

SAFELY HOME by RANDY ALCORN

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ACT I, SCENE I – THE HEAVENLY REALM

(FOG AND LIGHTING)

Li Manchu: What's happening?

Li Wen: I don't know, but wheels are turning, aren't they?

Li Tong: Things appear synchronized. A pattern is emerging. Something great seems poised to happen. Something else lurks in the shadows. Two destinies are converging. But neither suspects it.

Nan Hu: *(Voice trembling)* We must watch closely as the tapestry is woven...or as it unravels.

Manchu: We must do more than watch. *(The four grasp forearms)* The stakes are high, even higher than they can possibly imagine, even higher than we ever dreamed when we walked that world.

ACT I, SCENE II – GETZ INTL. BOARDROOM

Martin Getz: I called this meeting to discuss the dream that Ben spelled out for us ten years ago – selling one of everything to a country of 1.2 billion people! Teresa here and a couple of the team have voiced some concerns.

Teresa: The situation's not stable. *(Looking at her Palm Pilot, not at Ben)* I don't trust that government.

Ben Fielding: China won't be bullied by anyone. That's what Hong Kong was all about. They won't let "foreign devils" control their destiny. What's theirs is theirs.

Teresa: And what isn't theirs eventually will be.

Ben: I'll say it again. If one nation dictates everybody's future, it won't be America. It'll be China. The sooner everybody comes to terms with that, the better we can position ourselves.

Martin: Okay, okay, people. One thing's for sure, there's not another company with the access that Getz International has to Beijing and Shanghai. We've established one major beachhead or my name isn't Martin Getz! Now what's the report on the Shanghai factory?

Jessica: All indicators are positive. Production is still going up. With socialism loosening its grip and workers getting more for their labor, there's a new Chinese work ethic. Without all those paranoid safety and anti pollution regulations, they get done in a week what takes us a month – and their quality assurance tallies are better.

Joanna: I don't want to hear this! (*Playfully covering her ears*) There are certain things lawyers shouldn't know.

Ben: Sorry Joanna. We can't impose American standards on them. But we can demand the highest product standards. And we're getting great results. These people are bright, smart, and eager to work. They don't know about unions; they're just grateful to make a living and be able to buy a refrigerator, a TV, maybe even a computer.

Martin: China's still our fastest growing market!

Ben: In another few years they'll be our biggest customers – period! China has a skyrocketing economy with hundreds of millions of residences that'll add computers and a dozen other electronic devices in the next ten years. Our competitors' heads will be spinning. In the next few years they'll be eating our dust.

Martin: They'll never catch up.

Teresa: I wish I shared your confidence. Seems to me we're walking on a minefield. It's a shaky economy, human rights issues, over building in

Shanghai... not to mention Beijing's ability to pull the plug on anyone for any reason.

Ben: Its capitalists and communists scratching each other's backs. Sure, they've got problems. There's still a lot of trial and error, but they're learning fast. I've been saying it to you guys since my first trip to Beijing - China's our future; it's a dream market come true.

Jessica: Just make sure it stays that way, Ben. We don't want them to get any ideas of doing it on their own.

Ben: Oh, they've got the ideas, all right. They're swimming in U.S. and Japanese technology, and they can imitate it like nobody else. Give them a decade, and they'll be improving it. Eventually, they'll be our strongest competitors. We'll be racing to keep up, another six to eight years, and they'll be putting America to shame.

Martin: Ten years ago when you told us you could bring in millions of dollars if you studied Mandarin on company time, I thought you'd gone crazy. But it worked. They trust us. You speak their language. You know their culture. That's our edge. *(Stand up)* And I want to shore up that edge. *(Pause)* I'd like to send Ben to spend maybe six weeks living among and talking with typical Chinese citizens, the type that might work in our factories and eventually buy our products. Ben, what about that old roommate of yours from China? What's his name?

Ben: *(struggling to remember the name)* Um...Li Quan?

Martin: He lives in China, right? A teacher, isn't he?

Ben: He went back home to China to be a teacher.

Martin: GREAT!!!!!!! We'd be the company that sent a Mandarin-speaking VP to live with Chinese nationals to see what they're like, to learn what they need. It's the "we care about the common man" angle. It would impress the Chinese, our Board, Stockholders-everybody! The advertising potential is enormous. Ben could end up in a prime-time commercial sitting next to some Chinese guy grinning at his computer. *(Pause for reaction)*. Anyway, I will inform you more on that later. Our third-quarter profits are going to blow them away. Hold onto your hats people, when this hits Wall Street,

things are going to fly. Your profit shares could increase ten percent overnight!

ACT I, SCENE III – UNDERGROUND HOUSE- CHURCH

Zhou Jin: “It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him; he lived there by faith – for he was like a foreigner, living in a tent. It is the same with us, this world is not our home. Yesu says, “There are many rooms in my Father’s home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so you will always be with me where I am.” Remembering where our true home is will help us today as we speak of light and momentary troubles, which achieve in us an eternal weight of glory.

ACT I, SCENE IV – BEN’S OFFICE (Previously the boardroom)

Jen: There is a call for you. It’s your wife. It’s the third time she’s called today!

Ben: Pam! I really don’t want to talk with her now. Is Doug here yet?

Jen: Not yet, sir.

Ben: Okay. Put her through. Let me know when Doug gets here.

Jen: Yes sir.

Ben: What’s wrong, Pam? Are the kids okay? Did something happen to Kimmie or Melissa?

Pam: No, Ben. Everyone is fine.

Ben: Then why are you calling me at work? I am very busy!

Pam: When you don't return any of my messages on your cell phone; you leave me no choice.

Ben: I didn't return your messages because like I said, I'm VERY BUSY!!!!!!!!!! What do you want?

Pam: The family wanted to know if you were going to make it to the Thanksgiving reunion.

Ben: No, I won't be able to make it. It looks like I will be in China over the holidays.

Pam: China! Ben, no! You missed it last year.

Ben: I told you, I can't make it.

Pam: It's just that it has been quite a while since the kids have seen you.

Ben: I know, I know. I just sent them both a card with a very sizable check in it.

Pam: Kimmie and Melissa don't need a check. They need their father and...

Ben: And what?

Pam: ...and I need my husband.

Ben: Right.

Pam: Ben, what happened was not your fault!

Ben: I'm not discussing this with you!

Pam: If you don't talk about what happened, I don't see how we can make it through this.

Ben: Pam I'm late for a meeting. Tell the kids that I will make sure that their gifts will be delivered by Christmas. Goodbye. (*ends call*)

Pam: Ben? (*ends call*) God, please help my husband. He doesn't know how much he needs you. Please bring him back to his family, but more importantly, bring him to you.

ACT I, SCENE V – UNDERGROUND HOUSE-CHURCH

Zhou Jin: Sister Wu Xia has tuberculosis. Brother Wang An is in the hospital. They do not know what is wrong. Zhou Jin has many aches and pains. I know what is wrong with me. I am an old man! Some of our people suffer not from illness or age, but from persecution. Yesu said he was hated for being who he was, and his servants will be too. He said, "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." Zhu Yesu says, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

ACT I, SCENE VI – BEN'S OFFICE

Jen: (*walks Doug into room*) Mr. Roberts is here to see you.

Doug: "Mr. Roberts?" Why so formal, Jen? (*Jen turns to him but gives no response*) So what's up, Ben? You look a little...under the gun.

Ben: I think you've got a good idea what's up. Why did you force me into this?

Doug: Into what?

Ben: Why did you force me into this position?

Doug: What are you talking about?

Ben: C'mon, Doug. What do you think?

Doug: Okay. I'll play your little game. I think I see my cousin, a high-powered vice president who looks very tired. That's what I think.

Ben: I won't let you fall back on the family connection.

Doug: Fall back? What do you mean?

Ben: (*picking up a file folder*) I've got half a dozen complaints. They're all right here.

Doug: You're keeping a file on me!

Ben: We have to keep a file whenever...in these kinds of cases.

Doug: Is this a legal case? What's going on, Ben?

Ben: Doug, I don't care how narrow or intolerant you are in the privacy of your own home. But why couldn't you put a lid on it in the office? It's been building up for years. Now you've crossed the line. I've tried to warn you. You've become a disruption.

Doug: Come on, Ben. You knew me in the old days. I was outspoken then—radical politics, legalize marijuana, you name it. When I became a Christian twelve years ago, my opinions changed a lot, obviously. I don't apologize for that. But in the last five years have you ever known me to cram my beliefs down anyone's throat?

Ben: I'm not the one who filed the complaints! You've been warned before, but you never seem to get it. Remember the diversity seminar?

Doug: I took that seminar because I believe in both racial and gender equality and I can appreciate the fact that this company's trying to sensitize us to people from different backgrounds. All I said was I didn't think anyone should expect me to say homosexual behavior is right, because it isn't. I believe the Bible condemns it, and I said so. And I was quick to say it also condemns heterosexual relations outside marriage.

Ben: Oh, well, that really bailed you out! I got a complaint on that one too. Do you know how many people in this office are living together? You've

got five or six people within a thirty-foot radius of your desk who are having affairs. God knows how many others!

Doug: Yes, he does.

Ben: (*rolling his eyes*) Their lifestyle choices are their own business, Doug. Not mine and certainly not yours.

Doug: I believe in Christ. I believe in the Bible----even if it isn't popular.

Ben: I don't care what you believe, Doug. Nobody does. That's the problem. I sat on the Diversity-In-Business committee. We passed the NSW ordinance—No Hate Speech in the Workplace—ring a bell?

Doug: Hate speech? Come on, Ben. I don't hate these people. I just disagree, that's all.

Ben: Hate speech leads to hate crime. Saying homosexuality is wrong makes you an accomplice if someone beats up a homosexual. That's how it works.

Doug: Oh come on, are you kidding me? I oppose abortion too. Does that make me an accomplice if someone beats up someone who had an abortion?

Ben: You said it, not me.

Doug: Are you calling me a Christian bigot because I believe the Bible? What if someone beats me up, does that make you an accomplice? Is your calling me a bigot a hate crime? Or does it only cut one way?

Ben: Get serious, will you? You're deliberately pushing buttons, Doug. You're creating an antagonistic work environment. It's bad for camaraderie, and that's bad for business.

Doug: Just because I'm a Christian doesn't mean I throw out my First Amendment rights when I walk into this office.

Ben: What about your bumper sticker?

Doug: That's in my file too? What else have the thought police reported me for? The bumper sticker just says "Jesus Is the Only Way."

Ben: Don't you realize how condemning and judgmental that sounds? Your way is the *only* way.

Doug: Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." The bumper sticker just repeats what He said. I didn't make it up. Your argument is with Him, not me.

Ben: (*interrupting*) Stop preaching, Doug. That's what drives people crazy!

Doug: I park my car in the garage. I don't drive it into the office. My bumper sticker's not anybody's business.

Ben: Getz International owns your parking permit.

Doug: But Getz doesn't own my car. And it doesn't own me. (*Pause*)

Ben: Unfortunately, Doug, even what you admit saying to people is enough to incriminate you. You're not going to change, are you?

Doug: Change my beliefs? No. Refuse to speak up about Jesus? No way.

Ben: Then you've left me no choice. We're letting you go.

Doug: But...I've worked for Getz eighteen years. I've worked hard. I've never taken a day of phony sick leave or cheated on my reimbursements like half the office does. I've done my job well. You know that. And my beliefs have helped me do it honestly. (*Pause*) You're serious, Ben? You're actually firing me?

Ben: You've left me no choice. Joanna's worked out a severance package. It's all here. (*Walks to door*) Jen, will you come in here for a moment? (*Turns toward Doug*) That will be all Doug.

(*Doug exits, Jen enters*)

Jen: Yes sir.

Ben: Jen, I need you to try finding a university professor in China. Probably Beijing, maybe Shanghai; His name is Li Quan.

Jen: How do I find him?

Ben: The term “needle in a haystack” comes to mind, and this haystack has over a billion strands of hay. But you can start with this address. (*hands her an old envelope*) I found it in an old book a few years back. He was going to teach at a college, though I can’t tell you where.

Jen: I hope I can find him.

Ben: Honestly, I doubt you will. That is, unless they have *Books in Print* in China.

Jen: He’s a writer?

Ben: I’ll bet he’s written a dozen books by now. But you won’t find them on amazon.com, unless they’ve started carrying Mandarin titles.

Jen: I hope Li Quan isn’t a common name.

Ben: China’s full of common names. A phone book would be a bad joke. In a big city you could have a hundred pages of identical names. The bad news is Li is one of the most common Chinese last names. Maybe second only to Chen.

Jen: Thanks for the encouragement.

Ben: This might be a clue. There was a girl he always talked about, that he exchanged letters with. I wouldn’t be surprised if he married her. Her given name was Minghua...can’t tell you her surname. Chinese women keep their family names. And the surname comes first – Li is his family name, Quan is the given name – what we’d call a first name.

Jen: I’m not a *complete* China ignoramus, Ben. If those angles don’t work, do you have a “plan C”?

Ben: Call one of our contacts in Beijing or Shanghai. If nothing else, get Won Chi on the phone. Hey, there are only 1.2 billion people. How hard could it be to find one of them? That's why you get paid the big bucks.

(Jen exits)

ACT I, SCENE VII – UNDERGROUND HOUSE-CHURCH

Zhou Jin: Let us rise to sing. (Amazing Grace sung in Mandarin)

(As the singing starts, a commotion is heard in the back as armed men break in.)

Scarbrow: Bie dong!

Quan: Look down. Be still.

Scarbrow: Do not move. This is an illegal jiaotang! This gathering is not registered with the Religious Affairs Bureau. You meet in the night like the criminals you are. You have been distributing illegal foreign propaganda. You are cultists, devious and immoral. Do you think you are above the law? If you must worship foreign gods, there is a registered church! Criminals! We must crack down on all lawbreaking activities to safeguard social stability. Illegal churches are enemies of the state. We must kill the baby while it is still in the manger. You do not deserve to live! It is illegal to teach religion to children under eighteen! How dare you defy the law? Brainwashing children! You are a disgrace – traitors to the Republic. China is built on the backbone of hardworking citizens loyal to the superior socialist system. You are very bad people! Followers of Yesu are traitors. You make me sick.

(A man whispers to his wife.)

Scarbrow: Silence! Sit down, all of you!

For over fifty years we have fought the Western imperialists. We have forged ahead against our enemies and transformed the face of China. By assembling unlawfully you are subject to imprisonment. But what you

deserve is much worse! Yesu-followers surrender state secrets to foreign devils! (pointing at Quan's Bible) What is that? What is it?

Quan: It is...a message from God.

Scarbro: (*pulling a book from his pocket*) **This** is China's book—not your Western imperialist Bible! Our revered father, Mao Zedong said, “The Communist Party is the core of the Chinese people. Like sweeping the floor where the broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish of itself.” Today we come with brooms! With these brooms we will sweep away the dirt and filth that threatens China.

There are two sides to this room. Those loyal to the Party and its people must prove it by moving to the left side and out the door. In doing so, they will declare they do not believe in Yesu. They are free to go and will not be punished. Those who choose Yesu will step to the right side.

(One man moves to the left and out the door. Zhou Jin walks immediately to the right.)

Scarbro: In three minutes, we will shoot every man and woman – and child – who does not declare himself loyal to the people rather than the foreign devils.

(A man and an old woman move to the right.)

Ming: Will they really kill us?

Quan: I...think so.

(A man and his wife move to the left and out the door.)

ACT I, SCENE VIII – BEN'S OFFICE

Ben: Any luck on finding Li Quan?

Jen: I traced the last known address, and it went nowhere. Everybody I talked to said the same thing. There is no way I'd ever find your guy. I tried

to get a list of university professors? They say you probably couldn't get a list if you worked at the university!

Ben: So you didn't find him?

Jen: I've spent all day looking, so I'm entitled to draw out my story. Anyway, there are about as many Li Quans in Beijing as there are pushcarts, but I couldn't get any lists of professors. In Shenyang, I got someone at a university who spoke English. They said they knew a professor named Li Quan.

Ben: No kidding?

Jen: I asked for his description. He's an old man – not that your roommate wouldn't be an old man, but this one's in his seventies. How long ago was it you went to collage?

Ben: Very funny.

Jen: So I called Won Chi. When I told him I was looking for a particular Li Quan you knew twenty years ago, he actually laughed at me. But he has a friend who's a big shot at an Internet company in Shanghai. Based on the name and the name of the woman he *might* have married, they tried different angles and searched through the haystack. They got nothing.

Ben: Is this the end of your story, Jen? Because I do have someplace to be before I have to get up for work tomorrow. (*She hands him a piece of paper*) An e-mail address, you're kidding me, right?

Jen: It's registered to a Li Quan, wife Minghua, living a hundred and fifty miles west of Shanghai. Won Chi says it's probably not your guy, but if he is a professor, he'd likely be one of the fortunate with an e-mail address. Anyway, better chances than a lottery ticket.

Ben: Thanks.

Jen: That's all? It took me all day of unremitting toil just to find that e-mail address. You owe me.

Ben: I'll bring you back a silk scarf and some fortune cookies.

Jen: Thanks. You want me to e-mail and see if it's him?

Ben: I'll handle it.

ACT I, SCENE IX – UNDERGROUND HOUSE- CHURCH

Scarbrow: (*looking at his watch*) Two minutes.

Ming: We must not let Shen die.

Quan: He is Yesu's gift to us. No, he is not a gift, but a loan. God is his father. He will take care of him.

Ming: We must not lose our only son.

Quan: God lost his only son. He buried him in a foreign land.

Ming: I am willing to die, but I cannot bear to think of their killing Shen. Still...perhaps it is the Lord's mercy for us to die together.

Quan: I've always thought I might end like my father and great-grandfather...but not you, not Shen.

Ming: Are we not Zhu Yesu's also? Are we not his called and chosen? Why should we not walk the way he has chosen for you? Why should you be considered worthy and not us?

Quan: (*on one knee to Shen*) Do you understand what the captain is saying, Shen? (*Shen nods.*) Will you come with us and follow the Lord, Zhu Yesu? (*Shen nods again*)

(*They move to the right.*)

ACT I, SCENE X – BEN'S OFFICE

(Ben's working late, tie loosened, OFFICE NEARLY DARK BUT FOR HIS LAPTOP SCREEN)

Ben: Dear Professor Li Quan, I hope I have the right Li Quan. If not, I apologize – but then, you probably can't read English anyway, can you? If this is Harvard's Little Grasshopper, then hello from your old roommate. I know this is out of the blue (if you remember that expression), but I want to come visit you in China. I was wondering if I could stay with you, or if that's inconvenient, in a nearby hotel. I thought I could interview some locals, maybe show you some of my company's products, and get your feedback. A bit of a working vacation for me, I guess. Kind of a crazy idea, but thought I would ask. If I end up coming, I promise to bring my tennis racket and let you beat me. Dabizi, (otherwise known as Big Nose) Ben Fielding.

ACT I, SCENE XI – UNDERGROUND HOUSE-CHURCH

Scarbrow: Sixty seconds.

(Three more families, including three children, join Quan and the others. Five people stand in the middle of the room, starting to move one way and then the other.)

Scarbrow: If your life is more important than your loyalty to this foreign god, leave now! If you stay in the room, you choose to die. This is your final chance. Leave now or die!

(Of the five, a man and a woman leave while a man, woman, and teenage girl stay.)

Fu Chi (aka Scarbrow): Forgive us, brothers. I am Fu Chi. This is my only son, Fu Liko. We have come from the village of An Ning, across the mountain. We are, like you, followers of Yesu. God is doing mighty things among us. We have much to tell you. But we dared not put you at risk...or our brothers and families at home. Spies have betrayed two of our house churches. We had to drive away your infiltrators. Now you know who they are.

But you we salute. For you are the overcomers – more loyal to the King than to your own lives. (*He hugs Quan and Jin.*) We acted like the midwives in Egypt and Rahab in Jericho. They deceived, that lives might be saved. If we were wrong, forgive us. (*Kneeling to face Shen*) I especially request your forgiveness. You were very brave. We knew no other way.

Quan: We forgive you, brother. Now, tell us what God has done over the mountains. We have prayed many years for your people. What has happened?

Fu Chi: Something you will not believe. Sit down, brothers. Sit down, sisters. Prepare yourselves for something so wonderful that when you hear it your hearts will leap for joy!

ACT I, SCENE XII – BEN’S OFFICE **(Following morning)**

Ben is reading Li Quan’s return email.

(PLAY AUDIO RECORDING WITH LI QUAN SPEAKING)

Li Quan: Dear Dabizi, How wonderful to hear from my old friend! We will be most happy to have you stay with us. Will you be renting a car? It is at least a three-hour drive from Shanghai. Four hours or more if it is raining. Please tell us, when will you arrive? We will prepare a bed for you. We have no Frisbee, though I’m sure many Chinese companies have imitated them and sell them much cheaper! If it is not too much to ask, would you bring a copy of the book we used to study together? I will be glad to pay you what I can. An English version is all right, but if you know where to find a Mandarin book of that kind, it would be appreciated. Thank you. We are eager to have you in our home. Your brother, Li Quan.

Ben: (*rereading the e-mail*) Well, if he lives that close to Shanghai, I can visit our new factory without booking an extra flight. “Four hours or more if it is raining”, does that mean dirt roads? “The book we used to read

together”, he must mean the Bible. Why didn’t he just say so? “Your brother”.... what have I gotten myself into?

SONG: THESE SCARS—Li Quan

ACT I, SCENE XIII – THE HEAVENLY REALM

Nan Hu: I am very proud of him.

Tong: Yes. My boy showed courage.

Wen: He is a man now, with his own boy.

Tong: But he will always be my son – as I will always be yours.

Wen: This was not his day.

Nan Hu: But will that day still come for him, the day of martyrdom?

Manchu: There is One who knows. Only One.

END OF ACT I

ACT II, SCENE I – SHANGHAI FESTIVAL DANCE

(This scene will not have any spoken dialogue until the very end. The purpose of the beginning of this scene is to show the prosperous side of China—the only side the Chinese government wants the world to see. At the end of the dance, Ben meets with Won Chi to get a car to drive into the countryside.)

(PLAY VIDEOTAPED SCENE)

Won Chi: Ni hao, Ben Fielding!

Ben: Ni hao, Won Chi! How are you?

Chi: (*handing him a car key*) Not many Americans have license to drive in China. Ben Fielding very lucky.

Ben: Ben Fielding is lucky to have a friend like Won Chi. You're the one who cut through the red tape, or I'd still be stuck with a chauffeur! And on this trip that wouldn't work!

Chi: Do not forget. Foreigners cannot stay in Chinese home without registering stay at local PSB and receiving permission. I have called Pushan PSB and explained reason for your visit, but you must still register. Are you sure I cannot take you to dinner?

Ben: Thank you, but no. I'll just head over to the hotel, settle in, and get a good night's sleep. I'll see you at the ten o'clock meeting. Then I'm off to the Chinese countryside!

ACT II, SCENE II – LI QUAN'S HOME

(Ben arrives and finds a tiny, run-down house. Not what he expects for a university professor. The front door opens, a middle-aged man appears wearing plain, untailored, apparently homemade clothes. On the left side of his neck is a five-inch scar healed over but red and rough as if surgery had been done without proper sutures.)

Quan: Hello, Dabizi! (*Quan hugs Ben firmly yet politely, surprising Ben.....this is warm affection indeed from a Chinamen!*)

Ben: Still calling me Big Nose?

Quan: Welcome, my friend.

Ben: (*speaks in Mandarin, then English*) Nee ken chi lai hen hao. You look well, Li Quan. Surprised? I took some classes. And I've gotten practice on trips to China.

Quan: Ben Fielding has been to China before?

Ben: Yes, but not here. I've never been this far out.

Quan: Your Mandarin is...impressive!

Ben: Not as good as your English, and it never will be.

Quan: Welcome to the house of Li, Ben Fielding. This is my son, Shen. This is Ming, she who I am honored to call my wife. (*Both bow to Ben.*)

Ben: (*bowing back to them*) Ni hao.

Ming: We pleased to meet you. Very sorry Pam and children unable to come. Li Quan not say Ben Fielding speak Chinese.

Quan: Because Li Quan did not know! If my roommate Ben Fielding has become fluent in Mandarin, I wonder if Burger Magic back in Harvard now sells bai cai!

Ben: Bok choy? I don't think so. And I'm not that fluent, but at least nothing slips by me on the menus anymore. Speaking of which, I want to take you out to the best restaurant in Pushan.

Shen: Restaurant?

Ben: Yes, Li Shen. We will have quail eggs if you'd like. And what is your favorite dessert?

Shen: Bing xi lin.

Ben: Well, when we go to the restaurant you can have all the ice cream you want! (*To Quan*) Where's your favorite place to eat?

Quan: We seldom go to restaurants.

Ben: No? Well, we'll find a good place to eat – my treat.

Quan: You must be tired. Let me help with your bags.

(They enter the small house. It is tiny, Spartan, with few decorations. One notable exception is a large mahogany chair, beautifully handcrafted with embroidered velvety cushions on the seat, back, and arms. It is almost regal looking, entirely out of place in this modest home.)

Quan: Not large by American standards, but we have electricity. It works most of the time. We have two lamps. And we have a telephone and...new computer! Saved money for this two years. We got e-mail connection only a few days before you contacted us. Otherwise, you might never have found the right Li Quan. God wanted you to come here, I think.

Ben: Your other books are in your office? And how many books has my old friend written by now? I hope you'll sign one for me. You don't keep any at home? Don't be modest, Professor. Tell me, Ming, how many books has your husband written?

Quan: I will tell you such things soon enough.

Ben: You always loved books. What did you used to say? It was some proverb about books?

Quan: A book holds a house of gold.

Ben: Yeah, that was it. You had a proverb for everything.

Quan: I am Chinese. We think in pictures. We invented the proverb. But this you know, for you have studied our language. Here is your bed.

Ming: Sheets clean.

Ben: I hate to put you out. I'd be happy to stay at a hotel, so I won't be in your way.

Quan: You are not in our way. We have looked forward to having you. But we understand if a hotel would be better for you. There is one eight kilometers from here, if you prefer.

Ben: Oh no, this is fine for me. I was just thinking of you. I really appreciate your hospitality.

Ming: Xiexie.

Ben: Buyong xie.

Quan: Please sit down. (*Ben starts to sit in "special chair", Quan redirects*) Please sit here, my friend.

Ming: Now, please, tell us how Ben Fielding's family is.

Ben: Tamen hen hao. They are fine.

Quan: Your Pamela is well?

Ben: I spoke to her last week. She sends her greetings to both of you. (*Awkward silence*) I don't see Pam much anymore. We've been separated for a while.

Quan: I am sorry.

Ben: (*changing the subject*) I brought you a gift. (*He hands Quan a leather jacket.*)

Quan: I have not seen one like it, not even in the marketplace. Thank you, Ben Fielding.

Ben: You're most welcome, Little Grasshopper.

Ming: Little Grasshopper?

Quan: Nickname is hard to explain. Came from very strange American television program called Kung Fu.

Ben: (*hands Ming a leather jacket that is a little too big for her*) I'm sorry about the size. Maybe I could...

Ming: Bu – no, size very good.

Ben: And here's something for Li Shen. (*Hands him a box of new basketball shoes*)

Shen: Nike!

Quan: What do you say to Mr. Fielding, Shen?

Shen: Xiexie. Thank you very much.

Ben: You speak fine English. Your father is a good teacher, and you a good learner.

Ming: (*watching Shen jump around in his new shoes*) He is perhaps like his father. "Little Grasshopper!"

Ben: Maybe the shoes are a little big.

Quan: He will grow into them. My friend is most generous.

Ben: I also brought this. (*Pulls out a Frisbee and throws it to Quan*)

Quan: Frisbee! (*Frisbee is thrown a few times*)

Ming: You have children, Ben Fielding?

Ben: Two daughters. Melissa's ten. Kim's seven. And... (*he stops*)

Quan: Would you like to unpack?

Ben: Actually, I think I'd prefer to just keep things in my suitcase. That's what I usually do. Oh, I almost forgot. (*He pulls a black box out of his suitcase.*) I think this is what you asked for.

Quan: (*reverently holding the box*) Shengjing? (*Ming quickly pulls shut the frayed curtains and locks the door. Quan opens the box and takes out the Bible.*) Did they inventory this?

Ben: What?

Quan: At the airport, did they write down that you brought Shengjing with you?

Ben: No, this was checked luggage. They didn't even open it in customs.

Quan: Forgive me, my friend. You must be tired. We will be quiet now. We will go to bed early, so you may sleep. Tomorrow I am not working. I will show you Pushan.

Ben: That sounds great. Good night.

Quan: Good night.

(LIGHTS FADE IN ROOM, Ben is checking his email on laptop)

(PLAY AUDIO RECORDING WITH MARTIN SPEAKING)

Martin: Ben, hello, I got a disturbing phone call from Won Chi related to your friend Li Quan. It appears he's under suspicion. We don't know exactly... maybe for drug trafficking. At any rate, I'm having second thoughts about your being there. Well, if anything out of the ordinary starts to happen, keep your distance. I'll let you know if we find out more. Sorry I put you in an awkward situation. Perhaps it would be a good idea for you to come up with some reason to relocate. Anyway, keep in touch. Goodbye. Martin

ACT II, SCENE III – LI QUAN HOME **(The Next Morning)**

Ben: Remember how I used to kid you about your Chinese proverbs?

Quan: Very well.

Ben: One of my favorites was “Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend's forehead.”

Quan: Always wise advice. Very smart, these Chinese. And when you kept telling me there was no way I should expect to get an A in English, since it was my second language, I always said, “Those who say it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.”

Ben: That's a great business principle.

Quan: Chinese have been doing business for five thousand years. Americans have been at it for...three or four hundred? That's a big head start. But Americans have good sayings too. You say, "Don't bite the hand that feeds you." We say, "Do not cook your hunting dog." Li Quan is amazed at the changes in his old roommate.

Ben: What do you mean?

Quan: I listen to your beautiful Mandarin and I wonder if since I saw you last you have become like an egg – white on outside, yellow on inside. Like very large Chinese guy...with big nose.

Ben: You asked me last night about whether the Bible had been inventoried at the airport. What did you mean?

Quan: You are allowed to bring in a Bible for yourself. But if they inventory it, they can check you when you leave to be sure you take out one Bible for every one you bring in.

Ben: They really do that.

Quan: Not as often as they once did.

Ben: Is that why you hid the Bible I gave you?

Quan: It does not have the required government seal showing it came from a registered church. The moment you gave it to me it became an illegal Shengjing. In China, every honest man has hiding place.

Ben: guess I didn't realize...

Quan: When my father was taken to jail, his Bible was confiscated and destroyed. Besides his, there was only one other Shengjing in the church. The owner, Lin Chang, tore out all sixty-six books and entrusted a few to each church member. Usually the pastor would have one or two of them bring the needed book so as not to endanger the entire Shengjing. But once a year he would have all of them bring their Scriptures. My mother had been given the book of Romans. One weekend she was very sick. Mother

said, “I must go to church. If I do not go, part of God’s Word will be missing.” But she was so sick. Finally she handed me the book of Romans. She said, “Take it; guard it – nothing is more precious.”

Ben: You took it to church?

Quan: Yes. I felt in awe of being entrusted with something so important. Yet in school I was taught that there was no God, that the old Christians were fools. The older I got, the more skeptical I became. As a teenager I was immersed in the Red Guard of Communist youth. I rejected my parents’ faith. Now Shengjing is as precious to me as it was to them.

Ben: I need to ask you something, Quan. Okay, I know once there was plenty of persecution. I understand why you don’t trust the government. But do you think you’re...reading into things a bit because of the past? On one of my trips they gave us a tour of the Religious Affairs Bureau. The bureau offered to take us to a church service in Shanghai. I went. They introduced us to the pastor. He talked to us freely. They worship openly. I heard them sing. They had Bibles. They were even selling Bibles at the church!

Quan: They submit to restrictions many of us cannot accept.

Ben: But I’ve heard of areas where even the unregistered churches aren’t harassed that much.

Quan: I know of villages and cities where no Christians are in jail. But in other cities dozens of Christians are in jail. Often they’re beaten and humiliated. If someone says to you, “Religious freedom in China is like this,” don’t believe him. That is like saying, “The weather in America is like this – always sunny or always snowing.” It depends on what part of the country you are in, and what season.

In China the sun is always shining somewhere. Somewhere else the snow is falling. But the government is capable of magic – they can take you to places where it is usually snowing and show you a glimpse of sunlight so that you can go back and say there is no snow in China. You can write your column or say from your pulpit that you saw no persecution, only freedom. You are telling the truth – but a truth that misleads.

Ben: But they actually showed us Bibles printed by the government. I saw them with my own eyes.

Quan: Yes, it is true. Bibles can be bought at such churches. But eighty percent of all Chinese Christians are in house churches. There are not nearly enough Bibles even for those in registered churches, much less house churches.

Ben: I've heard repeatedly that people exaggerate about persecution in China. Aren't things getting better all the time?

Quan: You, Ben Fielding, are a man of great faith.

Ben: What do you mean?

Quan: I wish you were as quick to believe Yesu's truth, as you are the Party's propaganda.

Ben: I'm not that gullible – and I don't appreciate your implying I am. Remember, I've been around the block a few times here.

Quan: You are a businessman, Ben. Business is extremely important to the new China. To gain trading status with the West, our leaders had to make China appear not to violate human rights. But meanwhile, the government-run newspapers call for stronger control over religious affairs, as if this were the cry of the people, not the Party. Many Christians are arrested. But they do not want the world to believe this. So they take businessmen like you and political leaders and even religious leaders on tours to prove we are free. Then you go back and reassure everyone in your country.

Ben: You're saying they're using us?

Quan: *Of course* they are using you. They use anyone to accomplish their purposes. China wants your business. You want China's business. Their job is to make China look attractive. Your job is to accept the picture they paint, not to question it. That way you can sell your semiconductors and computer chips. They are happy. You are happy. They get rich. You get rich. Everyone believes what he wants to.

(Shen enters)

Shen: Baba, come, Frisbee play.

(MUSIC INTERLUDE WHILE FRISBEE IS PLAYED)

ACT II, SCENE IV – OUTSIDE LI QUAN HOME

Ben: Do you recall our first night in the dorm? I asked you what kind of school you went to in China. Remember what you said?

Quan: A Party school. You said, “I didn’t think China had party schools.” And I said, “Oh yes, we have many.”

Ben: Then I said, “America is full of party schools. Even Harvard is a party school.” I’ll never forget the look on your face. You said, “This is a Communist school?”

Quan: I didn’t realize Americans meant something very different when they said “party school”. Of course, some of our professors were Communists. The Party would have been pleased with their teaching. Needless to say, none of them had actually lived under Communism!

Ben: What is your first class that you teach tomorrow?

Quan: *(Pause)* I do not teach.

Ben: What are you telling me, Quan? You said you taught at the university!

Quan: *(Gives Shen Frisbee, Shen exits)* No, I never said that. Not twenty years ago and not since you e-mailed me. You assumed it. Every time you mentioned it I wanted to correct you. But the timing was never good. And perhaps...I was ashamed.

Ben: What happened? How did you lose your job?

Quan: You must first have a job before you can lose it.

Ben: What do you do?

Quan: I am...a locksmith's assistant.

Ben: Quan, what's going on? When you left Harvard, the job was all lined up in Beijing, right? What happened?

Quan: When I returned to China, I knew the fact I'd become a Christian would make it difficult to advance as a professor. I knew I would never be allowed to be a department head or a college president. But I thought they would be so impressed with my credentials they would overlook my faith and let me teach.

Ben: So what happened at your job interview?

Quan: They were excited to have me teach history. The interview was just a formality – they said so. But then they looked at my file, saw my father was a pastor with a long police record. They asked if I was still an atheist. I told them no, that I had become a Christian. At that moment I knew it was over. I would not be allowed to teach.

Ben: Just because you were a Christian?

Quan: For them, that was reason enough. “The minds of the young must not be poisoned by foreign beliefs”. That is what they think. That is what they have been taught.

Ben: Well, I can see why they want to preserve their culture and not have it westernized by Christianity, but...

Quan: **Westernized** by Christianity? You sound like them, Ben Fielding! You should know better. Christianity is not Western. Communism is far more foreign to China than Christianity! You do not know Chinese history? The church in China goes back at least thirteen hundred years. The church is one of the oldest institutions in all China.

Ben: Quan, look, I didn't mean to offend you.

Quan: I am only explaining why they would not let me teach.

Ben: What did you do?

Quan: What I had to do. Find a job to feed my family. I worked a few years in a tool shop. My employer kept a file on me. One day a man was weeping because his son was dying. I put my arm around him and told him about Yesu. The man became a Christian. He came back the next day and thanked me. My boss overheard him. He was very angry, and he wrote notes about me in a file. The file grew larger and larger.

Ben: The file was for PSB?

Quan: Sometimes police ask employers for files. Coming from America, I'm sure you cannot imagine that an employer would keep a file on an employee to keep track of words and actions that come from his Christian beliefs. To an American Christian, it is unthinkable to conceive of a society in which Christians are told that if they say certain things in the workplace, if they say what is politically unpopular, they could actually lose their jobs? But in a communist country such things happen. Can you believe such things happen, Ben Fielding?

Ben: Well...uh....yeah, I guess that is pretty hard to believe. But couldn't you have gotten a job teaching if you'd exercised a little more....discretion about your faith?

Quan: Discretion? Don't you mean denial? China is my place of service. It is the battlefield where Li Quan has been dispatched as Yesu's soldier. Do you remember the history course we took together?

Ben: Vaguely. What was that prof's name?

Quan: Dr. Franklin. For two weeks we studied Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement.

Ben: Of course, you loved King. Put his picture up in our room. You did a term paper on him, right? Got an A plus, no doubt. "Business as usual" for the Professor.....oh, sorry.

Quan: You can still call me professor. I do not mind. And I still have that paper. (*Moves indoors to find*) I also have a quote from it which I have kept all these years.

Dr. Martin Luther King said, “If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare composed poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, ‘Here lived a great street sweeper, who did his job well.’”

My father was a pastor but he was not paid for that, he made his living doing something else, something I never told you in college...something I did not want you to know.

Ben: What?

Quan: It was the best job a pastor could get, Li Quan’s father, Li Tong, did his job well. He was the greatest street sweeper that ever lived.

(IN THE HEAVENLY REALM)

Jesus: Yes, Li Tong. You did your job very well.

ACT II, SCENE V – WON CHI’S OFFICE

(PLAY VIDEORECORDING OF THIS SCENE)

Ben: I can’t wait to see that factory. Call me as soon as you’re ready to take me on the tour.

Chi: We want everything smooth before Mr. Ben Fielding visits. Should be no more than week. I will call. Is car running well?

Ben: Yeah. Great.

Chi: How much longer be needing it?

Ben: Well, you know, we said six weeks or so, give or take. Why? You need it back?

Chi: We have other cars. Only curious how long you will stay at friend's home.

Ben: Do you know Li Quan? He's out in the waiting area. I'm sorry. I should have brought him in with me.

Chi: No need to meet him, thank you.

Ben: Is something wrong?

Chi: No, nothing wrong. Only small phone call from government official. Inquiring what you are doing at this person's home near Pushan.

Ben: What did you tell him?

Chi: Told him Mr. Getz's idea. Get to know Chinese. He asked if I knew your college roommate. Said I had never met him – best to keep it that way.

Ben: How did he know Quan was my roommate?

Chi: Did not ask.

Ben: What was the point of the call?

Chi: Routine security, perhaps. But...

Ben: Yes?

Chi: Your friend has had problems with PSB before. Under suspicion.

Ben: For what?

Chi: Perhaps...drugs?

Ben: Quan? Look, Martin mentioned this to me; Chi. And I assured him this is unfounded. Quan's a good man. Okay, he and his wife and little boy are Christians, but he's not forcing it on anyone.

Chi: Didn't you say he has a computer in his home?

Ben: Yeah, he does. You helped find his e-mail address, remember?

Chi: Where did he get it? How does a locksmith's assistant afford a computer?

Ben: Well, I don't know, but it's not like he's living high on the hog. (*Chi has blank look*) I mean he's not wealthy, not by any stretch of the imagination. Okay, I guess you'd expect a locksmith's assistant to be even poorer, but still...I'm sure these accusations aren't true.

Chi: Perhaps if you see any problem with your friend you could let me know?

Ben: Why?

Chi: Chi told PSB I would keep eyes open. They help us out. We try to help them when we can. Good for business.

Ben: Quan's my friend. There's no way I can-

Chi: I understand. But for friend's sake, Mr. Ben Fielding may wish to encourage him to stay out of trouble.

Ben: Of course. I'm sure he will.

ACT II, SCENE VI – IN THE HEAVENLY REALM

Nan Hu: (*Looking at specific point in the distance*) Do you see this woman? She was taken as a slave in Sudan? Her husband was slain, her children enslaved. She has been beaten and mutilated. They tried to force her conversion to Islam. Watch how her appointed warrior stands by her, even though she does not see him.

Manchu: Have you been yet to the great Hall of Reward? There is one there who records not the suffering of saints, but their every act of kindness, every cup of cold water, every financial gift, every prayer uttered on behalf of the suffering.

Nan Hu: I have heard of this, of course, but have not yet been there. There are so many people to talk with, so many places to go, so many things to see! I have thought that perhaps Li Quan and I might go there together.

Manchu: There are many records and the King reads all of the reports. But He gives His closest attention to the reports of all His suffering children, every day, every moment.

Nan Hu: But he sees everything already and cannot forget what he sees. Why does he have them written in books?

Manchu: Perhaps so that we whose minds are finite will also never forget.

ACT II, SCENE VII – LI QUAN’S HOME **(Tai Hong Visit)**

(There is a man with his wife and teenage daughter who have just finished supper with the Li family. Ming has Quan’s Bible in her hands, preparing to read. Ben has excused himself and is sitting at his bed looking over some papers. Suddenly, there is an urgent pounding on the front door. Ming smoothly slides under the bed and reemerges an instant later without Shengjing. Quan gets up and opens the front door when three men push past him into the room.)

Quan: What brings the deputy chief of PSB to visit our humble home?

Tai Hong: We were in the area. We thought we would pay our respects. What is going on here? Why have you gathered?

Quan: We have just finished supper and were discussing the harvest.

Hong: Discussing the harvest? This is what you were doing?

Quan: Yes. We anticipate a large harvest.

Hong: You are not farmers.

Quan: Harvest is a subject of interest to us all. We must eat to live, and we must labor to produce food. Tai Hong needs food to eat, does he not?

Hong: I have plenty of food. I need none of yours. I will visit again, Li. Perhaps when your American friend has left. Perhaps before. Next time I may see you at my place.

(Hong & Men exit)

Ben: Well, that was a pleasant social call.

Quan: Yes. The weasel has come to say hello to the chickens.

Ben: *(Watches from doorway as PSB leave, he turns back, Bible study has resumed)* So how many people in house churches have Bibles anyway?

Quan: Often there are some Bibles, usually not many. Some say there are five or ten thousand more new Christians in China every day. There are more new Christians than new Bibles. No matter how many Bibles come in, it is never enough.

Ben: *(Guiltily)* I probably have three on my bookshelf at home.

Quan: Chinese proverb: “Distant water no help to put out fire close at hand.” There are those here who would gladly go without food for weeks in exchange for the spiritual food sitting on your shelf. In a country of more than a billion, even ten million Bibles would be only a drop in the bucket.

Ben: It would take a lot of money to provide that many Bibles.

Quan: Hudson Taylor said, “God’s work done in God’s way never lacks God’s supply”.

Ben: Who’s Hudson Taylor?

Quan: You have never heard of Hudson Taylor?

Ben: Was he one of Elizabeth Taylor’s husbands?

Quan: Who is Elizabeth Taylor?

Ben: You've never heard of Elizabeth Taylor?

Quan: Hudson Taylor was the founder of China Inland Mission. He led to Yesu my great-grandfather Manchu when he was a boy. But I am also ignorant—I do not know this Elizabeth Taylor. Was she also a great missionary?

Ben: Not exactly.

(IN THE HEAVENLY REALM)

Wen: I do not deserve to have my name on this wall, with you and the other martyrs.

Manchu: Yet here is the name of Li Wen. Does not the Builder of the wall, who inscribes the names, know who belongs upon it?

Wen: I did not die for my Lord like the two of you.

Nan Hu: There are different ways of dying. You died to a normal life. You died daily in the service of Yesu. You witnessed the deaths of your father and mother. What could be harder?

Tong: And many years later, when your son died, you cared for his wife and children. When my work was done, yours continued. Martyrs are not only those who die, but all faithful witnesses who suffer for the Name.

Nan Hu: Was it easier for you to see mother and father and son die than to die yourself? No. It was much harder. Zhu Yesu knows sometimes the families of martyrs deserve as much reward as the martyrs themselves. And that is why names of wives and husbands and fathers and mothers and sons and daughters and sisters and brothers of martyrs are often written on this wall as well.

Tong: Besides my mother, I respected my father more than anyone I ever knew.

Manchu: And I respected my son more than any man.

Wen: I wonder if our line of martyrs ends with you, or if Li Quan will follow, or maybe Li Shen?

Manchu: We shall see. Perhaps one of them will be the last martyr.

(OUTSIDE HOUSE)

(This scene has video but it begins and ends on stage)

Ben: Tell me about your father's imprisonment. I mean, if you feel up to it.

Quan: I am honored you would ask.

(VIDEO BEGINS)

My father first went to jail in the early days of People's Republic. He was imprisoned again in the sixties during the Cultural Revolution. I was eight when Li Tong went to jail for the last time. I was permitted to visit him a few times a year, though they would not let me touch him. But by the time I was twelve my heart had turned away from him. I was a proud little Communist, and I refused to visit my shameful father anymore. Then when I was fifteen, my mother forced me to visit him in prison.

Ben: What was that like?

Quan: The man I saw did not look like my father. His face was like a pale, twisted mask. But I could recognize his eyes. The last thing he said to me that day was, "Zhen jin bu ba huo lian".

Ben: "Real gold fears no fire".

Quan: And he added, “One day you will die. You must spend your life preparing for that day.” I have often asked myself, “Is this the day”?

Ben: How long was your father in prison?

Quan: Nine years in “reeducation”. It is a good name for a bad thing.

Ben: How was he arrested?

Quan: One day without warning the PSB invaded our house. They took all Mother’s pictures and Father’s books. He had twelve of them – a large library. They carried the confiscated articles into the courtyard and piled them up. They took off my father’s shirt. A young girl, perhaps fifteen, walked up to my father. Without a word, she slapped Father across the face. My mother rose to defend him. I did nothing. A young man pushed Mama down. Still I did nothing. She wept as she saw the blood coming from the side of my father’s mouth. I did not weep. I was angry with him.

Ben: What happened?

Quan: I do not remember what I saw, perhaps because my eyes looked at the ground. What I remember is the smell of our few family photographs burning, and the sound of my father’s flesh being hit by heavy shoes and sticks. I remember them shouting and swearing. I remember silence when Father was unconscious and Mother so frightened, shaking on the ground. What I remember most is that I did nothing.

(END OF VIDEO)

Ben: You were only a child. It must have been hard on you.

Quan: Yes, that is what I always thought about. But I never thought about how hard it was on Baba and Mama - only on me. I was a very selfish son. Many times I have asked my father’s forgiveness. I wish he would have been able to hear me?

(THE HEAVENLY REALM)

Jesus: I have heard you, my son.

Tong: I also have heard you, my son.

(Back in house)

(There is a loud banging on the door.)

Ming: *(looking out the window)* It is PSB! *(Quan opens door, a young officer walks into the room)*

Man: Police chief asks to speak with you.

Ben: Do you have written authority to take him? What is your name, Officer?

Quan: You are not here on behalf of the deputy chief, Tai Hong?

Man: No. Chief Lin Shan has sent this request.

Quan: The chief of police does not ask, he commands. What do you mean he requests me to come speak with him?

Man: He sent me himself. He is my uncle. He said to ask you, but not to force you. The decision is yours.

Ben: What does he want?

Quan: I will come to him. Now?

Man: That is his request.

Ben: Then I'm coming too.

Man: No!

Quan: I wish my friend to accompany us. *(The officer nods and goes out the door. Quan hugs Ming and Shen. Ming reaches under the bed and gives Quan a small duffel bag. Quan and Ben walk out the door.)*

Shen: Will we ever see him again, Mama?

Ming: We will pray for Yesu to bring him back to us soon. *(They kneel together at the chair.)*

ACT II, SCENE VIII – POLICE CHIEF’S HOME (The Miracle)

(They enter a bedroom where a young girl is laying in the bed. Her parents, the chief of police and his wife sit in chairs next to the bed.)

Man: He insisted this American come with him.

Lin Shan: Leave us! *(He rises to shut the door.) (To Quan)* My daughter, Lin Bo. She very sick. In hospital two months. Worse and worse. Asked to come home. Many doctors visit. Say she is dying. Say there is...no hope.

Quan: I am very sorry for you, but why have you asked me here?

Shan: For many years, my men have arrested house church Christians. High-ranking Party members have given me instructions, and in turn I have given orders to my men. You have been arrested by my PSB, I am told. Three times?

Quan: Five. I have been beaten while in three of your jails, tortured twice.

Shan: We understand each other, I think. We are enemies, perhaps. We both do what we think necessary. Do you remember when I visited your cell and saw you inside?

Quan: Yes. I remember. Two years ago.

Shan: I asked why you, an educated man, believed this nonsense, these things about a foreign God. You said you believed in a Christ who came from heaven, who died and rose from the dead. You said he defeated death. You said he brought people back from the dead and healed the sick. Then you said to me what I have not forgotten. You said you have seen miracles. You have seen the dying healed. Do you remember saying this?

Quan: Yes, I remember.

Shan: I am an old man, older than my years. I have believed in nothing but the Party and the Republic. I do not know if I believe any longer even in them. I act on the outside as if I still believe. But inside, my faith is dead. I asked you here because there is no more hope for this father who loves his little Bo. She has not had strength even to raise her head from pillow. She has no will to eat. We are out of hope. If you know a God who heals, please, I beg you, tell him to heal her.

Quan: I do not tell my God to do anything. He is the one who tells. He is the master; I am but the servant. Li Quan is not a healer. But this much I know – My God, Yesu Jidu, has the power to heal, and should he will it, he can heal without difficulty. I do not know his desire. But I will ask him to heal Lin Bo. (*Lays hands on girl's head, prays...*) I ask this in the name of Yesu. Amen.

(*Parents say, "Amen"*)

It is all I can do, but I ask you to talk to your daughter about Yesu, even if you are not sure she can hear you. And I have brought you a gift. (*Pulls a "Jesus" video from his duffel bag. Ben tries to stop him.*) No, it's alright. (*Gives to parents*) This is the story of Yesu. He speaks Chinese. Perhaps you can watch it. Your daughter might also hear the words. (*Parents say, "Xiexie"*) Our church will pray for your daughter. We will pray for you, Lin Bo.

(*LIGHTS DOWN ON FAMILY, SPOTLIGHT FOLLOWS BEN AND QUAN AS THEY EXIT*)

Ben: Do you think that was smart? Aren't you just asking for trouble?

Quan: I am already in trouble. I have been in trouble many years. I was in trouble before you came and will be in trouble after you leave. If I chose the path of least trouble, I would not follow Yesu.

Ben: And when the girl dies?

Quan: Life and death are not in our power.

Ben: But will the chief blame you for her death?

Quan: Perhaps.

(LIGHTS DOWN)

ACT II, SCENE IX – LI QUAN’S HOME **(Next Morning)**

(Back in Li home, there is a knock at the door. Quan opens the door and Shan walks in followed by his wife and then...his daughter)

Ben: Lin Bo? You’re alive?

Bo: I greet you and I thank you.

Quan: Welcome, Lin Bo.

Wife: (to Ming) I am Chaoxing.

Ming: Minghua.

Shan: Will you tell us how we can know Zhu Yesu?

Quan: *(taking his mother’s handwritten Bible which Ming has retrieved from it’s hiding place) (Ad lib, turning pages)* All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.....The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord..... If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Chao: I confess Yesu is Zhu!

Bo: I confess Yesu is Zhu! I saw Zhu Yesu in the movie you gave us.

Shan: Chaoxing and I watched it downstairs right after you left then went to bed. Sometime in the night, Bo awoke and went downstairs to get something to eat. She startled the maid in the kitchen. When the maid screamed, we rushed to the kitchen and saw Bo eating some fruit. We watched the movie twice more with her. I, too, wish to follow Yesu.

Quan: Yesu, worker of miracles, do the greatest miracle of all in these hearts – do in them a miracle of your grace!

(Ming hugs Bo. Bo nods to Quan and shakes his hand. She hugs Shen and then looks at Ben. He reaches out his hand, touches her, convincing himself this is not a dream)

(Simultaneously a celebration breaks out in Heaven)

(PARTY IN THE HEAVENLY REALM)

(Unrestrained celebration in Heaven, filled with joy, singing, and laughter.)

Tong: Three more sinners have repented. The house of Lin of Pushan, in the home of Li Quan the locksmith, has become part of the King's family!

(Scene as described in novel: A great cheer erupts from saints and angels as well, but no one smiles broader than one small woman with big dimples and a shy, cheery face. She marveled to hear she had appeared in a seeker's dreams. She puts her arms around the One next to her. He runs His fingers through her hair and gently kisses her head. She takes his hand to her lips and gazes into the eyes of the One who was the secret of her smile.)

(BACK IN LI QUAN HOME)

Shan: We must tell you something. Perhaps I should have told you when you were in my home. Before I called you, my wife had a dream. She said she saw a man lay hands upon our daughter and pray for her. I had seen you once in jail, but she never had. When you came into Bo's room, she whispered to me, "That is the man in my dream."

Chao: The moment you walked in, I knew it was you. The American was not in my dream, but you were. When I saw you, I believed my daughter would be healed. You were the messenger of a God I did not know. But now I know him. And I will gladly serve the God who has given me back my daughter.

Quan: The path you choose is not an easy one. Shengjing says that those who live godly in Jidu Yesu will suffer persecution.

Chao: I tell you now of another dream I have often had since I was a little girl, growing up in the home of vice chairman of Communist Party. I dreamed of a peasant woman with a great smile, who sat under candlelight with an empty chair beside her. She wrote out words in a big black book.

(Ming gets the book and hands it to Quan)

I dreamed that she gave me that book, and in it I would discover great secrets, including the secret of her smile. I have wondered sometimes if that book would be Shengjing.

Quan: My mother had just such a smile and this is my mother's Shengjing.

Shan: We are honored, Li Quan. We will take your mother's book tonight.

Chao: *(steps forward, away from group, cradling Bible)* I now have my own Shengjing! Thank you, Jesu.

SONG: "I Commend My Soul"—Chaoxing

(OUTSIDE HOUSE)

Quan: What is troubling you, my friend?

Ben: Do you ever have any second thoughts about coming back to China?

Quan: First, I have a question of my own for my old friend. What happened to you, Ben Fielding?

Ben: What do you mean?

Quan: What happened to make you lose your first love for Yesu?

Ben: Who appointed you my judge?

Quan: If Li Quan is wrong, correct him.

Ben: (*pause*) I had another child, a son. His name was Jason, our youngest child. One day I was watching him by the pool. The phone rang...someone from the office. I stepped inside for just a few seconds. When I looked back, he was underwater. I tried to revive him, but...

Quan: I am so sorry, Ben Fielding.

Ben: What kind of God looks the other way when a child drowns?

Quan: What makes you believe God looked the other way?

Ben: Weren't you listening? My son died! And this God of yours let it happen.

Quan: Yes, he did. But he loves your son. And you.

Ben: Isn't that a little smug, a little naïve?

Quan: I know something of suffering, Ben Fielding. I have learned God is not my servant. Did you think he was like the story of Aladdin? That he was your genie? That he is safe and tame, at your call to do tricks to entertain you? That is an American way to think, perhaps. But it is not true to Shengjing. You cannot rub a magic lamp and command God to do your will. You accepted blessing from his hand, and still you do – yet you reject him because of adversity?

Ben: He killed my only son!

Quan: He killed his only Son so that you and your family might live...so that your son and you would go not to the hell you deserve, but to the heaven you do not deserve. Instead of despising God because he does not follow your instructions, you should fall on your knees and praise him for his grace to you.

I am sorry for your suffering, Ben Fielding. I weep for your loss. But do not blame the one who gives you your every breath, who offers you grace beyond measure. He is the Creator; we are but creatures. We are accountable to him – he is not accountable to us.

Ben: Explain this to me, would you? God saved the daughter of Lin Shan, a man who persecuted Christians, because he asked for a miracle. But when I found my son in the water and asked God to save him, he was silent. He did nothing to help Jason. Where was a miracle when I needed one?

Quan: I cannot speak for God, nor does he need me to. Miracles are unusual or they would not be miracles. A dying girl is suddenly healed. That is a miracle. I have also seen children die in their mother's arms. Never believe a man who says God no longer does miracles, Ben. Never believe a man who says God must do a miracle the way a man wants him to. God is God.

Ben: I'll never forgive him for taking Jason.

Quan: God does not need your forgiveness. It is you who need his.

Ben: I'm still angry with him.

Quan: You do not have reason to be angry with him. He has reason to be angry with you.

Ben: You still have Shen and Ming. I don't have Jason.

Quan: You do have Melissa and Kim and Pam. Quan and Ming would give everything we own for the opportunity to have another child. But we cannot. *China's one child policy is very cruel.* Do not take your children lightly, Ben Fielding.

Ben: Who says I take them lightly? I provide a beautiful house for the kids and all of the latest clothes. I'll pay their way through college. One day I guess I'll leave them a big inheritance.

Quan: In China we have different words for inheritance and heritage. Even a bad father can leave an inheritance. Only a good father can leave a heritage.

Ben: I have no room for a God who lets children die.

Quan: Who is Ben Fielding to have no room for God?

Ben: None of this justifies the suffering.

Quan: Does my old roommate imagine that Yesu is a stranger to suffering? He wept for the sisters of Lazarus. He sweat great drops of blood in the garden. On that hill he took upon himself the anguish of all men. He was despised by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with grief. Even now when his people are persecuted, he feels their suffering. Ben Fielding has not suffered first, nor has he suffered most. As for the God you have no room for, who knows better than he what it is like to lose his only Son?

LIGHTS OUT

(MUSIC INTERLUDE)

ACT II, SCENE X – LI QUAN HOME **(Arrest of Li Quan)**

Ben: *(packing suitcase)* I cannot believe how fast the past few weeks have flown by.

Quan: I am sorry my old friend must leave tomorrow.

Ben: I've taken advantage of your hospitality too long. Next time I'm in Shanghai, I'll come out for a visit. I promise. Hey, there have been no raids of churches; perhaps a new era of freedom has come.

(Suddenly, three PSB officers, one of them armed with a rifle, breaks through the door. Ben and Quan stand still with the rifle pointed at them. Ming and Shen are huddled in a corner. The men empty drawers onto the floor. They then overturn the beds and find the hiding place. One empties the bag and three Bibles fall out. He checks for the red seal of a legal Bible. There is none.)

Guard: Li Quan is under arrest.

Ben: What are the charges?

Guard: *(reading from a piece of paper)* The charges are: Possession of illegal literature, Distribution of illegal propaganda, Participation in illegal religious meetings, Leading illegal religious meetings, Illegal religious instruction to a child under eighteen, Undue association with foreign influences. Tai Hong says there may be other charges too.

Ben: Tai Hong? What happened to Lin Shan?

Guard: He has moved away.

Ben: Why?

Guard: Sudden transfer.

Quan: I go peacefully. Perhaps Yesu will give me the opportunity to speak to Tai Hong about Him.

Guard: Tai Hong says to tell Li Quan he is eager to see him at his place. He instructed me to give you this greeting from him. *(He hits Quan behind the knee with a baton. Quan falls.)*

Ming: NO! NO! YESU, HELP HIM!

(An officer rushes toward Ming but stumbles somehow over the chair. He kicks the chair but hurts his foot in the process. Ben rushes toward him but stops when the officer raises his baton at Ming.)

Guard: If big-shot American takes one more step, he will find out his passport will do no good.

(Men drag Quan toward door, Ming tries to give him the prepackaged duffel bag, guard pushes her away, exits)

Ben: Are you two hurt at all? *(Ming checks Shen over then shakes her head no)* I can't believe this is happening.

Ming: It has happened before.

Ben: He told the police chief he'd been in jail five times.

Ming: In Pushan. Two or three other times also. Zhou Jin in jail many more times. He calls it "seminary". Once there twelve years.

Ben: How long do you think they will hold Quan?

Ming: Do not know. Few days, sometimes weeks. Longest time for Quan eight months.

Ben: Quan was in jail *eight months!* Why didn't he tell me?

Ming: Not easy to talk about. Does not wish to...draw attention to self.

Ben: What are you going to do now?

Ming: Minghua and Li Shen will pray for Li Quan.

Ben: You do that but I feel like I need to do more.

Ming: What could you do that is more than prayer?

Ben: You'll see. I'm not leaving until I get Quan out of jail.

(THE HEAVENLY REALM)

Tong: Perhaps now it begins.

Nan Hu: The threads are being woven together. The tapestry takes shape. Yet what the Weaver's final product will be, we cannot yet know.

Wen: At least now we can see the topside of the tapestry. They can only see its underside.

*****15 MINUTE INTERMISSION*****

**ACT III, SCENE I – EXTERIOR OF LI HOME
(Cell Phone Calls)**

Ben: You sound groggy, Joanna.

Joanna: Ben? It's 4:07 in the morning. What's going on?

Ben: Sorry. Guess I miscalculated the time difference.

Joanna: Where are you?

Ben: China.

Joanna: Weren't you flying in yesterday?

Ben: My friend Li Quan was arrested. The PSB barged in, pushed him around, and dragged him off. The new chief of police is harassing him.

Joanna: What are the charges?

Ben: Several, but they all relate to illegal religious activities.

Joanna: Is it true?

Ben: Well, yeah, some of it.

Joanna: You break the law in China and you'd better be prepared to face the consequences.

Ben: Look, Jo, there hasn't been a hearing. I've made calls all over. They won't even tell his family where he is. I need some legal help here. I've got to get Quan out. I've already put a call in to Liao's. You know them?

Joanna: Of course I do. They're the top law firm in Shanghai.

Ben: I dropped Getz's name and went right to a senior partner. I told him we need help with someone accused of a crime and, as far as we could tell, being held without due process or bail or anything. That was yesterday, and I still haven't heard back.

Joanna: I'm not surprised.

Ben: Why?

Joanna: Look, Ben, we need to talk. Are you flying home tomorrow?

Ben: No way. I told Martin it was a crisis. These people have put me up six weeks. I can't bail out on them until this situation's under control.

Joanna: Okay. Let me know what Liao's has to say. Meanwhile, I'll check around on this end, see what I can figure out. I know some Chinese business law; such as it is, but criminal law is out of my league. I have to find out what their due process is, prisoner's status and rights, all that.

Ben: Thanks, Jo.

Joanna: Sure, but next time, could you wait just a couple more hours to call?
Bye.

(Ben redials)

Ben: Martin, it's Ben.

Martin: What's the matter? Did your flight get delayed?

Ben: You can say that. My friend Quan has been arrested and taken to jail!

Martin: You're not in jail with him, are you?

Ben: No! That's the problem! The officials around here don't seem to know where he is nor do they seem to care.

Martin: Ben, I want you on the next flight out of China! No, wait! I'm sending my private jet!

Ben: Martin there is no way that I'm leaving before I get Quan out of jail!

Martin: Ben, I don't need to tell you how important it is to your career that Getz does not get involved in this affair.

Ben: You know Martin; I've got plenty of vacation time saved up. I think I'll use some of it to see the sights of China. I'll send you a postcard.

Martin: BEN!!!!!!!!!!

(Ben redials)

Ben: Hi Pam, it's Ben!

Pam: Ben, what is it? Where are you?

Ben: I'm still in China. Quan has been arrested by the PSB.

Pam: What are you going to do?

Ben: I'm going to get him out. That's what I'm going to do!

Pam: How will you do that?

Ben: I don't know just yet, but I need to ask a favor of you.

Pam: What?

Ben: Try and explain this to the kids and...pray for me.

Pam: You're asking me to pray for you?

Ben: I need all of the help that I can get.

Pam: Of course, Ben, I'll continue praying for you. We all will! Ben, I love you. Be careful!

Ben: I...will. Bye.

(Kimmy & Melissa join their mother. Ad lib.—“Who was that?” “What’s going on?” Just a minute girls”, Pam dials phone)

Pam: Doug, hello. You'll never guess who just called from China and asked for prayer!

SONG: “HE’S NOT ON HIS KNEES YET”—DOUG

ACT III, SCENE II – EXTERIOR OF HOME

(Ming exits house bringing tea to Ben)

Ming: How is your Pam?

Ben: OH, she is fine. *(pause)* You're missing Quan a lot, aren't you?

Ming: Yes, Shen also.

Ben: You and Quan seem very much in love.

Ming: *(blushing)* Yes...very much.

Ben: Pam and I were in love too, once. It seems like a long time ago.

Ming: Quan knew you both in college. He does not understand why you would separate.

Ben: Something...happened.

Ming: The death of your son?

Ben: Yes, I didn't know if Quan told you or not.

Ming: There are no secrets between Li Quan and Minghua.

Ben: Then you know that Pam blames me for Jason's death.

Ming: No, Quan did not tell Ming. Did Pam tell Ben Fielding this?

Ben: She didn't have to. I could see it in her eyes every time that I looked at her.

Ming: When Minghua looks in mirror, she no see herself. She see reflection of self.

Ben: I don't understand.

Ming: Maybe when Ben Fielding look at Pam, he not see Pam blame. Maybe he see reflection of his own blame. *(pause)* A man and wife should face difficulty together. Hostility from the world, persecution should make you stand together, not apart.

Ben: We've had hard times, but hostility? Persecution? Those aren't that common in America.

Ming: Perhaps that was problem.

Ben: I've never thought of lack of hostility and persecution as a problem.

Ming: Wife and husband must be more than lovers. Must be comrades; soldiers fighting side by side for same great cause. Ming's mother say, "Wife and husband should not only lie down face-to-face, but stand up shoulder-to-shoulder." And when they draw strength of Yesu, he bind them together.

Ben: That's what happened to you and Quan?

Ming: We depend on each other, need each other. Quan tell me couples in America speak very openly of love. But also that they lose love and move from person to person. This I do not understand. Ming miss Quan as lover. But especially as friend and comrade. Still I have given him freely to Zhu Yesu. He will do what is best for Li Quan.

SONG: "IN MY LIFE/IF WE NEER MEET AGAIN" – Ming

(In House)

Ben: I once heard an old Confucianism proverb that said, “When a son is born, he should be given a piece of jade to play with. But when a daughter is born, she should be given only a broken piece of pottery.” It must have been hard growing up with that view of women.

Ming: I did not grow up with that view of women.

Ben: You grew up in China, didn't you?

Ming: I grew up in Christian home. I grew up in church. Minghua's father and mother gave her jade. Of course, we could not afford jade. But my brother and I were equal. I never felt parents loved me less. In this world women have been given broken pottery, but Yesu give us jade.

(PHONE RINGS)

Ben: Hello.

Joanna: Good news, Ben. My sources tell me that your friend is back at Pushan Facility Six.

Ben: Thanks, Jo. I really appreciate everything you've done. I'll be at Facility Six tomorrow. They'll have to let me visit him! *(Ming listens in)*

Joanna: I don't think they *have* to let you do anything. But while you knock on doors at your end, I'll check with my source. I hope we can get you access to your friend. There's one more thing, Ben. I'm not sure how to say this.

Ben: What?

Joanna: My source got a photocopy of the charges against Li Quan and translated it for me. According to this report, there was someone else who relayed the information that Li Quan is illegally teaching Christianity to his underage son. That's one of the most serious charges against him. It's a major criminal offense.

Ben: (*Tries to keep Ming from overhearing*) Who made the accusation?

Joanna: Well, the report was filed by Won Chi. But it lists as his source of information...Ben Fielding.

ACT III, SCENE III – FACILITY SIX

Ben: First you told me he wasn't here at all. Now you tell me he's no longer here?!

Woman: Perhaps he has been released.

Ben: No, he hasn't. I'd know. I'm staying at his house.

Woman: Then he must have been transferred to another facility.

Ben: Fine. Tell me where.

Woman: We do not have this information.

Ben: You mean you're refusing to tell me.

Woman: It is against policy. You must go through legal channels.

Ben: I tried that. No law firm wants to get on the bad side of the PSB.

Woman: I am sorry, Mr. Fielding. (*begins to leave*)

Ben: Please! I just need to see him, to talk to him so I can tell his family how he is doing. How much would it cost to get a "permit" for that?

(*Woman turns back, smiling slightly*)

ACT III, SCENE IV – AT PRISON FENCE
(1st Visit)

Ben: How are you doing?

Quan: Zhu Yesu is faithful. Why are you still in China?

Ben: Did you think I'd leave you in jail without doing something to get you out?

Quan: Ben Fielding is even more powerful than I thought if he can get me out of a Chinese jail. How is my family?

Ben: They're doing well. They miss you.

Quan: Tell them I miss them, please, and tell them...it is not all bad here. There are many Christians. I can speak the gospel and have brothers to worship with. Some guards are very cruel. Some are not so bad. We pray for them.

Ben: Do they even feed you here? You look like you haven't eaten in a while.

Quan: Here, we only sit in a cell. We don't need much food. But we were each given an egg yesterday. My cellmates taught me to crush the eggshell into powder and drink it down in water, for the calcium.

Ben: It must be awful.

Quan: No, not awful. Difficult. Five years ago I was in another prison. Every day I assembled Christmas lights.

Ben: Christmas lights?

Quan: My quota was three thousand lights per day. When I went over quota two days in a row, they increased it to four thousand. I failed to meet that quota the next day. I was beaten. The next day it took seventeen hours for me to make quota.

Ben: This is the time of year Christmas lights go up back home. But I didn't even know Chinese used them – obviously not for Christmas.

Quan: I was told these were sent to America, to be sold there. Do you use Christmas lights, Ben?

Ben: Back when Pam and I were still together, we would put them up with the kids.

Quan: Then perhaps you put up lights assembled by your old roommate. Did some of the bulbs fail to work?

Ben: Yeah. Every year we had a few problems.

Quan: Ah, then they were not the ones I put together. For Li Quan was the finest assembler of Christmas lights in all China.

Ben: I'll bet you were. I'll get you out, I promise.

ACT III, SCENE V – QUAN'S CELL

*Jadoral is present in cell watching
Jesus and heavenly host praying*

(There is the sound of someone being beaten in the distance.)

Quan: *(yells encouragement into the darkness)* Believe in Zhu Yesu Jidu and you will be saved. *(He does not stop until he hears someone coming. When he sees Tai Hong, he starts to cough violently.)*

Hong: You do not fool me with coughing, Li Quan. You do not have a disease...except your diseased religion! *(He hits Quan in the stomach with a stick. Quan doubles over in pain. Two guards hold up Quan. Hong yells in Quan's face.)* Do you think I am afraid of your God? If you will not stop talking about your religion, I will see that you are put in the lower cellblocks, in solitary confinement, where you can talk to yourself.

(The guards let go and Quan crumbles to the floor. Hong kicks him in the ribs then freezes.)

ACT III, SCENE VI – AT PRISON FENCE
(2nd Visit)

Ben: (*seeing Quan led out in shackles*) Quan, you look awful!

Quan: Many thanks to Ben Fielding for his encouraging opinion of old roommate's appearance.

Ben: I'm not joking. This is taking a toll on you and your family. It's winter now – and getting colder all the time.

Quan: Yes, I have noticed.

Ben: Can I ask you something, Quan?

Quan: As you can see, I am a very busy man with many demands on my time. But yes, you can ask me.

Ben: Is it really worth it?

Quan: To do right is always worth it. Not always today, but always tomorrow. Does Ben Fielding think it would be worth it?

Ben: Pastor Zhou Jin told me there was no way I'd be allowed to see you again.

Quan: I am also surprised. It is rare enough that families are allowed to visit. But a foreigner? I've never seen it. Someone with power in Facility Six must believe it is to their advantage. Or perhaps it is a miracle.

Ben: Why did they put those on you?

Quan: Tai Hong ordered this to cause discomfort or humiliate. But I take them off at night when sleeping.

Ben: You have a key?

Quan: No. But I found a firm wire. Li Quan is very good with locks.

Ben: But you're still trapped in a cell.

Quan: Zhu Yesu will free me in his time.

Ben: I have some clean clothes, a blanket, and some bottled water in this duffel bag, but I don't know who to give it to so that I know that it will get to you.

Quan: Give it to that guard over there. He is a Christian.

Ben: How can he justify being a guard in a place like this?

Quan: He serves us from within. He brought an extra bowl of rice last night. Besides, he is a young Christian.

Ben: How young?

Quan: He bowed his knee to Yesu in a cell...just seven days ago. Or perhaps six of eight. It is hard to keep track. I have not been outside since you last visited me. Was that seven days ago?

Ben: Four. I was here Monday. This is Friday. You say he became a Christian in a cell?

Quan: Yes.

Ben: What cell?

Quan: The cell of Li Quan, assistant locksmith.

ACT III, SCENE VII – LI QUAN’S HOME
(False confession)

Ben: (walking into the house where he sees Ming, Shen, and Zhou Jin who has a paper in his hands.) What is that?

Jin: It is Li Quan’s confession.

Ben: Oh Ming, I so sorry!

Ming: Why? What does Ben Fielding mean by this?

Ben: I mean...they’re mistreating him, putting pressure on him. He’s obviously having it rough. He doesn’t look good, and now...there’s a confession.

Ming: Zhou Jin will read the confession of Li Quan. It has been typed. His signature is at the bottom.

Ben: Oh no!

Jin: “I confessing that Li Quan terrible criminal. Puppet of foreign devil and distributing illegal literature not approved by government. I guilty of terrible crimes against people and Party. Not deserving freedom, my crimes I confess.”

Ben: (*laughing aloud*) Either Quan’s grammar has really gone downhill, or he didn’t write this.

Jin: Right above signature statement reads, “I withdraw my faith in Yesu and say that the Party is right and the state is right and the illegal house churches are wrong forever.”

Ben: Now I know he did not write it.

Ming: Of course he did not write it.

Ben: But you said it was his signature. What was I supposed to...?

Jin: They had him sign something else. See how low on the page his signature is. They may have written something in pencil, had him sign in ink, then erased and typed over it. Quan knows not to sign bottom of blank page.

Ming: They did this to his father. For a while Quan believe he had recanted faith. It was only later he discover truth. But Li Shen has known all along his father would never deny Zhu Yesu.

Ben: Ming, I'm sorry.

Ming: Chan Minghua has been Li Quan's roommate much longer than Ben Fielding. She must know him much better.

ACT III, SCENE VIII – LI QUAN'S CELL

(LIGHT COMES UP during a break in the beating of Quan)

Quan: *(praying fervently... mentions Ben, mentions family, mentions Hong)*

Hong: We will see what your God does for Li Quan! Should you decide to deny your God, call upon the mercy of Tai Hong, perhaps he will deliver you. For surely you are in his hands.

(Jadorel, who has never left Quan's side looks up to the heavenly realm. Jesus nods his approval. Jadorel whispers into Quan's ear.)

Quan: You have no power except what I grant you, son of dust.

(Hong raises his club to strike Quan. Jadorel blocks each blow and they deflect off of him back to Hong and his guards. Hong and the guards get up frightened. They run out of the cell. Jadorel lays Quan down on the floor and stands guard all night.)

(LIGHTS DOWN BRIEFLY THEN BACK UP)

Quan: (*praying*) You have comforted me, Lord, but I burn to serve you. How can I minister without people to reach out to? Make a way for me, Lord. Give me a ministry; use me as a vessel of your grace. (*Jadorel gets approval and whispers in his ear again.*) GUARD!!!! GUARD!!!!

Guard: Be silent or I will come in and make you silent!

Quan: Sir, please, I have a request of you.

Guard: Unless you can pay me, I care nothing for your requests.

Quan: Can I do some labor for you?

Guard: What kind of trick is this?

Quan: Is no trick. This prison is so filthy. You are not a prisoner, but you must feel like you are. You have to breathe this foul air, to walk carefully because of what oozes out of the cells. Li Quan can help you. Let me go into the cells one by one and clean up this filthy place. Give me water and a brush and soap, and I will show you what I can do! My father, Li Tong, was a street sweeper, a great cleaner of the ground. The finest in China. And I am my father's son.

ACT III, SCENE IX – LI QUAN'S HOME **(Invitation to Seminary)**

Ming: Li Yue! Yue is Li Quan's favorite niece! This is Ben Fielding, Quan's college roommate from America.

Yue: I am honored to meet you. Also, happy New Year.

Ben: And a happy early Chinese New Year to you. You speak good English.

Ming: I will make green tea. Li Yue will tell Ben Fielding about herself.

Yue: I have attended seminary. I also visit nearby colleges and speak with students.

Ben: Why?

Yue: To tell students about Yesu. To challenge them to investigate his claims. And I can tell you, God is at work.

Ben: What's the seminary like?

Yue: Much of it is boring because it is Party propaganda and not the Word of Yesu. Still, there is a professor who believes the Bible.

Ben: Only one teacher believes the Bible? Who is he?

Yue: No need to say.

Ben: I've been told the seminaries are proof of China's religious freedom.
Yue: You have been told the Party lie. I dropped out, five weeks ago. I have been going to an underground seminary.

Ben: Where?

Yue: No need to say. I help to arrange the meetings. Zhou Jin says that I can trust you. Would you like to attend the meetings?

Ben: What kind of meetings do you mean?

Yue: No need to say.

Ben: If you think it would be okay with Zhou Jin, then I would be honored to attend. How far away is it?

Yue: No need to say.

Ben: Will we need my car?

Yue: No need to say.

Ben: How long will it take to get there?

Yue & Ben: No need to say.

Yue: I will meet you here at nightfall, day after tomorrow.

ACT III, SCENE X – AT PRISON FENCE (3rd & Final Visit)

Ben: Quan, you smell like...soap?

Quan: Yes. This is better than I smelled last time, yes? I have wonderful news! You must tell my family and house church. God has answered my prayer.

Ben: They are going to release you!

Quan: No, I prayed that God would give me a ministry and he has.

Ben: What?

Quan: I go from cell to cell, bringing Yesu's message.

Ben: But I thought you were in an isolated cell.

Quan: God opened the door. I go to the other men. I help and serve them as I clean their cells. I bring them the love of Yesu, then, I teach Shengjing to each of them. I teach as I wash.

Ben: The guards let you do this?

Quan: The smell that used to cling to the guards is now almost gone. Their shoes are not ruined.

Ben: Sounds like a revival meeting instead of a prison.

Quan: Please, tell Ming and Shen and Zhou Jin about Li Quan's ministry.

Ben: I'll tell them on one condition – there's a question you have to answer first.

Quan: What is your important question?

Ben: Tell me the story about the chair.

Quan: What chair?

Ben: You know what chair. The one in your house that no one is allowed to sit on.

Quan: Li Manchu built the chair. He was a master carpenter, known throughout the province... (fade)

(THE HEAVENLY REALM)

Manchu: They called me a master carpenter. Compared to you I am but a novice. Your hands are so skilled and powerful. Yet so delicate.

Jesus: I have much experience building. And these hands are familiar with wood.

Manchu: Anything I ever built in the Shadowlands was nothing compared to this.

Jesus: What you built had value, for you built it for me, and with me. But what Li Manchu will build in the future shall be greater still. I am the source of your gifts and skills. It was I who built your heart and trained your hands in the dark world.

Manchu: You are the master builder.

Jesus: I am the builder of simple furniture and wooden plows. I am the builder of men and worlds. And I am the builder of the place made for you.

Manchu: Thank you for asking me to build this with you, for helping me learn by watching the skill of your hands.

Jesus: To build something with you, Li Manchu, is for me a great pleasure. There – it is finished. This chair is made for Li Manchu. Sit.

Manchu: No. I cannot. It is much too beautiful. I am not worthy.

Jesus: I decide who receives my gifts. Sit down. (*Li Manchu sits in the chair*) You can take it with you to my new earth. It will sit in the great house of Li.

Manchu: Thank you, my Master. Li Manchu is most unworthy.

Jesus: Don't you think I know who's unworthy and who isn't? Li Manchu once built a chair for me. I do not forget such things. I am pleased now to have built one for him. And, remember, you assisted me in building it.

Manchu: But this chair is far beyond anything Li Manchu could ever build.

Jesus: What you do for me has never equaled what I do for you, has it?

Manchu: No. Never.

Jesus: So let us not imagine it should be different now. Your gifts and skills are greater than you realize, Li Manchu. I should know. I have plans for how you will use these skills in my new world, to do things you never dreamed of.

Manchu: How long will it be until then, my King?

Jesus: Not long, my friend. Not long.

(BACK AT FENCE)

Ben: So that's the story of the chair?

Quan: Yes. Please remember to tell my family about God's faithfulness to his servant Li Quan.

Ben: I will. I still haven't given up on getting you out of here.

Quan: Thank you my friend and goodbye.

ACT III, SCENE XI – IN HEAVEN, PRISON, HOUSE & USA

SONG: “WHERE JOY & SORROW MEET”—NAN HU

This scene will go back and forth between Quan’ cell and his home. (OVER THE OPENING MUSIC LIGHTS UP IN CELL) A guard throws a badly beaten man into a cell that Quan is cleaning. Quan recognizes him as Fu Chi. Through the first verse and the chorus, Quan begins bandaging his wound. (AT END OF FIRST CHORUS LIGHTS GO DOWN ON CELL AND UP ON HOUSE) Ben is on his phone outside the house trying to talk to whomever he can to get Quan released. He keeps running into dead ends. In his frustration, he barges into the house and finds Ming and Shen praying at the chair. He freezes in his tracks. Shen looks up. He gets up and crosses over to Ben, taking him by the hand and leads him back to the chair and kneels. Ben also kneels. (LIGHTS GO DOWN ON THE HOUSE AND UP ON THE CELL AT THE KEY CHANGE) We now see that Jesus has taken the place of Fu Chi and Quan is continuing to minister to Him. (AT END OF SONG “JESUS PAID IT ALL” LIGHTS GO DOWN ON CELL AND UP ON HOUSE)

Ben: I’m sorry that I barged in here, interrupting your prayers. You were praying for Quan, weren’t you?

Ming: Yes, but also pray for Li Quan’s old college roommate, Ben Fielding.

Ben: Well, sure....praying that I can somehow get him released.

Ming: No. Ming and Shen pray that Ben Fielding will know Zhu Yesu the way Li Quan know Zhu Yesu.

Ben: Oh, uh.....thanks.

(THE LIGHTS GO DOWN ON HOUSE AND UP ON CELL)

(Quan is holding and rocking Fu Chi. He is singing the hymn “Jesus Paid It All” in the Mandarin language)

**ACT III, SCENE XII – THE UNDERGROUND
SEMINARY
(Ben’s conversion)**

(Ben, Li Yue, Zhou Jin and Chaoxing enter together; meeting has already started)

Ben: Are we late?

Jin: They have been praying for three hours before we arrived.

Ben: So the meeting must be nearly done.

Jin: No. Just starting. Chinese believers have motto: “Little prayer, little power. No prayer, no power.”

Chao: Tonight is special. I heard that a teacher from America has come to teach us from Shengjing.

Ben: *(looking around)* He must not be here yet. I don’t see him. Who is the leader here?

Jin: *(pointing to a man)* He is. He walked a hundred and forty kilometers to get here.

Ben: That’s...over eighty miles.

Jin: He may have been followed at first, but after thirty kilometers it is usually safe. They tire of following.

Ben: How long did it take him?

Jin: Five days.

Ben: Do you always meet during the winter like this?

Chao: Yes. When it is very cold PSB does not follow us, and infiltrators usually do not come.

Jin: Meeting is starting again. We are ready to be taught Shengjing. Let the teacher open to us the Word of Yesu.

Ben: (*looking around*) I still don't see him. I hope he didn't get lost on the way here. (*Chao hands Ben a bible*) What? Me? OH NO!!!!!!!!!! (*standing*)

Chao: God has sent you from America to speak to us. We are ready. (*She touches the Bible in Ben's hands.*)

Ben: But...I'm not...you don't understand. There's no way I can....Is this some sort of trick?

Shan: Welcome. Teach us the words of God.

Chao (or Man 1): Teach us book of John.

Ben: I guess I can read it. (*looks for the book of John*)

Chao (or Man 2): Yes, read each verse to us and then teach us what it means.

Ben: But...where do I start?

Chao: At the beginning.

Ben: (*finding the passage*) "From the first he was the Word, and the Word was in relation with God and was God. This Word was from the first in relation with God. All things came into existence through him, and without him nothing was. What came into existence in him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light goes on shining in the dark; it is not overcome by the dark." (*The crowd whispers to one another and they nod their heads.*) Well, I suppose this is talking about how...the Word was in relation with God and that it was...well, that it was...God, I guess, or something like that. And...that...everything, or mostly everything anyway, came into existence through it...or him, or whatever. Maybe it all happened

at the big bang or something. Anyway, you know what I'm saying? (*The people just stare at him*)

(*LIGHTS DIM—Ben pantomimes teaching, apparent passage of time
(music underneath?)*)

LIGHTS BACK UP

Ben: “And so the Word became flesh and took a place among us for a time; and we saw his glory – such glory as is given to an only son by his father – saw it to be true and full of grace.” The Word is Yesu. Christ is the Word. That’s who this Word is – Jesus! (*The crowd whispers to one another and they nod their heads.*)

(*LIGHTS DIM—Pantomime teaching, Ben given a drink of water*)

LIGHTS BACK UP

Ben: “For God had such love for the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever has faith in him may not come to destruction but have eternal life.”

(*action freezes*)

(*SPOTLIGHTS GO UP ON DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STAGE
SHOWING DIFFERENT PEOPLE PRAYING FOR BEN: PAM, DOUG,
MING AND SHEN, AND QUAN.*)

Ben: (*Ben ponders aloud*)...For God had such love that he gave his only Son...his only Son. Jason!

(*Ben gives the Bible to Zhou Jin, rushes outside*)

God, you must have loved your Son like I loved Jason. I could never have sent Jason to die for anyone, but you sent Jesus to die for me.

SONG: “I SURRENDER” – BEN

(HEAVENLY REALM REJOICES)

ACT III, SCENE XIII – QUAN’S CELL
(Quan’s real confession)

Hong: *(two guards are holding Quan) (Hong strikes Quan after each sentence.)* Write a confession!

Quan: Why do you need me to write one when you can write your own and say I wrote it?

Hong: Confess!

Quan: What shall I confess?

Hong: Treachery. Betrayal. All your crimes against the state.

Quan: But I have done nothing wrong – I mean, not those crimes you accuse me of. I have done many wrongs of my own. Those I have confessed to my God.

Hong: If you do not write your confession, then perhaps I shall have to pay a visit to your family.

Quan: I will write my confession.

Hong: *(to the guards)* When he is finished, bring him and his confession to the warden’s office immediately. *(to Quan)* I knew you would never defeat me.

Quan: *(after Hong has left)* You and your master are already defeated.

(The guards bring in Quan and his confession. They put Quan in a chair and give the confession to the warden. Tai Hong stands by smiling.)

Warden: (*Looks at paper*)What is this?

Hong: It is the confession of Li Quan.

Warden: Listen to the confession of Li Quan. “Confess with your mouth, ‘Yesu is Lord’, and believe in your heart that Jidu raised Him from the dead you will be saved.” so bow your knees before him today, before it is too late.” (*to Hong*) You call this a confession?

(Jesus stands. Tai Hong runs at Quan, striking him in the head with his club. The chair Quan is sitting in turns over and Quan crumbles to the floor – dead.

(LIGHTS OUT)

Jesus: (*Crying aloud in the darkness*)

WHY ARE YOU PERSECUTING ME?

(TIGHT SPOT ON JESUS’ FACE)

I await you, loyal servant. In my presence is fullness of joy. At my right hand are pleasures forever more. I am the happiness you have always hungered for, the pleasure you have thirsted after, the peace you have sought in long shadowy nights. The darkness is nearly done. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life. (*possible music underneath*)

LI QUAN HOME **(Nighttime)**

(A CELL PHONE IS RINGING. DIM LIGHTS UP ON HOME INTERIOR WHILE BEN ANSWERS THE PHONE)

Ben: Hello?

Joanna: Ben?

Ben: Joanna? So it’s your turn to wake me up?

Joanna: I just got a call from our contact in Shanghai – the one who gets his tips from his source at the prison.

Ben: Yeah?

Joanna: I don't know how to tell you this, Ben, and I'm hoping the info's wrong. We can't be sure.

Ben: Sure about what?

Joanna: It's Li Quan. They say he's...dead.

Ben: No, Jo, he is more alive now than both you and I.

Joanna: What was that?

Ben: Never mind. I'll explain it later. Thanks.

(Ben looks up and sees Ming with Shen holding her hand. Ben opens his arms and nods his head. Ming and Shen run into Ben's embrace and all three are weeping together when the LIGHTS GO OUT)

ACT IV, SCENE I – PHONE CALLS HOME (Following morning)

Martin: It's over, Ben. I hoped I wouldn't have to pull the plug, but you've forced my hand. I've been way more patient than I should have been. But this is it. You have to let this go or I have to let you go. You understand what I'm saying? Get your stuff together and come home. That's not a request. I'm sending Jessica to clean up your messes. Meet with her and turn over to her what you have and then get on the next flight home.

Ben: Yes sir.

Martin: I don't want to hear any of...what was that?

Ben: I said “Yes sir.”

Martin: Good! I’m glad that we have an understanding.

Ben: Martin, something has happened and I need to talk with you when I get home.

Martin: Fine. Just don’t miss that flight.

(LIGHTS DOWN)

(LIGHTS UP on Ben & Pam in middle of conversation)

Pam: Okay, Ben, stop for a second. Are you alright?

Ben: Yes. Yes, I’m alright. For maybe the first time in years, I’m alright.

Pam: Have you been drinking?

Ben: Boiled water and green tea, that’s all.

Pam: This isn’t some kind of joke or something?

Ben: No, Pam. I’m okay, and I’m not drinking. I’m telling you that I’ve repented. I’ve surrendered my life to Jesus. He’s my Lord and Savior. I don’t know how else to tell you. It happened a few days ago. I was in an underground sem.....never mind. I’ll tell you about it when I get home. That is, if you’ll let me come back home.

Pam: This has always been your home and you have always been welcome here. Now let me get this straight, make sure I’m not dreaming. You are calling me out of the clear blue sky at four o’clock in the morning from China and you want me to see if I can find a dozen Chinese Bibles that someone can come by the house and pick up from me?

Ben: Uh, yeah. I guess that just about covers it.

Pam: Ben, the pastor of my church just gave me twelve Chinese bibles yesterday and asked me if I knew of a way to get them to China.

Ben: What did you tell him?

Pam: I told him that I would pray about it.

Ben: Well, God does answer prayers.

Pam: Ben, I love you.

Ben: I love you too, Pammy. I'll see you soon.

Pam: I'm looking forward to it. Bye. (*hangs up*) Thank you, Lord!

(*LIGHTS DOWN ON PAM*)

Ben: Hey, Jessica. You're coming to Shanghai, right? Sorry if I've made things a little awkward for you, but you're good at unruffling feathers. I know it'll work out. But listen, Jess, I need you to do me a favor. Could you swing by Pam's before you leave?

Jessica: Pam? I didn't think you two –

Ben: She's going to have a box ready to send to me.

Jessica: What kind of box?

Ben: It'll be kind of heavy. It's books.

Jessica: She's sending you books? But you're about to come home.

Ben: It's for friends over here. They need stuff to read.

Jessica: O...kay.

Ben: It's a goodwill thing. I've met a lot of Chinese, and they've been real helpful to me. Just wanted to give them some tokens of my appreciation.

Jessica: How about some nice little pens or those plastic Getz coffee mugs? They aren't so heavy.

Ben: No. I need the books.

Jessica: I'm already stretching it on the luggage.

Ben: Do you remember when I bailed you out of that mess in Hong Kong?

Jessica: Okay, okay. Sheesh. A box of books it is.

(LIGHTS DOWN)

(LIGHTS UP ON BEN & DOUG in middle of conversation)

Ben: So that's my story.

Doug: Wow!

Ben: That's all you can say?

Doug: That pretty much covers it. Wow!

Ben: When you spoke up like you did, it made me feel guilty for turning away from Christ. I resented you. Please forgive me.

Doug: God forgave me, Ben, and what I've done to him is far worse than anything you've done to me. Who would I be to withhold forgiveness?

Ben: Well, that was my first reason for calling you. The second is, I want to rehire you as soon as I get back.

Doug: You're kidding?

Ben: With full back pay for the time you were away – about three months, I guess, because I've been gone nearly that whole time.

Doug: Mr. Getz approves?

Ben: I'll take care of the details when I get back.

Doug: I'll give it some serious prayer and have an answer for you the next time I see you.

Ben: Fair enough.

Doug: Meanwhile, I want to invite you to church the first Sunday that you're back. I'll save you a seat next to me.

Ben: No can do.

Doug: Why not?

Ben: Because I'll be sitting next to Pam and the kids.

Doug: Well, Praise The Lord!!!!!!!!!!

ACT IV, SCENE II – THE JOURNEY TO HEAVEN

Quan: Am I dead?

Jadorel: No, you're alive. Your body is dead.

Quan: Then this is the day? But who are you?

Jadorel: I am Jadorel. I have been with you since the day your father died. I am the angel of the family of Li.

Quan: I have never seen you.

Jadorel: There is much you have never seen.

Quan: Yet somehow you're familiar.

Jadorel: Perhaps you have seen me, but you did not know it. You have many questions. There are many answers. It is time for your exodus. Others await you in the great country, the world for which you were made.

Quan: Jadorel, it was you all along, wasn't it?

Jadorel: I was with you after the earthquake. I provided the money for college in America, as well.

Quan: You were with me in prison too.

Jadorel: I never left your side.

Quan: Are you sure I'm dead? It's so much like...being alive. But a lot better.

Jadorel: Come.

(They walk to Quan's old house. Ming and Shen are praying at the chair.)

Quan: May I tell them goodbye?

Jadorel: *(He looks to Jesus)* The King has granted your request.

Quan: *(to Ming)* Farewell, Minghua. Thank you, beloved, for holding up your half of the sky...and much of mine as well. Come quickly.
(to Shen) Good-bye, Shen. Take care of your mother. You were willing to die for Zhu Yesu. Now live for him. That may prove more difficult. Come quickly. But..perhaps, not too quickly. Your father, Li Quan, is very proud of you, my only son.

Shen: Mama, Li Shen is proud of Baba.

Ming: Me too, little grasshopper.

Jadorel: Come. You are lingering too long on the path between worlds. It is time for Li Quan to come home, to the place he has never been but always longed for.

Quan: What about Ben Fielding?

Jadorel: He will see you again when his course has been finished. Come now.

ACT IV, SCENE III – LI HOME
(Ben’s Goodbyes)

Ben: I need to get a few hours sleep before the drive to Shanghai.

Ming: Will you come back to us, Ben Fielding?

Ben: I’m sure I will.

Ming: For business?

Ben: Probably. But I’d like to come see you and Shen.

Ming: Perhaps bring wife and daughters.

Ben: We’ll see. I hope so. Come here, Shen. Never forget Yesu is King. Never forget your home is in another world. Never forget your father will be waiting to see you again.

Shen: Xiexie, Dabizi.

Ming: Very kind of Ben Fielding to take care of his friend’s wife and son.

Ben: It’s you who’ve taken care of me. Keep holding up the sky, Minghua.

Ming: There is only One who holds up the sky. And he has not yet let it fall. *(She gives him a hug)* Thank you, Ben Fielding, for giving me jade. Please give warm embrace to Pam Fielding, Kim, and Melissa from Chan Minghua, wife of Li Quan.

Ben: I will.

*(LIGHTS DOWN ON HOUSE, LIGHTS UP ON BRIGHTLY LIT
HEAVENLY REALM)*

*(Quan is escorted into Heaven by Jadorel. He is reunited with his mother,
Nan Hu, his father, Li Tong, his grandfather Li Wen and his great-
grandfather, Li Manchu. The first person he sees is Jesus! The painting is
recreated during Jesus’ song)*

SONG: “SAFELY HOME” – JESUS
(CURTAIN CLOSES)

INVITATION

FINALE – SONG: “APPLAUSE”

*(Curtain opens at bridge -- “there’s a cloud of witnesses...”
revealing full cast. At key change, Quan enters in white robes.
Company applauds, led by Jesus)*

Full cast curtain call