

# CHINA SKY

By Pearl S. Buck

ILLUSTRATED BY MARTHA SAWYERS

## The Story Thus Far:

AFTER directing Dr. Sara Durand, one of his aides, to take over while he is away, Dr. Gray Thomison, head of a hospital in the Chinese city of Chen-li, leaves for America. The war is raging, and Chen-li and the hospital are being bombed daily. But happy in the knowledge that the man she loves, *unknown to him*—Gray Thomison—will presently be at her side again, young Dr. Durand carries on superbly.

Her first great test comes when Chen-ta, a noted Chinese guerrilla (called by the Chinese "the Eagle") brings in a badly wounded Japanese prisoner—a high-ranking army officer who gives his name as Yasuda. The Chinese implores Doctor Durand to save the man's life. Puzzled, Sara—assisted by Doctor Chung, head of the men's ward—operates; and Yasuda does not die.

Then Sara receives a crushing blow. Doctor Thomison cables that he is returning with "Louise"—his bride! . . . The young couple arrive. And from the first Louise (who dislikes China and the Chinese) is miserable—and terrified by the savage bombings. Noting her fear, Doctor Chung (in the pay of Yasuda) assures her that the bombings will cease if she will put her husband's Chinese seal on certain letters that he will bring her. Suspecting nothing, Louise agrees to do as he wishes.

The first of the letters (prepared by Yasuda) goes through. A short time later, the bombers stop molesting the hospital—but not the city. And everyone wonders why. . . . No longer afraid, but bored by life at the hospital, Dr. Thomison's wife begins writing to Harry Delafield, an attractive Englishman who is stationed near by. Presently, in answer to her entreaties, he comes over with some friends for a small dinner party.

While Gray—wondering why, for twelve days, the hospital has not been attacked—is dressing, Siao Fah, his cook (who adores "Thomison doctor") comes to him, gives him one of Louise's letters that he has intercepted. Gray reads the letter. It is to "Dearest Harry"; and it is, apparently, a love letter. . . .

Later, after the guests have gone, Louise is unusually affectionate. As she and Gray talk, in the bedroom, Siao Fah stands outside their door, while Little Pig, his assistant, peeks through the keyhole. After a time, Siao Fah pushes Little Pig away—and covers the keyhole with a dish towel. In the room, Louise is telling her husband that she loves him, that she wants to work beside him in the hospital.

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LOUISE tripped up the hospital steps with her little high heels clacking. The hospital was quite quiet and clean, for almost no one was here. Perversely, she thought, the Chen-li people had stopped coming, now that it was really safe to come. She pushed open the swinging doors, guarding carefully her bouquet of Chinese lilies.

Gray, hearing the light clatter of her footfall, opened his door and saw her coming down the corridor, her blue dress clear color for her glowing face, and for a moment he put aside again his question of her, never answered because love kept it unasked. How pretty she was, how sweet and suitable it was that she should bring flowers to his hospital! How impossible that she could be anything except what she looked! He had simply said gruffly to Sara the next day, "We were wrong about Louise—both of us," without having the courage to tell her that he had never asked Louise about the letter. "I'm glad, Gray," Sara had said quietly. Since then Sara had avoided him, but it was easier if she did.

Now Louise was at his side.

"Who is the lucky one this morning?" he asked playfully.

"Whom do you say?" she asked, smiling at the adoration in his eyes.

Even the Buddha did not dwarf the young man who stood at its feet. It seemed rather to retreat into the shadows

"There's not much choice—the hospital is so empty," he said ruefully. "One of the hospital orderlies broke his arm yesterday. There are a few people in the charity ward. And, of course, Yasuda's still here. I can't get at his trouble. Chung's making fresh tests today. It's almost like a typical case of sleeping sickness, the man's half-conscious so much of the time."

"Shall I give my flowers to Yasuda?" she asked. She had been on her way to Yasuda, anyway, but her eyes were innocent beneath Gray's.

"You may find him unconscious now." He hesitated, then he glanced about the empty hall, then tipped up her chin with his forefinger and kissed her. "It's lovely to see you coming in with flowers every day for somebody, my beautiful!" he said.

DOWN the hall Sara's door closed softly. She had been about to come out of her office, but now, seeing the kiss, she stepped back and stood, her hand on the door, her lips pressed together. She was frightened at herself. When in her life before had she hated anyone as she hated Louise? When, indeed, had she ever been so angry with anyone as she was with Gray? How could he be so fooled by this silly flower stuff? Whatever had been wrong, Louise had got him back again. She groaned at herself, bewildered with her own contradictions.

"But that was what I wanted, wasn't it?" she thought.

Surely to have Louise love Gray was what she wanted. Surely she had answered honestly to him that day, "I'm glad, Gray." But she had not been near to him again. They had come and gone in the quiet hospital, making work where there was none these days, and he came late and went home early.

She waited a moment more and opened the door. The hall was empty now and she stood irresolute. Where had she been about to go? It was no longer important. She went slowly upstairs to her own rooms. Her little Chinese baby was there playing on the rug. An amah sat near, sewing. The baby could sit up now alone. Now when she saw Sara she smiled and put up her arms and Sara took her and held her.

"I'll take care of her a while," she said to the amah, and when the woman gathered her sewing and went away she was glad to be alone. This little creature, she thought, looking at the baby, was going to be very pretty. She had the doll-like look of all Chinese babies, and the tiny hands fumbling at the buttons on Sara's uniform were exquisite as flowers. And then quietly, and to the child's wonder, she began to weep.

For a long time they sat thus, she weeping and the child watching. Then she wiped her eyes. What was the good of weeping when nothing could be done? For the first time since she began to love Gray she wished she could go away, go somewhere far enough so that she and Gray could never meet. "If he's really happy with her, I never want to see him again!" she thought passionately, and then to her shame she sobbed aloud and went on sobbing and could not stop. And the baby looked frightened for a moment and then accepted the strange noise and tried again to pick off the bright buttons.

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# Six Hours from London

By Quentin Reynolds

Refugees spend much of their time in Portuguese coffee houses. Here the Czech cartoonist Sors is earning his passage to America by doing sketches



Jewish refugees in Lisbon are provided three meals a day in the Israelite Dining Room. The cost is defrayed with contributions from the United States



Lisbon is a city under sentence of death. Her bright lights, incongruous in blacked-out Europe, are really her funeral candles. Lisbon tragically awaits the invader

MOST of the windows in the airplane were glazed over with a frosty sheen so that you could see out of them. Two in the back were covered by metal slides. We were swinging along the way a DC-3 does swing along—smoothly, effortlessly almost quietly. It would have been a nice trip except for those blacked-out windows. Several times I saw planes going from England to Lisbon had sighted German aircraft. It was a bit uncomfortable sitting there, wondering if any black-crossed visitors were in the neighborhood. The big Dutch pilot walked back and grinned.

"How are we doing?"

He nodded, "Fine. Be in Lisbon in another three hours."

"We got any escort?" I asked him. It would be nice to know that a few Coastal Command Sunderland or Hudsons were playing nursemaid to us. We weren't armed.

"Escort? We've got a fine escort," the Dutch pilot said. Then he reached down and slid back the middle window shutter. "Look at those clouds," he laughed. "Best escort you ever saw. We could lose ourselves in them in ten seconds."

There was nothing below but tumbling masses of white fleece touched faintly by the gold of a midday sun. So we flew serenely on, and gradually the clouds thinned out and below there was calm water and then suddenly to the left an irregular black line that became land within a few seconds, and then we were over Portugal. From the air the land looked tidy and neat. And then we were banking in a tight circle. The Lisbon airport is encircled by hills and you can glide into it. You have to circle and lose speed.

The Dutch pilot opened the door and said, "Lisbon." I stepped to the door of the Douglas, looked out and then instinctively recoiled in horror. I caught myself then and remembered that this was a neutral country. Fifty yards away a big Junkers 52 lounge, a huge black swastika emblazoned on her tail and three Germans working nonchalantly on her motor. It was the first time in eight months I had seen a German airplane that wasn't dropping bombs or pursuing or being pursued by English aircraft. It didn't seem possible. I walked past the Junkers, still a little suspicious.

It seemed incredible that if I killed these three men now or if they killed me it would be murder. Yet I had spent the whole previous night with the sound of German bombs in my ears; all night they had been over the west-coast city where I had slept. They had killed a great many people, too. If I could have done anything to bring any of those German bombers down, I would have been very happy. After you've been bombed daily and nightly for months you begin to develop a perhaps unreasonable resentment against the men who are doing the bombing daily and again, perhaps unreasonably, you would like very much to kill some of them. But we were a neutral country—even though we were only six hours from London.

Today Lisbon in many ways is the most interesting city in the world. It is crowded with ruffians, refugees and royalty. Its normal population of 500,000 has been swelled by another 50,000, and under the weight of this migration the natives themselves are quite lost. Portugal shivers in dread anticipation of the day when Hitler's acquisitive eye will light on her. The refugees from Russia, France, Poland, Belgium, Holland and Germany feel that they are living on borrowed time.

The result is that thousands of them, scarred and battered from the strain of the past months, are trying desperately to get to America. Getting to America from any part of Europe these days is a feat of legwork and domain beside which the Hindu rope trick is naïf and simple. Lisbon is almost the only port in Europe from which clippers and ships leave for America. There is a little thing called priority. All diplomatic, military observers and other government representatives are given "A" priority. They get first call for clipper or ship reservations. Foreign correspondents are given "B" priority. From there on, people stand in line. There have been families standing in line in Lisbon for six months now, (Continued on page 3)