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The Soldier's Letter

Part 1: The Sam Murphy Saga

by

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Korea War, 1951. China has entered the Korean War as the Allies approach the Korea-China border.

A company of Australian soldiers are being trucked to the front. The soldiers are quietly nervous. Truck stops, and the Sargeant alights.

SARGEANT

Alright you blokes. This is where we stay tonight. Dig your holes and make them deep. The Chinese will be coming tonight so keep your guns clean.

JACK

Hey Sarge. Can you get the Chinese to bring some Chinese food.

SARGEANT

What?

JACK

They forgot my order the last time.

General laughter. Our hero SAM has a quiet smile.

JACK and SAM are paired off and they begin digging. They take a break after a long effort.

JACK

I'd love a dish of fried noodle with Chicken right now.

SAM

Chow Mien?

JACK

Yeah. You eat Chinese food?

SAM

Crispy Skin Chicken in Soya Sauce is my favourite. I know this place in Sydney Chinatown that has the best.

JACK

You beauty. If we get out of this mess, my shout every night.

Soldiers are waiting in their foxholes, and talking quietly.

SAM

Too quiet.

JACK

Not good.

After a loud whistle from the Chinese front, numerous flares explode, which light up the scene. Another whistle is sounded, and the Chinese soldiers charge the Aussie frontline, screaming madly.

SAM

Fucking crazy. This is slaughter.

Shooting starts as SAM stares without raising his rifle.

JACK

Come on, Sam. Just shoot!

Battle action is chaotic. Sam and Jack each shoot a fair share of charging Chinese soldiers. Suddenly Jack is fatally shot in the head. As Sam turns to see his dead friend, a couple of shots hit in the face and in the helmet. Sam falls with blood flowing in the dirt.

4 **EXT. KOREAN LANDSCAPE - FOXHOLES. DAY**

4

Sam wakes and hears Chinese voices. He knows he is alone and behind the enemy line. He remains quiet and still until he hears the voices fade away. As he crawls out of his hole, he is confronted with a pair of Chinese boots and the sound of guns clicking. SIU-WAI is pointing his rifle at Sam.

SIU-WAI

(In accented English)

Hands Up. Hands Up. White Devil.

SAM

(With raising hands)

OK. OK.

5 **EXT. KOREAN LANDSCAPE. DAY**

5

Sam is marched to a group of Chinese soldiers resting and eating. There is a officer who is sitting some distance from the group. One of the group, FAT-CHI, is obsessed with revenge.

Note

Dialogue in Cantonese Chinese.

SIU-WAI

Comrades. We are lucky today. A white devil left for us to avenge our dead friends.

FAT-CHI

(With anger)

Let's show him the meaning of fear and pain.

The group agrees and begin to gather near Sam. FAT-CHI punches Sam in the face,

CHINESE OFFICER

No. Execute him. He is a
shit-eating foot soldier. Don't
waste your anger on him. We need to
march soon.

FAT-CHI

Comrade Senior. A few hours is all
we need. Please.

SAM

Wait. Wait. Friends. I am a foot
soldier, but I am also a son and a
brother. Like you I've lost friends
here. Don't shoot me. My mother
will be grateful if you let me
live.

The Chinese soldiers stare in amazement.

SIU-WAI

Where did you learn to speak
Cantonese?

SAM

I was raised by a Chinese family.
In Australia. Big Brother. That's
what they called me.

FAT-CHI

That's a lie. He's a spy. There is
a lot of English people in Hong
Kong who speaks Cantonese. He's a
spy.

CHINESE OFFICER

There's no time to argue. We need
to send him back to the Political
Commissar. If he is a spy, he will
be executed anyway. Fat-Chi.
Siu-Wai. Escort the White Devil
back to the command post. That's an
order. The rest of you, get ready
to march.

6

EXT. CHINESE COMMAND POST. EVENING/NIGHT

6

Near a Chinese Army command post, Siu-Wai is alone with Sam,
preparing a meal. Sam is securely tied up. Fat-Chi returns,
looking grumpy and tired.

Note

Dialogue in Cantonese Chinese.

FAT-CHI

The Political Commissar is back at
Headquarters. The Officer-in-Charge
ordered us to keep him until
tomorrow morning. I'm happy with
that.

The meal is cooked.

FAT-CHI (CONT'D)
(After a few mouthful)
What is this shit?
(Throws the meal away)

SIU-WAI
Comrade. I'm sure you can cook a
fucking banquet in this Hell-hole.
Anyway, good food will only remind
you of home.

FAT-CHI
(Annoyed and tired)
You guard. I sleep. Wake me when
you've had enough. Shoot him if he
even wiggles his ass.

FAT-CHI settled into a deep slumber.

SIU-WAI
White devil. I know you're not from
Hong Kong. Your accent is from
Sun-Wooi in Guangdong province.
I've been there. How did you end up
there?

SAM
I told you. I was raised by Chinese
parents. They were from Sun-Wooi. I
have never been outside Australia
until this war started.

SIU-WAI
If you were a spy, you would be
speaking Mandarin. If I wanted to
be an officer, I would learn
Mandarin. That is the natural order
in China.

SAM
Comrade. If you want a
conversation, please give me some
food.

Siu-Wai ties Sam's feet and loosens the rope around his
arms. Siu-Wai points the rifle at Sam as he unties the rope.

SIU-WAI
Please don't make me shoot you.

SAM
Thanks comrade. This war is over
for me. I'm sick of it.

Sam begins to eat the meal offered by Siu-Wai.

SAM

I met my adopted Chinese parents in a town called Darwin when my real father was still alive. It seems so long ago.

Sam begins to tell his story.

FADE TO.

7 **EXT. DARWIN HARBOUR. DAY**

7

Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia. 1931. Sam, age 5 is with his father, COLIN, watching their ship being docked. Passengers, including Sam and Colin, disembark.

COLIN

Sam. This is our new home.

8 **INT. DARWIN BOARDING HOUSE. DAY**

8

Colin is checking into a boarding house. The local police Sargeant TERRY approaches him.

TERRY

G'day. New in town?

COLIN

G'Morning. Yes. This is my son Sam. Say hello to the officer, Sam.

SAM

Hello Sir.

TERRY

Hello son. Welcome to Darwin.

(Looks at Colin)

Staying long?

COLIN

I hope to. I'll be looking for work. The police in this town seems a little nosey with travellers.

TERRY

Apologies. Most travellers here are passing through. In that case, I'm the local tourist guide. It helps to keep order in this small town. Sargeant Terry is the name. Just call me Terry. Yours?

COLIN

Colin. Nice to meet you. I may need your help some time.

TERRY

Not too hard to find me. I'll be on my way now. Nice to meet you Sam. Colin.

Sargeant Terry starts to leave, but turns to Colin in a serious tone.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Oh. One word of warning. Pick a fight with one of the Aborigines and you'll have the whole tribe after you. Don't want see anything nasty happen to you.

9 INT. DAN CHIN CLOTHING. DAY

9

Colin walks into the Dan Chin Clothing shop. Inside a middle age, well dressed Anglo Australian man, MARTIN, is talking to the shop owner, DAN. Martin is the newly elected mayor of Darwin, who won with the support of the local Chinese community.

MARTIN

Dan. I want to thank you for the support. Without the Chinese community it would have been hard.

Martin turns to see Colin.

MARTIN

Please go ahead. I don't want to stop normal business here.

DAN

Can I help you?

COLIN

Yes. Can I see the manager? I am looking for work. Happy to do anything.

DAN

This is my shop. Sorry mister. Not hiring here.

MARTIN

Ahh. I may be able to help. Martin James's my name. I'm the new mayor in town so I have a few useful contacts. My friend here is Dan Chin.

Colin shakes hands with Martin and Dan.

COLIN

Colin Murphy. Just arrived in town yesterday. Any opportunity would be appreciated.

MARTIN

You've come at a good time. The shipping company down at the harbour is looking for labourers and office staff. Got the right skills and you could start straight away. Where'd you come from?

COLIN

Sydney, but born in Melbourne.

MARTIN

Great. Melbourne born myself. I better move on. Colin, hope the shipping Company thing works out. Dan. Let catch up sometime when your shop is closed. Cheerio.

COLIN

Mr Chin, I think I need something suitable for an interview. What do you suggest?

Colin walks around the shop. A young boy, GARY (4), and a girl, MAY (3), appear from the shop's back office.

GARY

Dad, can we go and see our friends, the Wongs. They have invited us for lunch.

DAN

(In Cantonese)

Kids. Can't you see I'm busy. I have told you many times. Wait until our customers have left the shop.

COLIN

Hello there kids.

The kids stop and stare, realising their mistake.

DAN

(In English)

I'm sorry Mister. They are a little trouble sometimes.

COLIN

No problems Mr Chin. I have a 5 year old son myself. He's playing at the boarding house by himself. I understand how hard it is to mix business and children.

DAN

Your wife's not taking care of him?

COLIN

My wife passed away some time ago.
It's just me and Sam.

DAN

Oh. I am so sorry. It must be hard
for you.

COLIN

My friend's wife looked after him,
but he is old enough now for me to
take care of him. I'm afraid he is
a little lonely.

Colin turns to the kids and kneels down.

COLIN (CONT'D)

My Sam would love to play with you
if you like. Can I bring him here
to play with you?

DAN

Sure Mister. Kids are always
welcomed in my family.

COLIN

Mr Chin. Please call me Colin.

DAN

Sure. The same. Call me Dan. This
is Gary, and May.

COLIN

How about tomorrow? I have to be at
the Harbour in the morning. I can
leave some money for Sam's lunch.

DAN

No need for the money. It is an
honour to serve food to guests in
my house, and children gets served
first. To take money would be an
insult.

COLIN

Dan. Give me the best work clothes
you have. I'm happy to pay whatever
price.

10 INT. DAN CHIN CLOTHING SHOP. DAY

10

Colin brings Sam to the Chin's shop.

DAN

Good Morning Colin. Hello, this
must be Sam. Kids. Your new friend
is here.

Gary and May Chin appear along with their Mother, Lucy.

DAN
This is my wife Lucy. Her English
is not so good.

LUCY
Hello.

COLIN
Nice to meet you. Sorry Dan I can't
stay too long. Big day. (to Sam)
Sam, I will be back in the
afternoon. I have some business to
take care of. Remember your
manners.

SAM
Yes dad.

DAN
Good luck with it Colin.

COLIN
Thanks.

Colin leaves the shop. Lucy approaches Sam and kneels down
to face him.

LUCY
(In Cantonese)
Are you hungry? We about to have
breakfast. Come and eat.

GARY
(In English)
My mother ask if you are hungry?
You can join us for breakfast.

Sam is shown the Chin family home, which is a detached,
modest, fibro house behind the shop. Breakfast is a nervous
but light-hearted scene. Sam struggles with the chopsticks,
which causes the Chin family to break out with joyous
laughter. Even Sam joins in.

11 **EXT. VARIOUS DARWIN SCENES. DAY**

11

Series of scenes - Sam fishing with Colin. - Dinners at the
Chin Family.

SAM (VO)
The next six months was a happy
time for me. My father was happy
and working. We went fishing on the
weekends. My father became close
friends with the Chins, who we
visited regularly. Then, it all
changed suddenly. It started the
night my father let me stay
overnight with the Chin family, and
he was at the pub with Martin.

12 INT. DARWIN HOTEL. NIGHT

12

MARTIN

How is your job going?

COLIN

Great. Thanks to you. I think I made the right decision to come to Darwin.

MARTIN

That's good news. So why did you leave Sydney?

COLIN

Things were a little hard after my wife passed away when Sam was a year old. I was a bookmaker in Sydney, but I fell into the wrong crowd. I had to leave in a hurry. So I thought Darwin would be a good place to keep a low profile.

MARTIN

Ah. Darwin is full of people looking for adventure or running away from something. It must be the frontier spirit in this place. Look at the Chinese in town. The first Chinese were here for the Gold Rush, and they been here since. I was surprised when I arrived here to find that the White Australia Policy didn't mean anything to people here. It was like this small and forgotten corner of Australia is where people can live with real freedom and harmony.

A drunk man in the next table overhears the conversation.

DRUNK MAN

You're that new bleeding heart mayor. I heard what you said about the Chinese. Yeh, they voted you in. I tell you. We should send those slanty-eye bastards back to their yellow, rice eating country.

COLIN

We are having a private drink here. Do you mind?

DRUNK MAN

You're just another fucking political scum, Mate.

COLIN

Come on. Enough.

DRUNK MAN
You shut your face.

Colin attempts to intervene. The drunk man throws a few punches knocking Colin to the ground. Other patrons in the pub restrain the drunk man. Martin checks Colin, now unconscious, and realises the worse has happened.

13 **INT. CHIN HOUSE - MORNING**

13

Terry knocks on the door

DAN
Terry. What brings you here so early?

TERRY
Can I come in?

DAN
Of course.

Terry enters.

TERRY
There was a fight at the pub last night. Colin and Martin got into an argument with a drunk man, and Colin got knocked to the ground. He must have hit his head hard. (Pauses) Dan. He didn't make it. The doctor pronounced him dead a few hours ago. I have already charged the suspect with manslaughter. Open and shut case because just about everyone in the pub saw it.

DAN
Oh my god.

TERRY
I need to tell the son about it. How should I do it?

DAN
Let's do it together. Let me tell my wife before we wake up Sam.

14 **INT. CHIN HOUSE - BEDROOM. MORNING**

14

The adults are in the bedroom where Sam is slowly waking up. Lucy is in tears, trying to maintain composure.

TERRY
Sam. Something happened to your father last night, and we had to take him to the hospital. He passed away last night. I'm sorry.

Lucy, still in tears, immediately hugs Sam. Sam is in shock, and goes into a catatonic state.

15 **EXT. DARWIN CEMETERY - DAY**

15

SAM (VO)

I can't remember the next few days.
I remember my father's funeral, but
it felt like a dream.

The funeral party, which includes the Chin family, Martin, Terry and small number of work colleagues, is starting to leave. Dan sees Martin and Terry talking privately, and approaches them.

MARTIN

Dan. We were just talking about the
arrangements for Sam.

TERRY

I better get going. Martin. Dan.

Dan nods goodbye to Terry, and turns to Martin.

DAN

What will happen to Sam?

MARTIN

I will become Sam's legal guardian.
But you know I can't take care of
him. Can you and your wife do that?

DAN

Yes, it will an honour for us. I
was going to ask if Sam could stay
with us.

MARTIN

I just spoke to Terry, and he's OK
with it. Just drop by the police
station tomorrow to pick up some of
Sam's things. He can stay on in
your home until he becomes of legal
age. Dan, I know he will be in good
care.

DAN

You have my word. Sam will be
treated as my son.

16 **INT. CHIN HOUSE - BEDROOM. NIGHT**

16

Sam wakes up from a nightmare, and starts crying. Lucy
rushes in and hugs him,

LUCY

(In Cantonese)

Sam. I won't leave you. I won't
leave you.

SAM

Ma. Ma.

17 **INT. CHINESE COMMUNITY CENTRE. DAY**

17

SAM (VO)

It was Chinese New Year, 1936, when
I first met the Fong family and
Betty. They had just moved from
Tennant Creek to settle in Darwin.

Chinese community in a joyous party scene, with the Chin and
Fong families mixing together. ALBERT Fong, the patriarch,
is talking to Dan.

ALBERT

So this is the Sam I've heard
about. You know, Dan, even the
Chinese community in Tennant Creek
knows about your adopted boy.

DAN

He's a good kid.

LUCY

(In Cantonese)

Sam, go on. Take the children out
and play. We adults want to have a
long chat.

SAM

(In Cantonese)

Ok Ma. Do we really have to bring
May with us?

LUCY

(In Cantonese)

Yes Sam. You children should learn
to play together.

18 **EXT. CHINESE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND. DAY**

18

The kids form up into teams, the Chins (Sam, Gary and May)
and the Fongs (EDWARD, BETTY and ANDREW).

SAM

Let's play soccer

EDWARD

Yeh. And we can have two equal
teams, the Fongs versus the Chins.

SAM

Hey look. (Pointing to the Fongs)
Boy, Girl, Boy. And we're Boy, Boy
Girl.

EDWARD
(Pointing to Sam, Gary)
Not fair. You have two older boys.

SAM
Ah. May here can hardly touch the ball. (Pointing to Betty) Your Betty is the same size as Gary. And your Andrew is bigger than May. That's even. (Looks at Andrew) What are you staring at? (In Cantonese) Stop staring at me.

EDWARD
He understands English. He just can't believe you can speak Chinese.

BETTY
Edward, I'm smarter than both of these boys. (Pointing to Sam and Gary) We can beat them easy.

SAM
Ooo. What a show-off.

GARY
I want to be captain.

SAM
No. I'm the captain of the Chins. (Cantonese) Remember, I'm Big Brother.

19 **INT. CHINESE COMMUNITY CENTRE - DAY**

19

Sam walks past a room where the men are playing a gambling card game. The noise attracts him and he peeks through the partly opened door. He can't help being fascinated. Dan sees Sam looking in.

DAN
Sam. You shouldn't be here. Go back to the kids.

Dan walks with Sam to the corridor and closes the door.

DAN (CONT'D)
You can play when you start earning money. Tell your Mom I'll be finished in a hour.

20 **EXT. THE CHIN FAMILY HOME - DAY**

20

19 February 1942. Japanese bombing of Darwin. The Chins are sheltering in their home, now protected with sandbags and taped windows. Sam is now aged 16.

SAM (VO)
 The day I first kissed Betty was a
 dark day for Darwin, and for
 Australia. It was World War II, and
 Japanese bombers attacked Darwin.

The bombing ceases, and the Chin family slowly come out of
 their undamaged home.

DAN
 (To Lucy in Cantonese)
 Stay here with the children, I'm
 going to see if I can help anyone.
 Come on Sam, you can come with me.

Dan and Sam approach the Fongs home and finds that it is on
 fire. Two Australian soldiers along with a group of Chinese
 men are trying to help the family as well as fighting the
 fire.

AUSSIE SOLDIER 1
 (To his colleague)
 Nick. Over here. There's a young
 boy here. Under this rumble.

Dan and Sam join in, as the men safely lift Andrew from his
 situation.

AUSSIE SOLDIER 1
 Ok, I got him. He's OK, but we got
 to get him to the hospital.

The soldier takes Andrew in his arms, and carries him off.

AUSSIE SOLDIER 2
 (To Dan)
 Tell the family their boy is on the
 way to the hospital.

SAM (VO)
 The soldiers acted with bravery
 that day. I thought one day I would
 be like them.

21 INT. DARWIN HOSPITAL - DAY

21

The Fong family, except Andrew, are in the waiting area. Dan
 and Sam are with them.

DOCTOR
 (To Albert)
 Your boy is doing fine. We stopped
 the bleeding, so a couple days rest
 here and he can go home. Please,
 only a few visitors are allowed
 now.

BETTY

Dad, I'll stay here. I can see Andrew tomorrow.

Albert, his wife Poh, and Edward leave.

DAN

Sam. I'm going. Looks like Andrew is OK. Stay and tell Albert that I going to see if anyone else needs help. See you at home tonight.

SAM

OK Dad.

Dan leaves Sam and Betty alone.

SAM

Are you OK Betty?

Betty hugs Sam and starts to cry.

BETTY

I feel so scared. Hold me Sam.

After a long embrace. They look into each other eyes. They kiss.

22 **INT. CHINESE COMMUNITY CENTRE. NIGHT**

22

SAM (VO)

August 15, 1945, VJ-Day, was the end of the war with Japan. The next Saturday evening, the Chinese community organised a special celebration party.

The party is divided into groups. Older men and women are talking quietly and small children are playing at the end of the community centre, away from the stage. While around the stage, groups of young women are on one side, with groups of young men are on the other side of the stage. On the stage, a small, mixed group of young women and men are around a record player. Music of the period is being played.

The Fong family enters the centre late, and they separate to the respective groups. Betty stops as she finds Sam is talking to a young Chinese woman close to the stage. Sam senses the tension as some women stop talking and turn to see the looming confrontation. Sam turns, smiles and walks towards Betty, who is still at some distance from where Sam and the young woman was talking.

SAM

You're late.

BETTY

(With anger)

Who was that girl?

SAM

Whoa. That's my cousin Amanda. Her father is Dan's younger brother. Her family is up from Broome on a holiday. She hardly knows anyone here so I was keeping her company. You want to meet her?

BETTY

Maybe later. (Pause) Sorry Sam. Just couldn't help myself

Sam hugs Betty.

SAM

That's OK. Let's have fun.

Sam kisses Betty. She gently breaks off the kiss.

BETTY

Sam. Please. Not in public. People are watching.

Groups of young women are giggling at the couple.

SAM

They're just jealous.

BETTY

Not that. Look at the old crowd.

Sam turns to see a number of elderly people shaking their heads in disapproval.

SAM

(With a cheeky smile)

They probably don't remember what a kiss is.

Edward approaches the couple after quick greetings with the group of young men.

EDWARD

Hey loverbirds. Hate to interrupt your show. Sam, the game is still on later tonight? Is it at Joe's place?

BETTY

You are not dragging Sam away again? How come he spends more time with you boys than me?

EDWARD

Hey Sis. This one was organised by Sam.

SAM
 Sorry Betty. It's later tonight,
 after this party anyway. (To
 Edward) I'll talk to you later. (To
 Betty) Come on, let's go outside.

23 **EXT. CHINESE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND. NIGHT**

23

Once outside, the couple embrace again and kiss. This time with passion.

SAM
 I'm sorry about that kissing scene.
 I couldn't help myself. You make me
 do stupid things, but I love it.

BETTY
 I hope your cousin doesn't think I
 am some crazy, green, dragon woman.

SAM
 (With a cheeky smile)
 I'll just tell her the truth. You
 lose your mind when you get near
 me.

BETTY
 And I tell her, you are the dumb
 one to come anywhere near this
 crazy woman.

Pause as they look into each other's eyes.

SAM
 Oh, how I love you. I want you to
 be a part of my life always.

BETTY
 I love you too Sam.

They embrace again.

24 **INT. SAM'S WAREHOUSE. NIGHT**

24

Scenes of young men gambling in Sam's Warehouse.

SAM (VO)
 When the war ended, people started
 to have fun again. I started
 playing card games with a few
 friends at first. They brought
 their friends, and soon I was
 making money without having to
 work.

25 **EXT. SAM'S WAREHOUSE STREET. NIGHT**

25

Sam and his friends are coming out of a warehouse where they were gambling.

SAM

See you Friday night boys. Bring your luck with you.

He sees Terry approaching him, as his friends walk away quietly.

TERRY

Sam, we need to talk.

SAM

Hey Sarge. How's things?

TERRY

Look. I'll get to the point. I know you are running a part-time gaming business in that warehouse. I've already received complaints from a number of Chinese families saying their sons have come home without their hard-earned cash.

SAM

Hang on, Sarge. It's not a business. Nowhere near it. We're just a bunch of friends having some fun.

TERRY

Fun? Playing mahjong at a birthday party, and having a loud card game at Chinese New Year, that's fun. You're getting into a serious and harmful business if you keep going like this. (Pauses) Sam, I've known you since the first day you arrived here. You were always a polite and considerate boy. Now you think you're a man, you think you can do anything.

SAM

I guess that's the end of the sermon because I'm going home.

TERRY

This is my only warning, sonny. You keep this going and I will act officially to close you down. This is my town, and I will not tolerate someone like you ruining it.

Sam turns and walks away.

SAM

(Mutters to himself)
Go fuck yourself old man.

26 **EXT. OUTSIDE BETTY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

26

Sam is at the Fong family home, outside of Betty's room. He taps on her window.

SAM

Betty. Betty. You awake?

BETTY

Quiet. Don't wake everybody. Wait.
I'll get dressed and come out.

Betty comes out of the house. They embrace and kiss.

SAM

I just wanted to see you.

BETTY

I couldn't sleep anyway. Are you
upset?

SAM

Yeh. A little. I had some angry
words with someone tonight. Ah,
it's not important.

BETTY

I have to tell you something. I was
thinking about it, and I was going
to tell you in the morning.

SAM

What is it?

BETTY

I heard my mom and dad talking
about me tonight. They have
arranged for me to marry Gary, your
brother.

SAM

What?

BETTY

It's an arrangement between the two
families. Your parents have already
accepted. I think they were going
to talk to Gary before they tell
everyone.

SAM

But this is crazy. They can't do
this. I love you, and I want to
marry you!

BETTY

Calm down, Sam. I know. I love you
too. (Pause) I don't know what to
(MORE)

BETTY (cont'd)
do. If I say no, it will hurt my
mom and dad. Maybe there's a way
out.

SAM
Let me talk to my mom and dad. This
is so unfair. How can they do this
to us? (Pause) I got to go. I going
to sort it out tonight.

BETTY
Please Sam. Don't do anything
stupid. I love you.

SAM
Don't say anything until I see you
again. I love you.

Sam runs into the dark street.

27 **INT. CHIN FAMILY HOME - NIGHT**

27

Sam knocks on his parents door. Dan opens it. Dialogue in
English.

DAN
It's late Sam. What's going on?

SAM
I need to ask you something.

DAN
OK, just keep it down. Don't want
to wake everyone.

They walk to the living room.

SAM
Betty told me tonight that there's
an arranged marriage between her
and Gary. Is this true?

DAN
(Surprised)
Yes. But you were not to know this
until we talked to Gary.

SAM
I can't believe this. You know
Betty and I have been together for
some time. You can't do this.

DAN
Keep it down, and don't use
Chinese. I don't want your mom
upset.

SAM
Why is this happening?

DAN
Sam. The two families have been talking about this for awhile, and now is the time to act.

SAM
But why Gary, and not me?

DAN
We talked about it. The Fongs wanted Gary. I didn't press it because we agreed that you are not suitable.

SAM
What? This is so unfair. It is because I'm not Chinese?

DAN
That was a big part of it, but Sam you have changed in the last few years. Everyone in the community knows about your gambling thing. The Fongs don't want someone who is a bad influence. I agreed because I too will not have shame in this family because of you.

SAM
Count me out of it, Mister Chin. I'm leaving.

DAN
Why you ungrateful little shit!

28 **INT. SAM'S ROOM - NIGHT**

28

Lucy enters into the room as Sam is packing his bag.
Dialogue in Cantonese.

LUCY
Sam. What are you doing?

SAM
Sorry Ma.

LUCY
Where are you going?

Sam walks out the house.

DAN
He can come back when he apologies to me.

29 **EXT. DARWIN CEMETERY. DAWN**

29

Sam sits alone staring at his father Colin's grave. He starts to cry.

30 **EXT/INT. MARTIN HOME. MORNING**

30

Sam knocks on the door.

MARTIN

Sam. This is a bit early.

SAM

Sorry, Martin. I'm in a hurry.

MARTIN

What's happened?

SAM

You said once that if I ever needed your help, I could come and see you anytime.

MARTIN

Yes. Of course. I am not your legal guardian anymore but I still feel responsible for you.

SAM

I'm leaving town. I just want Colin's documents and whatever money that belongs to me.

MARTIN

You really need to do this? This is such a surprise.

SAM

Martin. Please. I don't want to talk about it.

MARTIN

OK. Let me get your stuff. I will have to write you a bank cheque for your father's money. I can only give you a small amount of cash that I have in the house.

SAM

Thanks Martin.

Sam is at the door, ready to leave.

MARTIN

Your father had distant relatives in Melbourne. So if you go there, you can stay with my family. The address is in that lot of

(MORE)

MARTIN (cont'd)
documents. They know about you from
my letters, so you will be
welcomed.

SAM
I don't know what to say.

MARTIN
Will you come back?

SAM
I don't know. I feel like a
stranger here now.

MARTIN
Whatever you do, take care.

The two men embrace, and Sam walks away without looking
back.

31 **EXT. SYDNEY SCENES. DAY**

31

Sam arrives in Sydney despite suggestion from Martin.

Series of scenes - Sam visits his mother's grave. - He
arrives at the army recruitment office, but it's closed - He
walks into a restaurant in Chinatown.

32 **INT. CHINATOWN RESTAURANT. NIGHT**

32

Sam is eating alone. A couple of Chinese men at the next
table are having a conversation. One of the speakers looks
at Sam, and believes it is OK to talk in Chinese.

Note

Dialogue in Cantonese

GAMBLER 1
Went to the Kowloon Club last
night. New owner, and he's doing a
great job.

GAMBLER 2
What's the big deal. All gambling
places are the same.

GAMBLER 1
No. This place is different. They
got young attractive girls as
dealers. There's girls who serve
you drinks at the table. And, they
thank you if you win big and want
to leave. I lost money last night
but I left the club feeling good.
Going back tonight.

33 INT. KOWLOON CLUB. NIGHT

33

Sam walks up a dark set of stairs and arrives at the door where a formally dressed man is standing.

DOORMAN

(In English)

Sorry Mister. Private Club. Member only.

SAM

(In Cantonese)

Brother. I know what this place is. I won't be any trouble. Talk to your boss.

DOORMAN

(Pauses, and in Cantonese)

Welcome. Please enjoy our club.

Sam settles at his table, and starts to gamble. He chats to the dealer, a young Chinese girl, and to his fellow gamblers in Cantonese. The older Chinese owner, Ka-ming, watches Sam patiently from a quiet, corner table. Some time passes. Another young girl approaches him.

WAITRESS

(In Cantonese)

Mister. My boss would like to buy you a drink and talk to you. Would you like to follow me?

SAM

(In Cantonese)

Oh alright. Need a break from this bad run anyway.

34 INT. KOWLOON CLUB - BACK OFFICE. NIGHT

34

Note

Dialogue in English

KA-MING

My name is Ka-Ming, and this is my club.

SAM

Pleased to meet you. Sam's the name.

KA-MING

I must compliment you on your Chinese. You speak well. It must be useful sometimes, like tonight.

SAM

Look Mister. If you want to throw me out, just say so. No need for this fancy stuff.

KA-MING

You've got it wrong. I want to offer you a job.

SAM

In this club?

KA-MING

Of course.

SAM

What will I do? Your doorman is doing a good job.

KA-MING

I want to expand and bring in more Aussie gamblers. There are too many clubs for local Chinese. The future is the gamblers outside of Chinatown. You will be perfect. A white face for white gamblers. Simple as that.

SAM

How exactly do I do that?

KA-MING

You go out to places where you can find gamblers, charm them and bring them to the club. I pay you a retainer, and a commission on each gambler who comes through the door. I even count any Chinese gambler you bring in. I have simple rules. No drunks, no cheats, and no racists. Gambling maybe be illegal but I run a respectable business.

SAM

Deal. When do I start?

KA-MING

One more thing. I need you to teach the club staff to speak English.

35 **INT. KOWLOON CLUB & BACK OFFICE - NIGHT**

35

Sam enters the club with a couple of Australian soldiers.

SAM

Mate. This is the end of the rainbow.

He leaves them at the games table and passes an Asian girl serving drinks.

SAM

(In Chinese)

Hey Amy, free tonight?

KA-MING

Sam. I've told you before, No
flirting with the girls while they
are working.

SAM

No problem boss.

KA-MING

There's someone I want you to meet.
Back office.

Sam and Ka-ming enters the room.

KA-MING

Sam. This is Detective Johnson.

SAM

Pleased to meet you.

JOHNSON

Ka-ming been telling me all about
you. You're a man with many
talents.

SAM

Just trying to do a good job.

KA-MING

We were talking about something you
need to know.

JOHNSON

Like I said, Ka-Ming. Your new
employee here will cost you more
money.

KA-MING

Of course. I agreed. But the
details.

JOHNSON

Look. I'm no fucking magician. You
understand? He gets into trouble, I
mean, serious trouble, and it is a
public matter, then I have to deal
with it in a special way. You know,
a couple of Chinamen caught running
a gambling club, there's fucking
moral outrage for a few days, then
it's forgotten. I pay a few
officials, and we're all laughing.
If your Sam gets caught, my
political contacts will run for the
hills, no matter what I pay. He'll
become a high profile catch, and
all the fucking Wowzers will want
to show that gambling lead to rape

(MORE)

JOHNSON (cont'd)
and murder. Fucking fantasy, I
know, but that's the way it is.

KA-MING
I see. I see. Then it's a deal. I
pay extra each month, but if Sam
gets caught, whatever it is, it may
cost me a lot more. (Pause. Looks
at Sam) Sam, you have any
questions?

SAM
No problem boss. I understand.
Absolutely clear. I'll be a good
boy.

36 **INT. KOWLOON CLUB - BACK OFFICE. NIGHT**

36

Sam and Ka-Ming are having drinks, 2 years later.

KA-MING
It's been a great year. I have a
bonus for you Sam.

Ka-Ming hands him an envelope full of cash.

SAM
Thanks boss.

KA-MING
Did the drop-off for Johnson go OK
last week?

SAM
Yeh. No sweat.

KA-MING
Watch out for Johnson. I worry that
he thinks everything is too easy.
You know what I mean?

SAM
Yeh. Boss. I know, he wants it all.
And everyone in Chinatown is scared
shitless of him.

KA-MING
You ever think about doing
something else?

SAM
Sometimes. And sometimes I feel
that what you want will come to
nothing. So, I live for the moment
because I'm having too much fun.

KA-MING

Be careful Sam. This fun will suck you into a black hole.

SAM

You ever wanted to get married, start a family, you know, be a good citizen?

KA-MING

(With laughter)

I was a young man once. Sometimes, you remind me of what I was like when I was young. I thought money would make me happy. I loved the thrill of the deal. Look at me now. I'm too old and stuck in this business to start a family.
(Pauses) Maybe there's still hope.

37 **INT. CHINATOWN BROTHEL. NIGHT**

37

Sam is in bed with a Chinese prostitute friend, YEE, resting after sex.

YEE

Who was the woman with you in our restaurant last week?

SAM

How do you know?

YEE

I have contacts and everyone in Chinatown knows who you are.

SAM

She's a new dealer at the club. I was helping her to settle.

YEE

I'm sorry.

SAM

No need to get nosey.

YEE

Darling. You think about a future away from Sydney and all this business?

SAM

Sometimes.

YEE

Can I be a part of it?

SAM

I don't know, Yee. If I want to start a new life, you will know about it.

YEE

Be a gambler. Bet your heart, and I'm yours. I love you.

SAM

I'm sorry. Let's forget this.

He dresses in a hurry, and walks out of the room. He passes the Brothel crowd on his way to the stairs.

38 **EXT. CHINATOWN STREET. NIGHT**

38

Sam is leaving the Brothel, which is above a normal shop. Johnson and a Chinese man, LUNG, approach Sam.

JOHNSON

Sam. How was it tonight? I hear your friend upstairs is a favourite among politicians. You're in good company.

SAM

None of your fucking business, mate.

JOHNSON

Sam. I have a business offer. This is my friend, Lung.

SAM

(Looks at Lung)

I know who you are. I have heard you want to start a business against my boss. If he hears you talked to me, I'll lose my job.

LUNG

(In Cantonese)

Don't worry. My partner will take care of everything.

JOHNSON

Gentlemen. Please. In English. Sam. The club is doing well but it is about time we expanded. Melbourne, even Hong Kong. I have a lot of contacts in the Hong Kong police. If you join us you'll have a 30% cut of the business. A man of your talents is too valuable. We can all retire like kings. Come on Sam. Be bold.

SAM

Wait. What about Ka-Ming?

JOHNSON

Ha ha. He's a coward. I have already asked him. You know what he said? Too many police and politicians involved. He's getting old and cautious. Lung here has agreed to take his place.

SAM

No. Without Ka-Ming, forget it.

JOHNSON

That is not acceptable. You're finished if you think you can walk away. I'll have you in prison for 20 years by next week, Mate. Even your friend upstairs will be lucky to earn a few dollars walking the streets. You understand?

SAM

(In anger)

You touch my friends, or my boss, I will cut your throat. 20 years will be worth it. Asshole

JOHNSON

(Johnson throw a punch.)

You fucking bastard.

Fight starts between Sam and Johnson. Lung stays at a safe distance. Johnson is knocked unconscious. Sam turns to Lung, who is now holding a knife.

LUNG

I am not your enemy. Leave. Leave with your life.

SAM

I will see you again.

Sam jogs away.

39 **INT. KOWLOON CLUB - BACK OFFICE. NIGHT**

39

Sam arrives late at the Club.

SAM

I saw Johnson tonight.

KA-MING

Did he make you an offer?

SAM

He did. I turned him down.

KA-MING

Sam. You should have taken it. You know without Johnson this club is finished. I can walk away because Johnson promised me a safe way out. He called it my retirement. Someone else will take over this club.

SAM

I don't like people like him. I don't trust him. What will you do?

KA-MING

Johnson is right. I want to retire. The bad spirits people bring to this club will turn my heart into stone.

SAM

Shit. Why didn't you tell me.

KA-MING

I tried to. But lately your mind has been on gambling and girls. I know you have slept with every girl in this club. Heavens know many else out there in Chinatown.

SAM

I know. (Pauses) It's too late now. I need to leave Sydney tonight.

KA-MING

Oh no. You didn't hurt Johnson did you?

SAM

Yes. He'll be OK, but I don't think I'm going to get another offer.

KA-MING

What are you going to do?

SAM

I'm going to join the army. That's what I wanted to do a long time ago.

KA-MING

I wish this did not happen. I wanted to leave you something.

SAM

It's OK. Say good-bye to my friends here. Tell them I'm sorry I can't see them.

KA-MING

They will still be here if you return. Take care of yourself, my friend.

SAM

I promise. I will come back one day.

Sam leaves the club.

40

EXT. KOREA - CHINESE COMMAND POST. NIGHT

40

Note

Dialogue in Cantonese Chinese.

Korea. 1951. Sam finishes his life story. A sense of peace and quiet settles as Sam and Siu-Wai stares at the campfire.

SIU-WAI

I don't know what will happen to you in the morning. You could be executed, my friend. I will tell the Political Commissar how you've learnt Chinese. That I believe.

SAM

Telling you my story has made me feel at peace. Whatever happens to me, I will accept it. I wish this was all a dream, and I wake up to find my father is waiting to take me fishing.

SIU-WAI

Has someone told you your name Sam sounds a lot like the Chinese word for heart.

SAM

Yes. My adopted mother.

SIU-WAI

Friend, be true to your heart. I hope one day you will go home.

SAM

I hope so too.

SIU-WAI

Come on. Let's sleep. There is only a few hours left before dawn.

SAM

Don't you want to wake up your comrade?

SIU-WAI

No. If I did, the grumpy bastard
will shoot me before he kills you.
I better tie you up. If he wakes up
and finds you like this, (Looks at
Sam untied hands) he will kill you.

Siu-Wai ties up Sam. Both men fall asleep.

41 **EXT. CHINESE COMMAND POST. DAWN**

41

Dawn break, as the three men sleeps peacefully. Suddenly,
the sound of screaming US jet fighters roar in the sky
above. Gunfire and bombs explode all around. All three men
awake in shock.

Siu-Wai is killed by shrapnel. Fat-Chi attacks Sam, but Sam
fights back despite having tied hands. Sam kills him and
unties himself. He runs towards the Allies frontline, while
the air attack continues.

42 **EXT. CHINESE COMMAND POST - PERIMETER. DAWN**

42

While still within the perimeter of the Chinese camp, Sam
jumps into a ditch, and is momentarily shocked to find a
dead Chinese soldier. The soldier has a fatal head wound but
his body is untouched. Sam looks at his blood soaked
uniform, and decides to take the dead soldier's clean jacket
and helmet. He continue his escape, stopping occasionally to
check if the way is clear.

43 **EXT. CHINESE COMMAND POST - FOXHOLE. DAY**

43

Sam stops and rests, trying to recover from his running. He
reaches inside the jacket's pocket and finds a letter. It is
the dead soldier's letter to his mother. As he reads the
letter he realise that he misses all the people he loves.
Tears begin as he continue to read the letter. He realises
that his love for his family and friends is his redemption.

44 **EXT. KOREA - US FRONTLINE. DAY**

44

Sam continues his escape until he sees two US Marines in
their forward positions. He raised his hands.

SAM

Australian. Don't shoot.
Australian. Don't shoot.

US MARINE 1

(From his foxhole)

Down on the ground. Face down.
Hands behind your back.

The two Marines approach Sam with guns ready.

US MARINE 2

He's wearing a communist uniform.
Must be a fucking Russian spy.

US MARINE 1

No, you moron. He's Australian. I recognise his accent. But search him for weapons and explosives anyway.

Marine 2 searches Sam's pockets and finds the letter.

US MARINE 2

He is a fucking spy. Look at his orders.

SAM

Oh, for God's sake, just take me prisoner, and take me to your Intel officer.

45 INT. ALLIES HQ OFFICE. DAY

45

Sam, now in Australian uniform, is standing at attention in front of a table facing two senior officers, one US Marine, MAJOR BARNES, and the other, Australian Army CAPTAIN LAWSON.

MAJOR BARNES

Captain Lawson here has confirmed your army unit and identity, and you were reported Missing-in-Action. You were lucky my men didn't shoot you. That Chinese uniform had them confused.

SAM

(To MAJOR BARNES)

Sorry Sir. Forgot to take it off. I was in a hurry trying to escape the Chinese.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

If that's all, you're dismissed.

SAM

Sir. May I have one request.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Yes. What is it?

SAM

May I have the letter back?
(Looking at the letter in front of LAWSON) The letter the Marines found in the Chinese jacket. That letter.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Why?

SAM

Just a memento.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Do you know what it is?

SAM

Yes Sir. It's a letter from a soldier to his mother. That soldier was dead when I found the letter in his jacket. I've read it.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Yes. That's correct. I have read it too. Where did you learn to read Chinese?

SAM

Back home in Darwin, Sir. I was close to a Chinese family who were kind enough to teach me to speak and read Chinese. I speak the Cantonese dialect, and basic Mandarin.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Why didn't you mentioned this when you enlisted?

SAM

Sir. No one asked me. Also, I didn't think we were going to have a war with the Chinese when I joined up.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Well, your skills will certainly be useful now. Are you interested in a transfer?

SAM

Yes Sir. Anywhere but the frontline is fine with me. (Pauses) Sir? May I have the letter?

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Ok. I see no reason why we should keep it. It has no intelligence value. Corporal Murphy, I will make the arrangements for your transfer to our intelligence unit.

SAM

Sir. Permission to ask a quick personal question.

CAPTAIN LAWSON

Yes?

SAM

Where did you learn to read Chinese?

CAPTAIN LAWSON

My parents were missionaries in China. I grew up learning Chinese from a early age. I understand why you want this letter. It's beautiful poetry.

46 **EXT. KOREA - ALLIES BASE. DAY**

46

Korea. 1953. A man with a Press badge is waiting beside a military tent.

SAM

Howard Smith, Sydney Morning Herald?

HOWARD

Yes.

SAM

Lieutenant Sam Murphy. Royal Australian Signals Corp.

HOWARD

I know you're an intelligence officer.

SAM

I know you have high level security clearance. But I don't understand why I have been assigned to be your escort. There's a number of smart press liaison officers back at HQ.

HOWARD

I have a special relationship with your spy masters. In return for a few exclusives, they ask me to publish a few pieces to promote to our cause.

SAM

If the Chinese do that, we call it propaganda.

HOWARD

Ha ha

(With laughter)

Not quite. You see I have the right to reject or change the stuff they give me. If it is the truth, then I publish it. If that happens to help our cause then everyone gets what they want. Nothing un-ethical about it. A nice cosy deal though.

SAM

You want to tour the DMZ?

HOWARD

The De-Militarized Zone? Yes. I heard that's where the action is.

SAM

Ha ha.

(With laughter)

Quite the opposite. Nothing much happens there. I can take you to the DMZ Guard Post. Great theatre. Two soldiers staring at each other across a table with two flags. Like two kids having a staring competition. In a way, that's how we should fight wars. No-one gets killed.

HOWARD

Have you seen action?

SAM

Yeh. Probably too much. They kept shooting at me and calling me a spy. Strange, now that I am a real one, no-one shoots at me. (Ends with laughter)

47 **EXT. SYDNEY CHINATOWN. DAY**

47

Sam returns to Chinatown.

Series of scenes - Sam, in military uniform, arrives by taxi at a hotel in Chinatown - In the hotel, he hangs up his uniform and takes out the dead soldier's letter - He walks into a Chinese restaurant, dressed in civilian clothes.

48 **INT. KOWLOON CLUB - BACK OFFICE. DAY**

48

Sam enters into the Kowloon Club and meets with Lung

LUNG

Why have you return? You take a big risk being here. If Johnson finds out you're back, you're dead.

SAM

I am back to settle my business. I know you don't want to fight me but I am ready to take on Johnson. You can tell him that. You can also tell that I am willing to walk away from Sydney and leave this business if he leaves me alone. I hold no grudges.

LUNG

Oh Sam. You are so innocent. Johnson wants to you dead and
(MORE)

LUNG (cont'd)
buried. He has taken out other
people for less. You've made a big
mistake.

SAM
Will you help me?

LUNG
I tried to before.

SAM
What are you talking about?

LUNG
You remember the first thing I said
to you the night we met?

SAM
No. I was kind of pissed off at you
and Johnson.

LUNG
I said, my partner will take care
of everything.

SAM
And so?

LUNG
You don't understand, do you.

SAM
Come on, Lung. What's the mystery.

LUNG
Well, I wasn't talking about
Johnson. My partner was Ka-Ming.

SAM
Shit. Shit.

LUNG
Yes. Remember I spoke in Chinese
because I didn't want to give
Johnson any chance to work it out.
You see, Ka-Ming is my second
cousin. He's family. It was he who
set it up. The so-called
retirement. We knew Johnson wanted
more, you idiot. If you had
accepted his offer, Johnson would
have minority share, and we would
still be in business. No, you
started a fight and stuffed it all
for everyone.

SAM
Why didn't Ka-Ming tell me later?

LUNG

We still had to protect the secret, otherwise Johnson would have had our balls on a plate. He has powerful friends. Even now, he's a police inspector. But all this doesn't matter anymore. Even if you want to tell Johnson, he's not going to believe you. He trusts me, and Ka-Ming is out of the business. It could have been different Sam. You and I could have been partners.

SAM

You're right. I have truly fucked up.

LUNG

What are you going to do?

SAM

I want to make things right. I'm tired of running away. It's now Johnson or me. Dead or alive.

LUNG

If I can help, I will. But please, if you do something stupid, I walk away. I want to survive. I have too much to lose.

SAM

Look. I've got an idea but give some time.

Sam leaves the club and joins the Chinatown crowd.

49 **EXT. CHINATOWN STREET. DAY**

49

Sam is walking down a Chinatown street. Andrew Fong turns into the street from a nearby corner and recognises him.

ANDREW

Sam. Sam.

SAM

(Turns to face Andrew)

Andrew? Is it really you?

ANDREW

Yes. I knew this day would come. I said to myself, if Sam is back in Chinatown, I am sure to see you.

SAM

What are you doing in Sydney?

ANDREW

I have a business in Sydney now.
imports and trading. It's doing
well.

SAM

Congratulations.

ANDREW

How about dinner at my place
tonight? You can meet my wife. She
will be glad to see you.

SAM

Wow. That's a big change.

50 **INT. ANDREW AND MAY FONG HOME. DAY/EVENING**

50

Andrew and Sam enters into Andrew's house.

ANDREW

Honey, I'm home. I have a guest
tonight.

May Chin appears.

MAY

Oh, my god. Sam. Thank god. Thank
god.

SAM

May.

Hugs and tears between May and Sam.

SAM

Andrew's your husband?

MAY

Yes. Isn't it wonderful? We got
married a year after you left
Darwin.

ANDREW

There's another surprise. Boys.
Daddy's home.

Two young boys appear, ages 4 and 3.

SAM

Well, there's little Andrews here.
What are your names?

ANDREW

The older one is Peter, and this is
John.

MAY

Boys, this is your uncle Sam.
Remember the stories I told you
about your Uncle Sam.

ANDREW

Let's celebrate. May, I bought some
Crispy Skin Chicken for Sam. Save
you cooking more. Like old times.

51 **INT. ANDREW AND MAY FONG HOME. NIGHT**

51

At the dinner table after a lavish meal. The young boys are
sent to bed.

MAY

We had heard rumours about a
Chinese speaking white man working
in the Chinatown clubs. We thought
it was you. You're a legend in
Chinatown.

ANDREW

By the time we settled in Sydney,
people said you had already left
town, disappeared like a ghost.

SAM

Well. Let's say I had good reasons
to leave quickly. I'm back now. My
running days are over. The war
experience has made me realise
what's important in life. What
about back home, in Darwin?

ANDREW

Ahh. When you left, things fell
apart. It seemed that a curse had
fallen on our two families.

SAM

Yeh. I wish I could fix everything.
I don't know if anyone would want
me back. I've messed up so many
things.

MAY

No. Sam. It's not too late. You
would be welcomed back with open
arms.

SAM

How's Mom and Dad? Are they OK?

MAY

They're OK. But, when you left they
were awful. Dad said that once he
calmed down after his fight with
(MORE)

MAY (cont'd)

you he realised his mistake. It should have been you who married Betty. But by then it was too late to tell you this. Why did you run away?

SAM

I don't know. Maybe I was a coward. How is Betty?

MAY

That's another sad story. When she found out you were gone, she cried every day for weeks. She thought you would return in a short time, but after a year she gave up. She was a different person. Moody and bad spirited. She ran away from home, left for Melbourne. Maybe she thought she could find you there because she'd heard that you had some family there. Anyway, she returned to Darwin a few years later, I've heard. She was engaged to some Aussie soldier in Melbourne and had a child, a son. You know what she named him?

SAM

What?

MAY

She named him Colin. Sam, your father's name.

SAM

Oh my Betty.

MAY

Anyway, she returned to Darwin because life in Melbourne became too much. No family to help, and a child to care for. Her fiance left her for another woman. It must been hard. Her parents accepted her back.

ANDREW

What could they do? Things were bad enough. Even Edward, my brother, threatened to leave the family. My parents just wanted peace, and the family back together. May and I did our best to make everyone happy.

SAM

My goodness. This is all my fault.

MAY

No. Sam. It's not. People have choices. To be happy, or not.

ANDREW

Look at us. When you left, May was upset too, but I was there, and we feel in love. May is right. We make our own futures. I always knew you would come back to the family.

SAM

Thanks Andrew, but I am not there yet. I still have some un-finished business to take care of. (Looking at May) After that, I promise you. I will see Mom and Dad again. I hope they can forgive me.

MAY

Like I said Sam, it would make them eternally happy. You were always their favourite. Oh, how I hated it when we were young. Sometimes, I felt you were the special one in everyone eye. Do you want to know a family secret?

SAM

Of course.

MAY

When Mom and Dad were fighting after you left, Mom would remind Dad about something just to hurt him. It was him who wanted to adopt you. Of course, then she would break out in tears because she loved you so much. To them, you are family.

SAM

I've been such a fool.

52 **INT. KA-MING BOOKSHOP - DAY**

52

Sam enters a run-down Chinese book store. Ka-Ming is at the counter.

SAM

Hello old friend.

KA-MING

Oh heavens. Sam. Good to see you again. Where have you been?

SAM

Joined a war in Korea, got shot at, got taken prisoner, nearly got killed by friendly fire and finally escaped. Other than that, taking it easy. (Pause) I can see you are doing the same.

KA-MING

This book shop is my passion now. It's refreshing for my soul. Also, I don't have to worry about Johnson and people like him.

SAM

I spoke to Lung yesterday. He told me everything. I think I owe you an apology.

KA-MING

That was also my fault. My plan was a little too smart. Are you going to fix your problem with Johnson?

SAM

Yes. But I need your help.

KA-MING

I thought you may need it one day. I have been preparing something to help you fight Johnson. I call it my dirt file. Let's have lunch first.

Sam and Ka-Ming leaves the shop.

53 **INT. CHINATOWN. DAY**

53

Various scenes as Sam sets up a showdown with Johnson.

Sam visits Lung again - Ka-Ming bribes a police officer - Sam speaks to a brothel madam - Sam meets with Howard, the journalist, at a cafe, and hands over a thick dossier.

54 **INT. CHINATOWN BROTHEL. NIGHT**

54

Johnson enters the brothel.

BROTHEL MADAM

Inspector. Something special for you tonight from your friend Lung.

JOHNSON

This is a nice surprise.

BROTHEL MADAM

Complimentary drinks, Inspector?

Johnson drinks a mouthful and enters the room. Two beautiful Asian women in sexy clothing are waiting.

JOHNSON

Ladies. This is a special night.

As Johnson starts to enjoy himself he falls asleep as the sleeping pills take effect. He awakes to find a transvestite in bed.

JOHNSON

Who are you?

The door opens and two police officers walk in.

POLICE OFFICER

Sir, you are under arrest for conspiracy to commit organised crimes. Please come with us quietly or we will have to restrain you with force.

JOHNSON

Do you know who I am? You are making a big career mistake.

POLICE OFFICER

If you resist, sir, I will use the cuffs.

JOHNSON

Ok. But you will all suffer for this.

55 **EXT. CHINATOWN BROTHEL. NIGHT**

55

As Johnson is escorted to the waiting police car, Sam confronts Johnson. A couple of serious looking, plain clothes officers are also waiting.

JOHNSON

You. You fucking shit. I'll get you.

SAM

Gentlemen. This is the suspect. (To Johnson) Johnson, once you are charged with criminal offences you will have more serious questions to answer. These gentlemen are senior operatives with the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. You will be charged with espionage and treason.

JOHNSON

What? This is bullshit.

SAM

Johnson. You're finished.

Sam leaves as Johnson struggles. A press photographer is taking shots as Johnson seethes with anger. Sam walks to a nearby parked car, where Howard is waiting. Sam gets into the passenger seat.

SAM

Great work Howard.

HOWARD

What is this all about anyway? With the evidence of organised criminal activities you gave me, Johnson will be in jail for a long time. And, he will face questions about his links to the Chinese Communist spy ring. That will destroy any public career.

SAM

There is a wise Chinese saying, when your enemy is down, cut his head off and leave him no chance to come back. The set-up was to ruin his reputation. It was also fun. A lot of his enemies will have a good laugh.

HOWARD

How did you know about the Chinese spy network? How is Johnson involved?

SAM

That was luck. I was asked by my spy masters to investigate the suspected spies in Chinatown. Well, it turns out that the Chinese spies played Johnson like a violin. Johnson was blinded by greed, and couldn't see that the money he got paid had Communist colours. Everyone in Chinatown knows what colour your money is. Johnson, the dumb bastard, didn't. Getting the intelligence about the spies and Johnson's links to them was easy. I just asked some old friends. One of them gave me that dossier with all the evidence of Johnson's crimes. This stuff is off-the-record, of course, national security and all that. (Pauses) That was my last spying assignment. Already handed in my resignation. There is one more favour I have to ask.

HOWARD
Not another set-up?

SAM
No, this is personal.

Sam takes an envelope from his pockets.

SAM
This letter has been my saviour,
but it doesn't belong to me. I
found this letter with a dead
Chinese soldier in Korea. It is a
simple letter home. There's a
Chinese mother who will treasure
it.

HOWARD
Can I read it?

SAM
Only if you can read Chinese. Trust
me, there's no political or
military secrets. I can't post it
because we're still at war with
Communist China. You know a few
important diplomats who can bypass
all this Cold War bullshit. I will
owe you one.

HOWARD
Sure Sam. I guess this is another
good-bye.

SAM
I'm going home, back to Darwin. If
you're passing by, drop in. It will
be fun to have some laughs again.

Sam leaves the car and walks down a quiet street.

56 **INT. DAN CHIN CLOTHING SHOP - DAY**

56

Sam walks in as Gary is tidying stock at the counter.

SAM
Anyone tell you, you look like Dad
twenty years younger.

GARY
Sam. (Pause) And I thought today
was going to be a dull day.

The two men embrace.

SAM
Well. We better break the news.

GARY
Let me do it Sam. We don't want to
give them heart attacks.

57 **INT. CHIN FAMILY HOME - DAY**

57

The men enter the front door.

GARY
(In Cantonese)
Mom. Dad. Sam is back.

Lucy rushes out from the kitchen.

LUCY
(In Cantonese)
Sam. My Sam is back. My Sam is
Back.

Lucy, in tears, hugs Sam. Dan chooses to hold back until
Lucy releases Sam.

SAM
(To Dan in English)
Dad. I'm sorry.

DAN
It's OK. I was a pig-headed old man
anyway. Forgive me.

The two men embrace.

58 **INT. CHIN FAMILY HOME, DINNER ROOM - DAY**

58

The family is finishing a joyous feast for lunch.

GARY
What are you going to do now?

SAM
I'm back for good. I've seen the
world and this place is as good as
it gets. There is one more thing I
have to do.

GARY
Betty?

59 **EXT. THE FONGS HOME - DAY**

59

Sam approaches the house, and sees Betty in the garden
playing with her child.

SAM
Hi Betty.

BETTY
Oh my.

There is a silence, as the young boy, COLIN JNR, turns to see the stranger.

SAM
He's a beautiful boy.

BETTY
Sam. The night you left, you said
you wanted to marry me. Do you
still do?

SAM
Yes. Yes with all my heart.

BETTY
I love you Sam.

They embrace and kiss.

60 **EXT. DARWIN CEMETERY - DAY**

60

Sam, Betty and their family - Colin Jnr, NORA, and MICK - are visiting the Cemetery. Scene opens with the family walking towards the graves of Dan and Lucy CHIN. They start to clear the grass around them.

MICK
Dad, why do we come every year?
Grandma Lucy's been gone for five
years.

SAM
Well. Coming here helps me to keep
my memories of your grandparents
alive. There're also many of my
friends who are buried here. One
day you may understand that they
are all part of me, and a part of
you.

Sam gathers them to face the graves. There is a solemn silence.

SAM (CONT'D)
Let's pay our respects.

Scene starts to fade.

SAM (V/O)
I wanted to tell my children so
much more. Things to avoid, like
those things that could lead them
astray. But I know they will make
their own journeys and tell their
own stories.

END.