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The Enemy- Explanation-

You mean die from the operation?”

Hana asked.

“Yes,” Sadao said.

Vitality: energy, life

Sadao questioned that what would be the implications if the man died. He looked down towards the injured man and wondered that he had a lot of energy which had kept him alive through such torture. He countered his thought with the fact that the man was very young – he seemed to be twenty five years of age and at that age, people do have a lot of energy. Hana asked him that did he mean the man could die during the operation. Sadao confirmed her question.

Hana considered this doubtfully, and when she did not answer Sadao turned away. “At any rate something must be done with him,” he said, “and first he must be washed.” He went quickly out of the room and Hana came behind him. She did not wish to be left alone with the white man. He was the first she had seen since she left America and now he seemed to have nothing to do with those whom she had known there. Here he was her enemy, a menace, living or dead.

Menace: danger, threat

Hana was pondering over this possibility and as she was taking time to reply, Sadao left. He said that something had to be done with the injured man irrespective of the result. The first thing was to wash him. As he walked out of the room, Hana followed him. She did not want to remain in the room, alone with the white skinned man. Since she had left America, he was the first white man she had seen. She had no contact with the Americans whom she had met as they were her enemies. This injured man was also an enemy and was a threat to them.

She turned to the nursery and called, "Yumi!"

But the children heard her voice and she had to go in for a moment and smile at them and play with the baby boy, now nearly three months old.

Over the baby's soft black hair she motioned with her mouth, "Yumi — come with me!"

Nursery: a room in a house for the special use of young children.

Hana turned to the children's room and called out to Yumi. As the children heard her voice, she went inside, smiled at them and played with her three – month old son. As she held the baby who had soft black hair, she motioned with her mouth to Yumi asking her to come.

"I will put the baby to bed," Yumi replied. "He is ready."

She went with Yumi into the bedroom next to the nursery and stood with the boy in her arms while Yumi spread the sleeping quilts on the floor and laid the baby between them.

Yumi replied that the baby was ready for sleep and that she must put it to sleep before accompanying her. Hana held the baby and went to the bedroom next to the nursery with Yumi. Yumi spread the sleeping quilts on the floor and laid the baby between them.

Then Hana led the way quickly and softly to the kitchen. The two servants were frightened at what their master had just told them. The old gardener, who was also a house servant, pulled the few hairs on his upper lip.

Hana led the way as they walked fast towards the kitchen. The two servants in the kitchen were scared after hearing their master's words regarding the injured man. The old gardener who also worked as a servant was pondering over the news and pulling the hair from his upper lip.

"The master ought not to heal the wound of this white man," he said bluntly to Hana. "The white man ought to die. First he was shot. Then the sea caught him and wounded him with her rocks. If the master heals what the gun did and what the sea did they will take revenge on us."

Bluntly: in a straight – forward manner

The old gardener spoke bluntly to Hana. He said that Sadao must not treat the injured white man. He reasoned that the man was destined to die. Firstly, he had been wounded by a gun shot and secondly, the rocks of the sea wounded him further. If Sadao healed the wounds given by the gun and the sea, then the gun and the sea would treat them as enemies and seek revenge. The gun represents the Japanese army and the sea represents the country of Japan. If they treated the enemy, they would be punished by Japan.

"I will tell him what you say," Hana replied courteously. But she herself was also frightened, although she was not superstitious as the old man was. Could it ever be well to help an enemy? Nevertheless she told Yumi to fetch the hot water and bring it to the room where the white man was.

Courteously: politely

Superstitious: irrational beliefs

Hana politely said to the gardener that she would pass his message to Sadao. She was frightened though not superstitious like the old man. She thought that helping an enemy could never be good for them. Still, she asked Yumi to get hot water into the room where the injured man was kept.

She went ahead and slid back the partitions. Sadao was not yet there. Yumi, following, put down her wooden bucket. Then she went over to the white man. When she saw him her thick lips folded themselves into stubbornness. "I have never washed a white man," she said, "and I will not wash so dirty a one now."

Stubbornness: firm determination

Hana went inside first and moved the partition to one side. Sadao was not there. Yumi followed her and kept the wooden bucket on the floor. As she saw the white man, her thick lips folded and the expressions on her face indicated her determination. She said firmly that she had never washed an American man and that she would never wash one who was as dirty as that injured man.

Hana cried at her severely. "You will do what your master commands you!"

Hana reacted to Yumi's refusal. She screamed at her that she was supposed to follow her master's orders.

There was so fierce a look of resistance upon Yumi's round dull face that Hana felt unreasonably afraid. After all, if the servants should report something that was not as it happened?

Fierce: dangerous

Resistance: the refusal to accept or comply with something

Yumi resisted strongly. Her dull face had a dangerous look of protest which scared Hana. She was worried that if the servants reported something different from what had happened, they could land into trouble.

"Very well," she said with dignity. "You understand we only want to bring him to his senses so that we can turn him over as a prisoner?"

Dignity: respect

Hana changed her expressions to respect and said, "very well". She explained to Yumi that they intended to bring the unconscious man into his senses and then, they would hand him over as a prisoner.

"I will have nothing to do with it," Yumi said, "I am a poor person and it is not my business."

Yumi said that she was not concerned about their plans. She added that she was a poor person and it was none of her business to know about their plans.

“Then please,” Hana said gently, “return to your own work.”

At once Yumi left the room. But this left Hana with the white man alone. She might have been too afraid to stay had not her anger at Yumi’s stubbornness now sustained her.

Sustained: continued

Hana said to Yumi that then she should return to her work. Yumi left the room at once. Hana was again left alone with the white man. She would have been afraid to remain there all alone but her anger on Yumi’s firm determination made her stay in the room.

“Stupid Yumi,” she muttered fiercely. “Is this anything but a man? And a wounded helpless man!”

Hana said with anger that Yumi was a stupid person. She said that it was just an injured man.

In the conviction of her own superiority she bent impulsively and untied the knotted rugs that kept the white man covered. When she had his breast bare she dipped the small clean towel that Yumi had brought into the steaming hot water and washed his face carefully. The man’s skin, though rough with exposure, was of a fine texture and must have been very blond when he was a child.

Conviction: firm belief

impulsively: to do something suddenly without thinking

rugs: blanket blond: of light colour

Hana was so full of anger at the refusal by the maid, Yumi that without thinking, she opened the blanket in which the man was injured. His chest was bare. Hana took a small clean towel, dipped it in the steaming hot water and washed his face. The man's skin was rough due to being exposed to the sun, but it had a good texture and he must have been very fair as a child.

While she was thinking these thoughts, though not really liking the man better now that he was no longer a child, she kept on washing him until his upper body was quite clean. But she dared not turn him over. Where was Sadao? Now her anger was ebbing, and she was anxious again and she rose, wiping her hands on the wrong towel. Then lest the man be chilled, she put the quilt over him.

Ebbing: decreasing gradually

Rose: stood up

Chilled: freeze due to cold weather

Hana kept on cleaning the man's upper body as she had these thoughts. She did not like the man as he was not a child anymore. She did not have the courage to turn him over and thought of Sadao. His anger was decreasing and she started becoming restless. She stood up and wiped her hands with the wrong towel. As she did not want the man to freeze due to the cold weather, she put the quilt on him.

"Sadao!" she called softly.

He had been about to come in when she called. His hand had been on the door and now he opened it. She saw that he had brought his surgeon's emergency bag and that he wore his surgeon's coat.

Hana called out to Sadao softly.

He had been on the door when she called him. He opened the door. Hana saw that Sadao was carrying his surgeon's emergency bag and was wearing his surgeon's coat. He was prepared to operate upon the injured man.

"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, kakemono, 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.

Sadao asked Hana to get some towels.

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."

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.