

The Corps: Book 1 Semper Fi Study Guide

The Corps: Book 1 Semper Fi by W. E. B. Griffin

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Corps: Book 1 Semper Fi Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter 1.....	4
Chapter 2.....	6
Chapter 3.....	7
Chapter 4.....	8
Chapter 5.....	10
Chapter 6.....	12
Chapter 7.....	13
Chapter 8.....	14
Chapter 9.....	15
Chapter 10.....	16
Chapter 11.....	17
Chapter 12.....	18
Chapter 13.....	19
Chapter 14.....	21
Chapter 15.....	22
Characters.....	24
Objects/Places.....	27
Themes.....	29
Style.....	31
Quotes.....	33
Topics for Discussion.....	35

Plot Summary

Semper Fi by W.E.B. Griffin is the first in the series of books on The Corps. The Preface provides the background to events in China, beginning in the 1900s with the Boxer Rebellion. The problem is settled with the Protocol of 1901 which places troops of the foreign powers in China. This means the U.S. troops are in Shanghai, Peking and other places. Navy gunboats patrol the Yangtze River. By 1941, the lines are drawn for World War II in China. The Japanese take over the Russian interests and are determined to expel foreigners from China.

As the first in the series, the book takes place before the United States is involved in World War II. It introduces many of the characters that appear in later books in the series.

The main characters in Semper Fi is Ken McCoy. He is a China Marine and stationed in Shanghai as the book opens. When he is attacked by four Italian Marines, he kills two of them. Captain Banning is assigned to defend him, but the charges are dropped.

They decide to get McCoy out of Shanghai for a while and send him on a convoy to Peking. Banning has Lieutenant John Macklin looking for information on the Japanese and tells McCoy that he is just along for the ride. When the convoy returns to Shanghai, Macklin has found out nothing and has been caught by the Japanese. McCoy has found out a great deal of information about Japanese troop movements by visiting a brothel. When the Italians learn that McCoy is back in Shanghai, they have a Welcome Home, Killer McCoy party. This is how McCoy comes to be nicknamed Killer.

Banning is impressed with McCoy and sends him on another convoy assignment on which he is able to take pictures. The Marine brass is impressed with the photos and sends Captain Ed Sessions to learn more information. Sessions poses as a missionary with Reverend and Mrs. Feller. There is an incident during which eighteen coolies are killed. After this, McCoy is sent back to the United States. Macklin is caught falsifying reports, trying to blame McCoy for his and Sessions' being caught by the Japanese. Banning writes a bad efficiency report for Macklin and has him sent back to the States.

Macklin causes more problems for McCoy at Quantico and almost causes him to be eliminated from the Platoon Leader's Course, but both McCoy and Pick Pickering graduate and go to other assignments.

Semper Fi is "must" reading for W.E.B. Griffin fans. It sets the stage for the rest of the books in The Corps series. The book is quick and easy reading and well worth the reader's time.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Semper Fi by W.E.B. Griffin is the first in the series of books on The Corps. The Preface provides the background to events in China, beginning in the 1900s with the Boxer Rebellion. The problem is settled with the Protocol of 1901 which places troops of the foreign powers in China. This means the U.S. troops are in Shanghai, Peking and other places. Navy gunboats patrol the Yangtze River. By 1941, the lines are drawn for World War II in China. The Japanese take over the Russian interests and are determined to expel foreigners from China.

Chapter One begins on January 1, 1942 with Ken McCoy, stationed in Shanghai, China. He is trying to decide if he should carry a weapon when he leaves the compound. There has been trouble between the United States and Italian Marines. He is waiting for his promotion to corporal to come through and he does not want to have any trouble. He decides to carry a knife to the poker game at the Cathay Mansions Hotel, even though the guard recommends he carry his bayonet.

McCoy rides a rickshaw to the hotel and goes to a room in the basement. He has his own plan for gambling and has over two thousand dollars in Barclay's Bank as a result. He takes his place at the table with Piotr Petrovich Muller, the hotel doorman. Two of the other players are from the Shanghai Municipal Police, one of which is Detective Sergeant Lester Chatworth. McCoy wins about two hundred fifty dollars and heads back to the billets. His rickshaw is attacked by four Italian Marines. He successfully fights them off, killing two of them.

Captain Edward J. Banning is asked to be the defense counsel for McCoy. He does his background work and then goes to visit McCoy in the infirmary. He tells McCoy that he could plea guilty to a lesser charge than first degree murder. McCoy tells Banning that he acted in self-defense. He then asks if he can have his company commander as his defense counsel and Banning says no. He gives McCoy twenty-four hours to think about the situation. He thinks McCoy will spend twenty to thirty years in prison if he ignores Banning's advice.

Banning looks into McCoy's claim of self-defense. He goes to talk to Chatworth, at police headquarters. He explains the situation and how he is looking for witnesses. Chatworth says he will help.

While this is going on, McCoy's promotion comes through.

Chatworth finds two Chinese witnesses to the attack on McCoy and brings them to Banning's office. Through they appear to be coolies, they are both police officers. When Banning talks to them, he finds that neither saw the fight and tells Chatworth that they



cannot put them on the stand. However, he calls the colonel and tells him about the two witnesses.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The groundwork for World War II in China begins with the Boxer Rebellion. The settlement or Protocol of 1901 results in the troops of various foreign powers being in China. When Russia pulls out of China, the Japanese take over most of the Russian position. The Japanese have a goal of driving the foreigners out of China. By 1941, the stage for World War II in China is set.

McCoy faces murder charges when he acts in self-defense. He is attacked by four Italian Marines, two of whom he kills. Banning says he can plead guilty to a charge lesser than first degree murder but McCoy says it is self-defense. When Banning talks to Detective Chatworth, who knows McCoy, Chatworth procures two witnesses, both of whom are police officers. It is obvious to Banning that neither witnessed the crime but both are willing to testify that they did. It is obvious that Chatworth is not willing to let McCoy be railroaded by the lies of the Italian Marines.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Banning visits McCoy at the Infirmary and demands to know how well he knows Chatworth. McCoy says he knows him. Banning tells him about the two witnesses that Chatworth has produced. Banning apologizes to McCoy for not believing in his innocence and tells him that the charges against him have been dropped. As soon as he is released from the hospital, he is assigned to Banning in Intelligence. Banning will be sending him to Peking. He will leave on Thursday in a truck convoy and is to gather information about the Japanese troops. They discuss the assignment and the fact that McCoy's promotion was approved.

The convoy is gone for a month. When it returns Lieutenant Macklin has been caught snooping by the Japanese. When McCoy appears, he tells Banning what he learned about Japanese troop movements. He found out from some women in a brothel. Macklin had laughed when McCoy told him. McCoy says he went to Nantung and checked the information at another brothel. Banning asks him if he would be willing to photograph some of the trucks and McCoy says he would.

That night the Italians have a Welcome Home, Killer McCoy party that angers Banning.

Lieutenant Edward Sessions arrives at Banning's office several months later in response to McCoy's photos, which Banning had send to headquarters. Sessions is supposed to present himself as a missionary while trying to gather information on the Japanese. Banning says he will advise the Japanese that he is providing vehicles for the Christian and Missionary Alliance and they will be traveling in the Peking truck convoy. He also tells him how Killer McCoy earned his nickname.

Sessions tells Banning that Reverend Feller will be in the group and that he is willing to help the Americans against the Japanese. Banning believes that Feller is more interested in transporting Chinese artifacts. Banning tells Sessions to listen to McCoy's advice on the trip.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The charges against McCoy are dropped. His promotion comes through and he is assigned to work under Banning in Intelligence. Banning is very impressed with McCoy and thinks he is more intelligent than his test scores indicate. McCoy comes through with information for Banning that he obtained in a brothel.

When Sessions visits Banning, he finds that the purpose of Sessions' trip is to help gather more intelligence on the Japanese. Headquarters is very impressed with the pictures taken by McCoy. Banning's faith in McCoy is evidenced by his telling Sessions to follow any advice that McCoy gives him.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

McCoy moves into an off-compound apartment in Shanghai. He is now officially assigned to the Motor Pool so he can ride on the truck convoys to Peking. He does not let it be known that the Marine Corps paid for his apartment as part of his assignment. Muller found the apartment for him. McCoy also becomes friends with the Russian owner of the Golden Dragon Club who is called General.

McCoy hires a rickshaw to take him to the Hotel Metropole where he meets Reverend Feller and Sessions. Their vehicles have been prepared and Macklin will be in charge of the convoy. The route for this convoy will be different because they have to go to Nanking to pick up Mrs. Feller. They will also be visiting five other missions. There are nine vehicles in the convoy and they are waived through the Japanese checkpoint along the Nanking highway. Feller, Sessions and Mrs. Moore, along with a truck, drive to Nanking with McCoy while the rest of the convoy waits in Chiangyin.

They arrive at the mission in Nanking. McCoy wonders if the crates of belongings include the Chinese artifacts that Banning had mentioned. McCoy spends the evening at a brothel and learns that there is not much of interest in Nanking, so he returns to the mission compound. Mrs. Feller comes to his room in a bathrobe to tell him that breakfast is at six-thirty.

The next morning she rides in the front seat with McCoy. They arrive at Chen-chiang, meet the convoy and find they have to wait for the ferry. McCoy and Ernie Zimmerman each go to different restaurants to eat, hoping to overhear conversation about Japanese troop movements. When McCoy returns to the convoy, he has to take Mrs. Feller to the restaurant.

Chapter 3 Analysis

McCoy is officially assigned to the Motor Pool as a cover for his Intelligence activities. His apartment, in the same building as the Golden Dragon Club, is paid for by the Marine Corps. The Golden Dragon Club is a brothel and the girls could be a source of information. He is also acquainted with Chatworth from the police and Lon Ci-iang, the head of the Po'Ti Tong. He also is acquainted with some of the Russians. He has made a lot of good contacts that can be useful for an intelligence person.

Since intelligence gathering is the reason why McCoy is on the trip, he uses every opportunity he can to be in places where he can learn of Japanese activities. He visits the brothel in Nanking and sits in a restaurant in Chen-chiang.

Mrs. Feller is obviously flirting with McCoy and he is a little irritated with her. He is uncomfortable with Mrs. Feller and does not want any trouble.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

After everyone has eaten, Sessions tells McCoy that he has told Macklin the purpose of his mission. Since they will be spending the night at Chiehshom, Sessions wants to see if the Japanese have any German artillery at nearby Yenchi'eng. McCoy says he will not go to Yenchi'eng with Sessions and produces orders from Banning. He tells them that there is no way they can go to Yenchi'eng without being caught.

That night they all eat dinner together at the Hotel aim See. McCoy had hoped to eat alone with Zimmerman and avoid the others. When they leave the table, McCoy tells Ernie to drop the drive shaft in the truck. He plots the route for Macklin and Sessions, knowing he cannot stop them from going to Yenchi'eng.

The next day Zimmerman calls McCoy to the lobby. There are two Japanese messengers there. McCoy instructs Zimmerman to sign the papers for them. It is a message from Macklin saying they he, Sessions and Feller have accepted an invitation from the Japanese to inspect their division. McCoy delivers the other letter to Mrs. Feller. He is unable to contact Banning on the phone.

Ellen Feller arrives in McCoy's room later that night, angry that he has been absent. She accuses him of spending the evening in a brothel and he tells her that it is none of her business. She says that he does not have to buy women and stays with him. Ellen says she found out that her husband was a homosexual after she married him. When she says she could not leave him because she could not support herself and says she might have a deal that might work out, he asks about the artifacts. She admits that she has some.

Sessions knocks on the door and Ellen hides in the bathroom. Sessions is angry that McCoy did not report the incident to Shanghai. Ellen, wearing a bathrobe, walks out and leaves McCoy's room. Sessions says he would like to see McCoy court-martialed. McCoy says that Sessions can report to Shanghai that he was caught by the Japanese and that he found McCoy with Ellen, or he can report that the Japanese do not have any German PAK 38 cannons. McCoy was there the prior morning and took pictures.

Sessions says he will file his report about his trip to Yenchi'eng but will not mention McCoy's involvement with Ellen.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Sessions wants to see what artillery the Japanese have at Yenchi-eng. McCoy refuses to go, saying they will be caught; so Macklin, Sessions and Feller go, using the excuse that Feller is looking to open another mission in the area. They are caught and McCoy knows that Banning will be angry with him for allowing the situation to occur.



When Ellen appears in McCoy's room, he gives in to his physical desires. He also learns that Ellen is more or less trapped in a marriage to a homosexual. Her wealthy father is a pillar of the church and would never support her decision to leave the reverend. Ellen also admits to McCoy that she is smuggling Chinese artifacts out of China. This confirms Banning's suspicions.

Sessions decides not to report McCoy's relationship with Ellen Feller. McCoy has taken pictures of the Japanese equipment and warns Sessions off making the trip. Sessions realizes that he should have listened to McCoy. Banning told him to follow McCoy's advice.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Zimmerman warns McCoy about Ellen. There will be trouble if Macklin finds out.

Nine days later, the convoy reaches Huimin. At each stop, McCoy tries to gather intelligence on the Japanese. He brings Sessions along with him at T'anch'eng. They did not find any German cannons. The next night in Weifang, McCoy will not take Sessions with because there is a greater danger of being caught. He does not have any time to spend with Ellen because Sessions always wants to talk. He lets Sessions accompany him in Huimin because it is the last chance to find the German cannons, and they do find them there. They photograph them.

There is another ferry on the way to Tientsin. Sessions, Zimmerman, McCoy and Ellen cross first in the car. They pull the car around a bend, leaving enough room for the rest of the convoy when it crosses. Sessions and Zimmerman walk back to the crossing, leaving McCoy and Ellen alone in the car. As the couple become romantic, McCoy notices Zimmerman's Thompson in the back. He grabs it and runs around the bend with Ellen following, and finds Zimmerman and Sessions surrounded by twenty to twenty-five coolies. The Japanese, he figures, will make it look like Chinese bandits. McCoy fires at the coolies who had guns.

When it is over, there are about a dozen dead and wounded coolies on the ground. The others have fled. Then they realize that the film is in the car, and McCoy runs back. The film is safe and he drives the car back for Ellen. Macklin and part of the convoy arrive and Macklin is furious. He was ordered to avoid a confrontation and will now look bad in Shanghai. Sessions says the primary goal is to deliver the film. Reverend and Mrs. Feller are second in terms of importance. They decide to split the convoy. Sessions and Zimmerman are in the group that goes to Tientsin. McCoy and Macklin are in the group that remained behind.

After the bodies are removed the next day, they go on to Tientsin. McCoy is questioned by the Tientsin officers. They say that Ellen and Macklin said that McCoy and Zimmerman shot the wounded coolies.

Sessions decides to leave China with the Fellers. He gives McCoy a thick envelope to personally deliver to Banning. Sessions says that McCoy will receive an official Letter of Commendation.

Ellen is not happy to see him. He says he loves her and she becomes indignant. He walks away, vowing to never make that mistake again.

Back in Shanghai, Macklin is called to Banning's office. He finds out that Sessions wrote a report about the trip contradicting Macklin's report, which blames McCoy for the problems at Yenchi'eng and the ferry crossing. Sessions tells Macklin that he would like



to court-martial him but that would involve too many security issues. It will be a long time before Macklin will receive a promotion.

McCoy receives orders that he is transferred back to the States. He leaves in a few days. Banning says he wrote a very good efficiency report for McCoy.

Chapter 5 Analysis

There are problems on the convoy trip. Sessions, Macklin and Feller are caught by the Japanese at Yenching and the incident at the ferry crossing where eighteen coolies are killed. Macklin writes a report blaming McCoy for the incidents, not knowing that Sessions had written his own report to Banning. Banning calls Macklin a slimy creature, an officer who tries to blame enlisted men for his own shortcomings. Banning will write him such a bad efficiency report that it will be a long time before he will be promoted. He suggests that Macklin resign. Banning makes it very clear that he does not like Macklin.

McCoy receives orders transferring him back to the States. He is not happy about it but there is a lot of flack over the shooting incident. Banning tells him that he will write a very impressive efficiency report for him. He will be back in the States soon and see if he can help McCoy in his assignment.

McCoy finds that he was used by Ellen Feller. She was not really interested in him and just wanted some physical excitement. He vows to never make the same mistake again.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

McCoy sails on the Whaley. He is not happy about his assignment to the Navy Yards in Philadelphia. At Pearl Harbor, he boards the U.S.S. Fenton for San Diego. At San Diego, he is told to report to the brig sergeant. There he finds that he is to be part of a guard detail transporting prisoners to Portsmouth. They depart the next day and ride in a special Army troop car.

From Portsmouth, McCoy goes on to Philadelphia, changing trains at Boston. He thinks of leaving the Marine Corps and returning to Shanghai, not remembering about discharges being frozen. On the train he meets Malcolm Pickering, who is about to become a Marine. He wants to talk about the Marines. Pick and McCoy keep drinking and talking and the next morning, McCoy wakes up in the Bellevue Stratford Hotel. Pick orders breakfast for them.

McCoy arrives at the Naval Yards. Nobody had told them about the guard duty to Portsmouth so he was listed as AWOL. They tell him there is a violations report being filed because he is not in a regulation uniform, but sometimes the reports get lost. He asks about buy-out papers and is told all discharges are frozen.

When he reports to the Captain, he finds it is Captain Edward Sessions. McCoy is to work for Sessions in Intelligence.

Chapter 6 Analysis

McCoy is upset about being returned to the United States. He feels that he has been shafted by the Marines. After the guard duty to accompany the prisoners to Portsmouth, he figures those are the kinds of assignments he will always draw. He decides to look into leaving the Marine Corps, but learns that all discharges are frozen because of the coming war. He decides to make the best of it and hopes Banning follows through on his promise to get him out of Motor Transport. When he meets his captain, he is surprised to see that it is Edward Sessions. McCoy did a good job for Sessions in China. The Marines feel that McCoy is very knowledgeable about the Japanese and want more information from him.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

McCoy has just come from dinner with Ed Sessions and his wife, Jean. She thanks him for what he did at the ferry crossing. After dinner, he goes to a used car lot. He is interested in a 1939 LaSalle. When McCoy wants to test drive it, they find the battery is dead. Salesman Dickie Golden has the battery replaced. McCoy checks out the car at a gas station and decides that there are no major problems. He does not want to finance the car or buy insurance through Golden, aware of the kickbacks the man receives.

McCoy is questioned by Intelligence to learn what he knows about the Japanese in China. He tells them what he knows.

McCoy obtains the paperwork and parts he needs for the car and spends the weekend working on it.

Sessions talks to him about his plans for after the interrogation ends and asks if he has ever considered becoming an officer. Sessions has the officer application paperwork ready for McCoy to sign and explains the procedure to him. McCoy applies on Monday. On Wednesday, he is called before the interview board. The board approves his application, but tells him he will be notified through official channels.

McCoy finally makes the trip to Norristown to see his family. His mother has died and his sister, Anne Marie, is supposed to be in a convent. The local priest tells him that she left the convent. One of the nuns tells him that his sister married a Protestant and where to find her husband's gas station.

Chapter 7 Analysis

McCoy decides to buy a used car. He lets the dealer think he is going to finance the car and manages to get the price down to the price he wants to pay. Then he pays cash, saying he is not interested in financing or insurance. He knows he is shafting the dealer out of his kickbacks. McCoy knows how to deal with used car dealers because his father was one. He feels good about beating the dealer at his own game.

McCoy follows Sessions' advice and applies to become an officer. He does not really think he has any chance and thinks that Banning will be back before any action is taken. He is wrong and is interviewed two days later. The board does not tell him that they have approved his application, just that he will be notified through official channels. McCoy does not seem to know what he really wants to do.

Norristown, where McCoy grew up was only an hour ride but McCoy puts off going there. His mother has died and he does not want to see his father, but does want to see his sister. He finally makes the trip.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

McCoy drives to the Amoco station to find Anne-Marie's husband. He introduces himself to Dutch Schuller and Dutch takes him home to see Anne-Marie. She also has nothing to do with their father. McCoy takes the family out for dinner and they decide on the Norristown Inn. Their father is there and McCoy finally walks to the bar to say hello. He drives his sister's family home after dinner and says he cannot stay overnight. He spends the night at a hotel in Bethlehem. He sees his brother, Tommy, the next day. He spends the night with him and then returns to Philadelphia.

The San Mateo Club in San Mateo, California, was the residence of Andrew Foster, Sr. Pick Pickering is upstairs showering in one of the guest rooms. He dresses and drives into San Francisco to the Andrew Foster Hotel. Pick has clothes in the locker room there and quickly changes and goes to the penthouse to visit his grandfather, who lives there.

Tommy is in jail for being drunk and getting into a fight. His employer gives him his severance pay. He either accepts it or goes back to jail. The next day Tommy joins the Marines and is sent to Philadelphia on his way to Parris Island. His brother left for Quantico the day before.

In Washington D.C. the Assignments Branch is reviewing the records of Lieutenant John Macklin. He is being sent home and the Marines have to decide what to do with him. He has been declared in excess of the needs of command, a very rare situation. The records say he did not accept responsibility for his failures and tried to blame others. His official reports are slanted in this way. They decide to assign him as a mess officer at Quantico since they cannot ask him to resign.

Chapter 8 Analysis

McCoy makes the obligatory visit to his family. He meets his sister's family and even sees his father. He finds his brother in Bethlehem. They all think he is successful when they see his car. When his brother Tommy gets into trouble and loses his job, he enlists in the Marines.

More information is revealed about Pick Pickering. He is from a wealthy hotel family and will begin the officer's training course.

Banning did just what he said he would do. He wrote a very bad efficiency report for Macklin and had him sent back to the States. Normally in this situation, the Marines would ask him to resign, but given the situation with the approaching war, there are no discharges. They have too many positions to fill. Since they cannot kick him out, they assign him to Quantico as a mess officer.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Master Gunnery Sergeant Jack Stecker is driving to the shooting range at Quantico. He has a vehicle available to him that is maintained by the Marines. Stecker refuses an assigned driver. He goes to the Known Distance rifle range to check the records and weapons. Satisfied, he drives back to his office. One of the people waiting to see him is McCoy.

The two men talk and McCoy, who is to report for duty the next day, says he worked with Captain Banning. Stecker has served with Banning. McCoy is trying to get his car registered on base and has been told that he cannot because he is attending the Platoon Leader's Course. Stecker makes arrangements for McCoy to leave his car in the Impound Yard.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Stecker is the Master Gunnery Sergeant at Quantico. McCoy remembers being told that if he ever had a problem, talk it over with the gunny. He is supposed to begin the Platoon Leader Course and is told he cannot have his car on base. He has no place to leave it. What is he supposed to do? Stecker makes arrangements for him to keep the car in the Impound Yard. Stecker is a friend of Banning and possibly wants to help McCoy because he has worked for Banning.

Stecker is being promoted to a commissioned officer. He does not really want to be an officer. His wife, Elly, buys him a Brooks Brothers uniform to celebrate the occasion.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Garand rifles are issued to the men in the Platoon Leader's Course. Malcolm Pickering is in the course. Pick is not in uniform because he has not had time to unpack. Pick sees McCoy at breakfast and McCoy tells him that he was right about the freeze on discharges. McCoy tells Pick that they will make it hard on him if they find he is friends with McCoy. He says to stay away and they have some time off.

McCoy decides he is not going to waste several hours trying to clean an uncleanable rifle and goes and gets his car. He cleans the Cosmoline off the rifle using a solvent at the gas station. He returns to the barracks and waits for the inspection by Corporal Pleasant. Pleasant tells him to wait outside, which he does. When he comes out, he tells McCoy to get in the car. He hands him a can of beer. He wants to know how McCoy cleaned the rifle. He tells McCoy he knows of his reputation. If he does not make trouble, they will get along.

This phase of the program is basically a repeat of boot camp and intended for the college kids like Pick.

One day Macklin fills in for the company commander during an inspection. He cites McCoy for not being cleanly shaven and for having a dirty rifle, neither of which are true.

In October, 1941, Banning is sent to the Philippines. He marries Ludmilla before he leaves. The marriage is against regulations but he reports it to his colonel, who backdates the necessary paperwork. Banning secures the appropriate visa for her before he leaves.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Pick and McCoy are in the same Platoon Leader's Course. Pick is happy to see McCoy because he will have someone to pal around with. McCoy tells him they cannot do that or their instructor will make it hard on them. They have to wait until they have some time off. McCoy is not rejecting Pick's offer of friendship; he is just giving him the wisdom of his experience.

McCoy has another run-in with Macklin who is the mess officer at Quantico. Macklin goes out of his way to cause trouble for McCoy during an inspection. There is nothing that McCoy can do but accept the punishment.

Banning, who thought he would be sent back to the States, is assigned to the Philippines on very short notice. He marries Ludmilla before he goes. He wonders if he will ever see her again.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Stecker checks out the Garand with a series of tests and concludes that it is a reliable rifle. He is not satisfied with the results the students are having. McCoy is one of the people who has trouble with the test since his hands are full of blisters, from his punishment of sanding the decks. Stecker suspects that the problem is not McCoy, since he tried the rifle also. He suspects that someone is messing around in the firing pits. He orders them to run the test again, the next day, the first day of Thanksgiving liberty. They find out that Macklin volunteered to be the pit officer. When asked if McCoy knows Macklin, he answers yes.

Stecker looks up Macklin's record and McCoy's. He then begins to ask questions. He finds that Macklin has volunteered for various duties and that McCoy has been put on report for every inspection Macklin was involved in. He is facing an Elimination Board hearing. Stecker makes his point and tears up the unsatisfactory behavior reports.

McCoy does not know any of this. He has to spend the Thanksgiving liberty sanding the decks. Pick offers to help him. Pick has stuck by him even though McCoy is convinced that he will not make it by the Elimination Board. When they read the list of names of those slated for extra training and the Elimination Board, McCoy's name is not included. Pleasant tells him he is on liberty like everyone else. Pick and McCoy head to New York City for their liberty, planning to purchase their officer uniforms at Brooks Brothers.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Macklin is making all kinds of trouble for McCoy. Macklin volunteers for extra duty on inspections and as a result, McCoy has a file full of unsatisfactory behavior reports. During the Garand rifle qualifying tests, McCoy who rated expert with other weapons, keeps getting bad reports. Stecker is curious about why Macklin volunteered to be pit officer and concludes, after reading the records of both men, that there is foul play in the pit. This time Macklin is caught. McCoy is lucky that Stecker takes the time to look into the situation since he faces an Elimination Board hearing in a few days. Without Stecker's help, McCoy would not have made it through the course.

Pick is becoming a true friend to McCoy. In spite of McCoy telling him to stay away, Pick sticks by McCoy, even offering to help him with sanding the decks. He tries to help in any way he can.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

McCoy and Pick drive the La Salle to the Foster Park Hotel in New York City. The clerk does not recognize Pick, but the night manager does and shows them to a penthouse suite overlooking the park. It is then that McCoy finds out that Pick is heir to a hotel and shipping fortune. Pick tells him not to mention that back at the base.

They go to some of the finer clubs in New York. Everywhere they go, the bar picks up the bill, but they do not have any success with women. Pick leaves a notice at the Harvard Club that there will be a cocktail party in his suite and that each man is to bring two girls.

McCoy feels out of place at the party because everyone is as rich or richer than Pick. He sits on the balcony and remembers where his last Thanksgiving was spent in Shanghai. A girl from the party comes out and sits by him and they talk. When some of her friends say they are leaving, she says she wants to stay and they leave.

McCoy and the girl leave the hotel and ride the subway to Chinatown. Her name is Ernestine Sage. They find a Cantonese restaurant. When they finish, she takes him to her apartment. When McCoy arrives back to the hotel, he tells Pick that he is meeting her for lunch at the Grand Central Oyster Bar. Pick says that the restaurant is right by Brooks Brothers.

McCoy waits in the restaurant and sees Pick talking to Ernestine. She enters the restaurant and gives McCoy a kiss.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Pick and McCoy drive to New York and stay in the penthouse suite at the Foster Park Hotel. McCoy watches as Pick gets whatever he asks for and finally asks about it. Pick tells him that he is the heir to a hotel and shipping fortune but not to say anything at the base. McCoy feels out of place when he meets some of Pick's friends. Some of the girls snub him because he is not a college man. He also begins to feel that he is mooching off of Pick.

McCoy meets a girl at Pick's cocktail party named Ernestine Sage. He relates to her and spends the night at her apartment. He does not know that she is wealthy and feels comfortable with her. McCoy feels a little out of place in Pick's world.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

McCoy and Pick drive back to the base following their liberty in New York. Pick tells McCoy that Ernie Sage is from a very wealthy family. McCoy feels that she lied to him and made a fool of him. Pick says that maybe she really likes him.

This is the last week of their training course and it basically centers on behavior. They are also given liberty at night. Their orders come and Pick and McCoy are assigned to the Washington DC area. That Friday they graduate and receive their second lieutenant bars; McCoy is the detail commander for the ceremony. As they march past the reviewing stand, Pick sees his parents in the stand.

Captain Stecker congratulates McCoy and says he thinks he will make a fine officer. When Stecker leaves, Pick says he wants McCoy to meet his parents. After the Pickerings leave, Pick and McCoy drive to Washington D.C. The Lafayette is full but they make room for them. They then go to the Marine Barracks since Pick is anxious to know about his administrative duty assignment.

Saturday is spent sightseeing since McCoy has never been to Washington. They report to duty on Sunday night, ahead of schedule. Pick is to report to Anacostia Naval Air Station and McCoy is to report to a temporary building near the Smithsonian.

General McInerney, whom Pick reports to, served in World War I with Fleming Pickering, Pick's father. He will be the general's junior aide-de-camp. Pick is upset at finding his father interferred to obtain this assignment and says that he does not want the position or any special treatment. McInerney says that if they had not intervened, Pick would have been assigned to the Officer's Club based on his hotel experience. He asks Pick if he has considered going to flight school.

Chapter 13 Analysis

McCoy is not happy to learn that Ernie Sage is from a wealthy family. He feels that he has been lied to and becomes very upset, thinking that she just wanted something physical, like Ellen Feller. He feels as if he made a fool of himself by telling her about his background. Pick tries hard to explain that maybe she just likes him for what he is, but McCoy cannot accept that. They do not discuss the situation again, even when Pick tries to steer McCoy to New York after their graduation.

McCoy is the detail commander at the graduation ceremony, an honor he is surprised at. He does not know that it was Captain Stecker who stepped in and righted the wrong that was being done to him, but he knows that someone did.



Pick is not happy with his posting as junior aide-de-camp to General McInerney, especially when he finds that his father had called McInerney, whom he served with in World War I. When he protests, McInerney tells him that they had him slated for a mess officer slot at an Officer's Club because of his background in the hotel business. McInerney had him assigned to him until they could find a place for him. Pick wants to make it on his own without anyone pulling strings for him. It is also obvious that he is not afraid to say what is on his mind.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

McCoy finds that the room number he is supposed to report to is not even printed on the door. The man answering his knock checks his identification before allowing McCoy to enter. He is given a visitor's tag to wear that is good anywhere in the building except at the Office of Naval Intelligence. McCoy is two weeks early in reporting for duty.

Sergeant Ruttman takes him into a big room where people are operating a variety of machines. All of them are wearing holsters with guns. They do the paperwork and picture taking for McCoy's credentials and then send him to Major J.J. Almond's office which is in front of Lieutenant Colonel F.L. Rickabee's office. He learns that the policy of the officer is for the personnel to live off base with compensation.

They have prepared a background statement that he is to check for errors and omissions. He is told to be honest. There is a background check file compiled by the FBI. He is being processed for top secret and other security clearance. Rickabee says that the Chief of Intelligence is quite impressed with McCoy and his knowledge of the Japanese in China. Rickabee says that McCoy will work as a courier and will only obey the orders of the Intelligence chief. He will be leaving for Pearl Harbor in a few days.

Back at the hotel, Pick is upset that McInerney said that McCoy had to move out because Intelligence might start questioning the assignment. McCoy tells him about his assignment to Intelligence. Pick tells the hotel manager they will move into a suite and the two go out to celebrate.

McCoy reports to Commander Kramer for his first assignment as a courier. Ellen Feller is working as a secretary for him. After they finish the paperwork, Kramer tells Ellen she can ride to Anacostia with McCoy.

Chapter 14 Analysis

McCoy has some surprises in store when he reports for his assignment. He finds that he is working in Intelligence on the recommendation of Banning. Banning is assigned to the Philippines which McCoy did not know about but he follows through on his promise to find a place for McCoy. McCoy will begin by working as a courier, delivering sensitive material to different places in the world. He is happy about this because it allows him to travel.

When McCoy reports to Commander Kramer for the courier documents, he finds that Kramer's secretary is Ellen Feller. On the ride to Anacostia for his plane, he seems to have forgotten the promise he made to himself in Shanghai. Part of the reason may be that he is still angry about Ernestine.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Pickering passes the medical exam for flight training school. He has purchased several aviation books to learn what he can about the subject. Ernie Sage calls and says she wants to talk to him. When she arrives, Pick tells her that McCoy is in Hawaii. They talk about McCoy and Pick says that he told McCoy that she was wealthy. Ernie says that she is in love with McCoy. Pick says that he will try to help her with McCoy. She leaves and returns with the news that Pearl Harbor has been attacked. Not only is McCoy there, so are Pick's parents.

The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor has ended before McCoy arrived. McCoy takes a Ford pick-up in the confusion and drives to the Navy Base. He is worried about Tommy who was stationed at Pearl Harbor. McCoy delivers his documents, is told to get a few hours sleep and to report back. His next stop is Cavite. He leaves and goes to look for Tommy.

He asks about Tommy at the Marine Barracks. His name is not on the casualty list. The lieutenant remembers Tommy's name and says he is being transferred to Wake Island but he does not know where he is. When McCoy leaves, the lieutenant, also a China marine, erases Tommy's name from the Wake Island list.

McCoy has another batch of documents to deliver to another place. In the Philippines, he looks up Captain Banning.

Banning is checking out the beach defenses when McCoy arrives. He was supposed to stay at the Navy Comm Center but says he believes he belongs with Banning. The Japanese assault begins and Banning is injured. Banning regains consciousness in a church basement where a Filipino nurse has attended to his and McCoy's wounds. As soon as they can move Banning, they will take them to Mindinao. Banning orders McCoy to go through the Japanese line and report to the base and leave the Philippines as he was ordered to do.

Jack and Elly Stecker are informed that their son Jack was killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

McCoy arrives in Washington DC on January 17, 1942. Looking for Pick, he finds Ernie Sage instead. She tells him that she loves him and he says that he could not get her out of his mind.

Chapter 15 Analysis

McCoy arrives in Hawaii right after the attack on Pearl Harbor. There is a great deal of confusion, but he manages to deliver the documents he carries. Instead of following



instructions to catch a few hours sleep, he goes looking for his brother. It is a good thing he does because a lieutenant, another China Marine, removes Tommy's name from the list of people being sent to Wake Island.

McCoy arrives in the Philippines right before the Japanese. He is with Banning when the attack begins. Both are injured and being cared for in the basement of a church. He had been told to stay at the Navy Comm Center until they could get him on a plane. Instead he goes to see Banning. Banning tells him to go back and catch a flight out of the Philippines. He is more valuable as an intelligence officer. McCoy heeds his advice.

In Washington, McCoy finds Ernie waiting for him at the hotel suite. They work out their problems.



Characters

PFC Kenneth J. McCoy

PFC Kenneth J. McCoy is a twenty-nine year old Marine who was from Norristown, Pennsylvania. McCoy had just signed up for a second four years of duty. He is fluent in several different languages including Cantonese. He entered the Marines right out of high school. Coming home from a poker game in Shanghai, he is attacked by four Italian Marines, two of whom he kills. He is scheduled for a court martial but the charges are dropped and he is assigned to Banning in Intelligence and sent to Peking. When he returns to Shanghai, the Italian Marines hold a Welcome Home, Killer McCoy party, which is how he earns his nickname of Killer. After another incident where McCoy shoots a group of attacking coolies, he is sent back to the States with a good efficiency report from Banning. He is questioned by Sessions' Intelligence people because of his knowledge of the Japanese in China. Sessions suggests that McCoy apply for an officer's training position. He does and is accepted. During the Platoon Leader's Course at Quantico, he has another run-in with Macklin. Macklin almost succeeds in having McCoy face an Elimination Board, but Stecker finds out and corrects the wrong. McCoy is assigned to work in Intelligence. He begins by working as an officer courier, carrying secret messages to various places in the world. He becomes romantically involved with Ernestine Sage.

Captain Edward J. Banning

Captain Edward J. Banning is a staff Intelligence officer with the 4th Marines. He is thirty-six years old and graduated from the Citadel, a South Carolina military college. He is romantically involved with a White Russian named Ludmilla Zhivkov. Banning is appointed to be the Defense Counsel for the court-martial of Ken McCoy. When the charges against McCoy are dropped, he has McCoy assigned to his motor pool Banning catches Macklin filing a report based on falsehoods and promises Macklin a very bad efficiency report and a long time to a promotion. He is true to his word and writes a very bad efficiency report for Macklin. Banning stays in China until October 1941 when he is ordered to the Philippines on short notice. His personal belongings go into storage since he has no time to make any arrangements. He marries Ludmilla before he leaves. Since she is a foreign national and stateless person, he does this without the required permission. He reports this to his colonel and says that he is prepared to resign his commission, but the colonel backdates all of the necessary paperwork. He secures the appropriate visa for her and hopes that she will be able to follow him. Banning recommends McCoy to Rickabee for a position in Intelligence. McCoy is with Banning when the Japanese attack begins in the Philippines. Banning is injured in the attack.



Lieutenant John Macklin

Lieutenant John Macklin works in Intelligence for Banning. He is the officer in charge of the convoys from Shanghai to Peking. Macklin writes a report blaming McCoy for the problems on the convoy, not knowing Sessions wrote a report based on the truth. Called home from China, he is assigned as a mess officer at Quantico, where he causes problems for McCoy at the Platoon Leader's Course at Quantico and almost has him kicked out, when Captain Jack Stecker intervenes.

Ellen Feller

Ellen Feller is the wife of the reverend. She is at the mission in Nanking and flirts with McCoy any chance she gets. Her father is a wealthy supporter of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Since her husband is a homosexual, she fools around a lot with other men. She smuggles Chinese artifacts out of China, hoping to sell them in the United States. After returning to the United States, she works for Commander Kramer in Washington.

Captain Edward Session

Captain Edward Session is an officer in Marine Intelligence. Married to Jean, he arrives in China on a secret mission. He is supposed to find out if the Japanese have any German PAK 38 cannons. He is assisted by McCoy, who saves his life when he is surrounded by coolies. He is in charge of the 4th Motor Transport Platoon at the Philadelphia Naval Yards which is a cover for Marine Intelligence.

Malcolm Pickering

Malcolm Pickering is about to join the Marine Corps when he meets McCoy in Boston. He is from a very wealthy family and his father was in the Marines in World War I. He attends the Platoon Leader's Course at Quantico with McCoy. Pick is assigned to General McInerney as a junior aid-de-camp and then is accepted into flight school.

Master Gunnery Sergeant Jack Stecker

Master Gunnery Sergeant Jack Stecker has been in the Marines for twenty- five years. He is married to Elly and has two sons. He is a Medal of Honor winner in World War I so both boys attend the service academies. He finds out what Macklin is doing to McCoy at the Platoon Leader's Course and puts an end to it. Stecker is promoted to captain. His son Jack is killed in the attack at Pearl Harbor.



Reverend Glen T. Feller

Reverend Glen T. Feller is the head of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. He is in China to bring his wife, Ellen, back to the United States. He is detained by the Japanese along with Sessions and Macklin. He returns to the United States and handles his church's affairs in New York.

Sergeant Ernst Zimmerman

Sergeant Ernst Zimmerman is a Marine who works with the convoy. He lives with a Chinese girl and has three children with her. Ernie speaks Chinese and German.

Peotr Petrovich Muller

Muller is the White Russian doorman at the Cathay Mansions Hotel in Shanghai. He had been a colonel in his Imperial Majesty's 7th Petrograd Cavalry.



Objects/Places

Shanghai

Shanghai is a city on the eastern coast of China.

Nanking

Nanking is a city in China located a little northwest of Shanghai.

Chen-Chiang

Chen-Chiang is a town on the Yangtze River near Nanking in China.

Chiehshom

Chiehshom is a town in Shantung Province, China.

Huimin

Huimin is a town in Shantung Province.

Tientsin

Tientsin is an international settlement on the coast near Peking.

San Diego

San Diego, in southern California, is the site of a U.S. Marine base.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia is an East Coast city in Pennsylvania where the Naval Yards are located.

Quantico

Quantico, Virginia is the site of a large military training facility, including the Platoon Leader's Course.



New York City

New York City is on the East Coast and where Pick and McCoy go on their Thanksgiving liberty.

Washington DC

Washington DC, the nation's capitol, is about an hour's drive from Quantico.

Pearl Harbor

Pearl Harbor is on Oahu in Hawaii.

The Philippines

The Philippines are an archipelago of islands in the Pacific.



Themes

Relationships - Pick and McCoy

Since the book takes place before the outbreak of World War II, there are few combat scenes. *Semper Fi* is basically a novel about people and their relationships. One such relationship is that between Malcolm "Pick" Pickering and Ken McCoy. Pick meets McCoy on a train from Boston to Philadelphia. Pick is joining the Marines and wants to talk about life in the Marine Corps. They talk on the train, party in Philadelphia and then go to the Navy Yards where Pick fills out his paperwork and McCoy reports for duty. They do not meet again until they are in the Platoon Leader's Course. Pick is happy to see McCoy and to have someone to pal around with. McCoy warns him that he is a China Marine and knows that they will give him a hard time because of that. He does not want them to make it hard for Pick for being friends with him. He tells Pick to stay away from him but they become friends anyway and Pick has a harder time than he would have had. It is not until their Thanksgiving liberty that McCoy learns that Pick is from a wealthy family. McCoy becomes romantically involved with one of Pick's friends and Pick has to help them hold the relationship together. After their graduation from the course, they are both assigned to the Washington DC area and room together at one of Pick's family's hotels. Then the war begins.

Relationships - McCoy, Ellen and Ernestine

When McCoy is in China, Reverend Glen Feller arrives to collect his wife, Ellen. Ellen begins flirting with McCoy as soon as she meets him. When Feller, Sessions and Macklin go to Yenching and are detained by the Japanese, she tells McCoy that her husband is a homosexual and they begin an affair. Even though they are caught by Sessions, their affair continues for the rest of the trip. When Ellen is leaving for the United States, McCoy goes to say goodbye to her. He tells her that he loves her but is rebuffed by her. He figures she just wanted something physical and vows he will never be in that situation again.

In New York, McCoy meets Ernestine Sage at Pick's cocktail party. McCoy feels out of place among Pick's rich friends. She presents herself as a working girl and McCoy falls for her. They spend the night and the next day before Pick and McCoy have to return to base together. On the way back, Pick tells McCoy that Ernie is from a very wealthy family and McCoy becomes very angry. He feels that Ernie played him for a fool and just wanted her first time to be with someone insignificant. He refuses to see or talk to her. When he is on a courier assignment, she goes to Pick for advice. When McCoy returns, she is waiting for him and says she loves him. They work out their differences.



Bad Blood

Another theme of the book is the bad blood between Macklin and McCoy. This begins in China when Macklin is the officer in charge of the convoy to Peking. Macklin is supposed to be obtaining information for Captain Banning on the Japanese and fails to learn anything and is caught by the Japanese. McCoy obtains a great deal of information on Japanese troop movements by visiting a brothel. Banning, who does not like Macklin, gives McCoy a camera and tells him what information and photographs to obtain on the next trip, which McCoy does. When Sessions arrives and poses as a missionary to secure photos and information, McCoy refuses to go to Yenchi'eng. Feller, Macklin and Sessions go without him and are caught. Macklin writes a report blaming McCoy for the situation. Macklin's report is contradicted by a written report that Captain Sessions writes. Macklin is given a very bad efficiency report and sent back to the States, where he is assigned as a mess officer at Quantico. He causes problem for McCoy in the Platoon Leader's Course resulting in a folder full of behavior reports and many hours of punishment. McCoy is scheduled for an Elimination Board hearing. Captain Stecker becomes curious when McCoy cannot pass the shooting test with the Garand when he has expert ratings on other weapons. They find that Macklin is the volunteer pit man. Stecker intervenes and McCoy receives his second lieutenant's bar.

Style

Point of View

Semper Fi is written in the third person point of view with the narrator being the author W.E.B. Griffin. This approach is very appropriate for the novel since it allows the author to provide the reader with the necessary information on background, setting, and characters. This approach allows the author to impart more information to the reader than the first person point of view would. In this approach, the knowledge of the reader is limited to the knowledge of the storyteller. The third person approach avoids this situation and allows the author to provide as much background and other information as is needed. Since the characters continually interact with dialogue throughout the book, the reader is able to become familiar with their personalities. The reader can feel their anticipation of the on-coming war as the characters go through their training. The author obviously does not like Macklin and neither do most of the other characters. The point of view is appropriate to the nature and content of the novel.

Setting

There are various settings for the action of Semper Fi as the characters move around. The first third of the book takes place in China. Shanghai is where Banning, McCoy, Macklin and others are based. There are truck convoys between Shanghai and Peking. Nanking is where the mission is and where they pick up Ellen Feller. Chen-chiang is where the convoy crosses the Yangtze River by ferry. Chiehshom is a town in Shantung Province where Feller, Sessions and Macklin make their ill-fated trip to Yenching from. Huimin is where Zimmerman and Sessions are attacked by the coolies. Eighteen coolies are killed. Tientsin is the international settlement from which Sessions and the Fellers sail to the United States. McCoy travels to San Diego and then on to the Naval Yards in Philadelphia where he is assigned. Quantico, Virginia is the site of the Platoon Leader's Course which McCoy and Pick attend. After that they are assigned to the Washington DC area. McCoy is in Pearl Harbor right after the Japanese attack and is in the Philippines with Banning when the Japanese land. Within these places, there are scenes in restaurants, hotels and homes and other places.

Language and Meaning

The language used and the meaning of the terms is relatively straight forward, as it is in most W.E.B. Griffin novels. The book is written for fast reading with very little to slow the reader down. Wherever there are military words or terms used, Griffin defines them either in the body of the novel or in a footnote. This is very helpful to the reader who is unfamiliar with these kinds of terms. There are no foreign language terms in the book even though the first third of the book takes place in China. The language of the novel is everyday English with no hidden meanings or difficult to interpret passages. There is



quite a bit of cussing in the novel, but the main characters are Marines. The foul language adds to the realism of the characters and the story. Griffin's style of writing is easy to read and to relate to. The reader has to appreciate the style of writing because it makes the story more realistic and adds to the enjoyment of the novel.

Structure

Semper Fi is written with the same structure used by W.E.B. Griffin in many of his other novels. The structure is simple with the action of the novel given in fifteen chapters. The chapters are not titled but begin with a heading designating the place, date and time of the action. There are also different scenes within each chapter designated by a number. The place, date and time heading is also used when there is a change in setting. This is good because the reader is always aware of the place and time of the action.

There is a Preface at the beginning of the book that the reader should read. It is short and gives the background and history of events in China, beginning with the Boxer Rebellion that sets the stage for World War II in China. It explains why the different foreign powers are in China.

There is no Table of Contents or Index, but none is really needed. A map of the relevant part of China would have been helpful but the interested reader can easily look up the information.

The book is structured in the usual W.E.B. Griffin manner and works well for the novel.



Quotes

In January 1941, the American military presence in China consists of the U.S. Navy Yangtze River Patrol; the U.S. Navy Submarine Force, China and the 4th Regiment USMC (both based in Shanghai); and the U.S. Marine Detachment, Peking. (Preface, p. 3)

"The first thing I thought, McCoy, was that you and Chatworth were involved in something dishonest, and it was a case of one crook helping another. But I just came from seeing Captain Fairbairn, and he tells me that Chatworth is a good man. Off the record, he told me that if Chatworth was getting you out of the mess you're in, that speaks highly for you, because he doesn't normally do things like that." (Chapter 2, p. 29)

He believed the key to a successful career in the Corps was to do what you were told to do as well as you could and ask no questions. And to keep your eyes open so that you noticed strange little things, like the fact the regimental S-2 paid a lot of attention to a truck convoy that was really none of an intelligence officer's business, and that the real man in charge of the convoys was not whichever officer happened to be sent along, but Corporal 'Killer' McCoy/ (Chapter 3, pp. 61-62)

As missionaries have no authority to order Marine corporals around, it was necessary to let Macklin know who he actually was. He had thus told Macklin that he was an officer on a secret mission, and now they were both thrilled about their importance in the scheme of things—and prepared to deal with a lowly corporal who was standing in the way of their doing their duty. Captain Banning had warned him this was likely to happen. (Chapter 4, p. 79)

Lieutenant Sessions learned quick, McCoy decided. You had to give him that. He took charge, the way an officer was expected to. Lieutenant Macklin was running around like a fucking chicken with his head cut off. (Chapter 5, p. 115)

He could buy his way out of the Corps and get a job. Things were better now, and he had a high school diploma. Maybe even go back to Shanghai and see if he couldn't work something out with Piotr Petrovich Muller, or the 'General'. (Chapter 6, p. 137)

Not only was the LaSalle a nice car, but he had screwed a used-car dealer. McCoy hated used-car dealers: Patrick J. McCoy J. McCoy of Norristown, Pennsylvania, Past Grand Exalted Commander of the Knights of Columbus, Good ol' Pat, everybody's pal at the bar of the 12th Street Bar and Grill. Corporal Kenneth J. 'Killer' McCoy's father, was a used-car dealer. (Chapter 7, pp. 157-158)

He still hadn't accepted the possibility that he could become an officer. Which was the main reason why he hadn't said anything about Quantico to either Anne-Marie or Tommy. Besides, they probably wouldn't believe it. Which was easy to understand; he



didn't quite believe it himself. But getting arrested for drunk driving or speeding would be the end of it. He wanted to give it a shot, anyway. (pp. 180-181)

"In the future, McCoy, be very careful when you tell somebody you don't think much of officers or that you have doubts about being one yourself. You just might run into some chickenshit sonofabitch with bars on his collar who will take offense." (Chapter 9, p. 212)

"Pick, honest to God, I know what I'm talking about," McCoy said. "Sooner or later, they have to give us some time off. Then we can see if there are any fourteen-year-old virgins in Virginia. But what you have to do until we can get away from that prick, especially if you plan to get through the course, is make yourself invisible." (Chapter 10, p. 223)

Waiting for Corporal Pleasant to blow his whistle, McCoy was pretty well down in the dumps. At first, he had been almost thrilled that Macklin had been caught sticking it to him. (Chapter 11, p. 256)

"Hey, get off my back. Get two things straight. First, that you're my buddy. And second, that being rich is better than being poor, and I have no intention of apologizing to you because I was smart enough to get born to rich people (Chapter 12, p. 278)

"Despite what some people think of China Marines, Lieutenant," Stecker said, "every once in a while some of them make pretty good officers. I think you will." (Chapter 13, p. 288)

There is a small, generally unknown group of people in the Corps who don't have to obey the orders of superior officers, unless that officer happens to be the chief of intelligence. (Chapter 14, p. 312)

And then it occurred to him that he was a Marine officer and that what he should be doing now was getting into uniform and reporting for duty. (Chapter 15, p. 329)



Topics for Discussion

How did Ken McCoy come to work in Intelligence? How did he meet Banning?

What problems did McCoy have with Macklin? What did Banning mean when he called Macklin a slimy creature?

Why was McCoy transferred out of China to the Philadelphia Naval Yards?

What kind of problems does Macklin cause for McCoy? Why? How does Macklin get caught?

Why is Pick upset with his first assignment to General McInerney? What makes him upset?

In what way does Banning come through for McCoy on his promise to find a place for him?

Why is McCoy so upset when he learns that Ernie Sage is from a wealthy family?