

A Map of Betrayal Study Guide

A Map of Betrayal by Ha Jin

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



Contents

A Map of Betrayal Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
1949, 1950, 1953, 1954.....	5
1955 - 1958.....	9
1959, 1961, 1962 and 1963.....	12
1964 - 1969.....	15
1970 - 1980.....	18
Characters.....	22
Symbols and Symbolism.....	25
Settings.....	27
Themes and Motifs.....	28
Styles.....	30
Quotes.....	32



Plot Summary

“Map of Betrayal” by Ha Jin is the fictional story of Weimin “Gary” Shang who was a secret agent for Red China. His mission was to infiltrate the Eighth Bureau of the Chinese Nationalists’ internal security, the training organization for new recruits. Weimin is a well-educated young man and speak English fluently which is one of the reasons he is chosen for a much bigger job.

Weimin is urged by his superiors to apply for a foreign service position. It is suggested that he use the first name, Gary, so that he will appear less exotic to the Americans, the target that the Red Chinese have in mind for Gary Shang. He is accepted into foreign service and his first assignment for the Americans is as a radio translator in Okinawa. Gary is a young man who misses his family and his wife of just a few months. Although his marriage was arranged, he likes his attractive young wife, Yufeng and longs to return to his homeland and make a life with her.

However, destiny steps in and when the Americans decide to move operations out of Japan, they ask Gary to go with them. He wants to return to China but his operators cannot allow the homesickness of one of their low-level spies to make them miss this delicious opportunity. He is ordered to accept the position and move to the United States with his agency.

Fast-forward many years into the future. Lilian, Gary’s daughter, is an American who is teaching American history at Beijing Teachers College. She and her husband live in Maryland but she has accepted the teaching assignment in China because she has another important reason for being in the area. She is determined to uncover her father’s story – what really happened to him, what had been required of him, how his country used him and how it impacted him emotionally and psychologically. The two stories are told in tandem. The narrator’s description of the events occurring in Gary’s life during certain eras is followed by Lilian’s interpretation of the same timeframe. While the narrator’s account is based on “facts,” Lilian is focused on the danger and emotional stress that her father was forced to live under for literally decades. She feels for her father who she had a close relationship with.

Although she learns of Gary’s first wife and children – children Gary never got to see – and discovers that he had a mistress during his marriage to her mother, Lilian demonstrates her compassion and understanding for a man who was lonely and isolated and afraid and lived a lie for the majority of his life. The details of his eventual capture by the FBI, trial and imprisonment are made more heartbreaking when she learns that the Chinese government completely abandoned him during his ordeal.

Lilian is able to locate the remains of Gary’s first family. His wife had died years before. However, she is able to contact his first child, a daughter and her step-sister, Manrong, in China. She learns that Manrong had a twin, a boy, who died most probably of starvation when he was twelve. A bright spot in Lilian’s long pathway to understand the



story of her father is the discovery of Manrong's children, Juli and Benning, who are Lilian's only niece and nephew.

Lilian develops a relationship with both of these youngsters. She is also able to potentially save Benning's life. Ben is living in Boston and ultimately reveals that he is following in his grandfather's footsteps. He is a low-level spy who the FBI is on to. Lilian warns him and convinces him that another member of the Shang family should not destroy his life for the sake of a country that will only use and ultimately abandon him.



1949, 1950, 1953, 1954

Summary

Weimin is a young Communist secret agent who arrives in Shanghai at the beginning of 1949. His mission is to infiltrate the Nationalists' internal security system in the Eighth Bureau which trains hundreds of agents. The Communists focus on apprehending those who sabotage factories and disrupt transportation. Weimin is well-educated and speaks English fluently. He was just married one month before.

Weimin is encouraged by his Communist superiors to apply for a foreign service position under the alias, Gary Shang. He is offered a translator position with the Americans for \$145 a month. The Nationalists regime is crumbling with Communist armies moving into Shanghai. Gary is ordered to go with the Americans when they leave for Okinawa. He is not given time to say goodbye to his family or young wife.

Lilian teaches an American history course at Beijing Teachers College but makes time to reconstruct her father's story. She tracks down Bingwen Chu, a comrade of Gary's. He tells her that Gary loved China and was a patriot. He was a special agent, one of China's highest ranking, known as a "nail" – a "goner" who had to stay and die in his position. He was a hero and a legend. Bingwen had met Gary's first wife, Yufeng, only once. He gives Lilian an old address he had for Yufeng who had twins, a boy and a girl. Lilian is determined to find her father's first family.

Gary works as an official translator for a U.S. radio station in Okinawa. The Americans don't trust Chiang Kai-shek believing he is corrupt. They had granted the Nationalists \$2 billion in aid with the assumption that they'd stop the Communists, but the money vanished with no positive outcome. Since the Americans don't plan to defend Taiwan, Gary feels China should attack at once. He wanted to see his country unified. The Korean civil war is breaking out. General MacArthur lands with 18,000 marines in Inchon and drives the Communists back. Gary fears that war could break out between China and America. Gary translates the warnings from China to America direr than issued so that the U.S. pays attention. Gary feels isolated and lonely.

Lilian misses her husband, Henry. The email every day and speak once a week. Lilian is an American and is her parents' only child, half Chinese and half Irish. She wonders how old her relatives are and where they are if not in Shandong, her father's village. A student drives Lilian to Shandong province.

The quasi-military life in Okinawa brings discipline to his life. He had been devastated when the Chinese Army ambushed U.S. troops east of the Yalu. Such conflicts would only prolong his duty. He is sent to Pusan, Korea, to help interrogate the thousands of POWs from the Chinese and North Korean armies. Gary is given orders to obtain photos of the die-hard anti-communists who are among them and send them through the channels. Gary works diligently to find out who the anti-communist leaders are,



taking and gathering photos when possible. He receives word from Bingwen Chu about where in Tokyo to take them.

Lilian finds the home of the village chief of Shandong who tells her there are more than a dozen Shang households but none were Weimin's immediate family. Yufeng left during the famine in the early 1960s. She meets with Weiren, a cousin of Gary's, and asks about Yufeng's current whereabouts. Yufeng went to the northeast. The boy twin died of a brain inflammation. Weiren gives her Yufeng's last known address. Lilian tells him that her father had remarried because the Party wanted him to start another family abroad. He died in America long ago.

In 1954, Gary is granted a three-week vacation. He travels to Hong Kong hoping to cross over to Guangzhou, although he does not have a passport from Red China. He has not talked to his family in five years. He reunites with Bingwen who gives him a bonus and informs him that he's now a Party member with the rank of captain. Bingwen tells him that his family is fine. He will not be allowed to visit them. His cover could be blown. If his agency returns to the U.S., he is to go with them. Under no circumstances is he to try to contact his family.

Lilian writes Yufeng a letter asking to meet with her. After she gets no response, Lilian travels to the northeast by train to look for her. She hears from passengers that a recruit who wants to join the military has to pay for it. Lilian got off at the Fushan station. Lilian checks into an inn called Home For Everyone. She arrives in Gutai Village and learns from the village chief that Yufeng had died several years before. She looks up Manrong, her half-sister who has a seamstress shop. She learns that Manrong had never met their father. Lilian tells her that he loved Yufeng. He died thirty years before but never forgot her. Manrong breaks into tears and calls her daughter out to meet her aunt.

Analysis

Learning that the story takes place in Shanghai in 1949 is integral to understanding the heart of the story and the culture and background of the main character. Immediately, there is a sense that young Weimin (Gary) is getting into something that he does not feel completely comfortable with. He is a young man with a gentle nature. The world of espionage evokes images of violence and dirty tricks. This man is most concerned with returning to his home village, his family and his new wife.

Gary's marriage to Yufeng was an arranged one. Although he does not love her, Gary is willing to make a go of it. Gary is part of his culture which is a society that has great respect for its elders and the decisions of its elders. His compliance in this matter reveals that he is flexible and open to compromise and situations that are less than ideal for him personally – a perfect individual for the career he was embarking upon. Gary would find many years later, that he had to basically give up his personal life for his country. A less compliant person may have had more problems adhering to this life sentence away from those he loved and the village and culture that he was part of.



Being compliant certainly helped Gary perform his secret agent responsibilities. However, being smart and astute was just as important. Gary is able to quickly assess the perils facing his country – Red China – and immediately formulate a scenario in which his homeland could avoid damage or defeat. A perfect example of this occurred at the beginning of his career. He saw a schism between Chiang Kai-shek who led the Nationalists and the Americans. He recognized at once that Red China had a window of opportunity to attack the Nationalists because they were vulnerable due to the lack of support from the West.

Gary is an emotional man who is truly dedicated to his homeland. His emotionalism is probably not the greatest trait to have for a secret agent. He is devastated when he learns that the Chinese Army attacked U.S. troops. He fears that a war will break out between Red China and the Americans. He is wise enough to know that Red China would not have a prayer against the U.S. On a more self-focused note, Gary wants to return to his homeland and give up the world of espionage. Should a major war break out, he knows that his service will only be prolonged.

The other story that is interwoven throughout the book is that of Lilian, Gary's American daughter. It's many years later after Gary's story was over that Lilian is on a quest to learn the truth about her father and his career. Lilian is getting older; her husband is already retired. She wants to discover Gary's entire story because she doesn't like the legacy that he currently owns – a mole, a nail and a betrayer of trust. Her determination to tell his story is becoming all the more urgent as she ages. It is up to Lilian to tell her father's story. Once she is gone, there will be no one else to do so.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Gary think that the schism between the Americans and Chiang Kai-shek is an opportunity for Red China? How does Gary try to put his "thumb on the scale" when he provides intelligence about this relationship to his Chinese superiors?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Gary upset when the Chinese Army ambushes U.S. troops? How do Gary's Chinese superiors exploit Gary's U.S. mission in Pusan, Korea, for their own purposes?

Discussion Question 3

How is Gary manipulated by his superiors to ensure his continued cooperation and compliance?



Vocabulary

tumultuous, lucid, gesticulated, cadence, gargantuan, impasse, cadre, propaganda, blatant, lisinopril, nonplussed, viscerally, emissaries, napalm, flummoxed, gaffe, feudalistic, bamboozled, petulant, protracted, imperialism, fastidious, anachronistic



1955 - 1958

Summary

In 1955 just before Gary's 31st birthday, he is notified that his agency is return to the U.S. He is asked to go with them, and he accepts the offer. They travel by ship to San Francisco. He takes a train across country and is enthralled with the beautiful country. The agency opens its office in Virginia as an extended unit of the CIA. He is impressed with the wages, the libraries, street lights, and supermarkets - but he feels isolated, alone and afraid. He longs to return to China. He meets 26-year old Nellie McCarrick, a waitress at a small local restaurant. A relationship develops between them. He tells her that he has no family in China.

Gary's plan is to become naturalized as soon as possible so he'll have access to more-classified documents. The People's Liberation Army had attacked the Yijangshan Islands. The Communists were victorious but it was a political disaster. The U.S. Congress passed the Formosa Resolution which granted President Eisenhower the power to protect Taiwan. There is a new threat of war between the U.S. and Red China. Gary has noticed documents from Taipei about the role of General Sun Liien who had commanded the Nationalists. Sun is suspected of attempting a coup against Chiang Kai-shek and is relieved of his duty and arrested. Gary takes photos of Sun's file and passes them off to Bingwen in Hong Kong. Gary is given permission to marry Nellie. The government will take care of his family in China. He spends \$94 on an engagement ring.

Manrong insists that Lilian stay with her. Manrong shows Lillian a photo of Yufeng and one of Gary and Yufeng on their wedding day. Lilian tells Manrong that their father knew of her and her brother. Yufeng knew that their father was on an important mission overseas. Lilian does not tell her that he was a Chinese spy caught by the FBI. Yufeng tells Lilian about the famine and her brother's death. Yufeng has a son, Benning, whose whereabouts are unknown. When Lilian leaves she promises to visit in the next year or two.

Gary and Nellie get married in the summer of 1956 and move to an apartment in Alexandria. Her parents accept their marriage but do not take to Gary who they thought is too introverted. Gary feels guilty because he is committing bigamy. Nellie quits her job and wants to start a family. She becomes pregnant in the fall of 1956 and Lilian is born on July 16, 1957. Gary is pleased but he had silently been hoping for a boy. In 1957, Gary follows international events with USSR taking center stage. He sees that his country is an underdog to the two superpowers – the U.S. and USSR. Conditions in China are awful – the country is in shambles and the people are suffering. He has no intelligence to deliver to Bingwen so he does not travel to Hong Kong. Bingwen assures him that they are keeping an eye on his family for him.



Lilian is delighted when her niece, Juli, comes to Beijing for a visit. She is twenty-six and was a greeter at Wal-Mart but left that position to become a bar-singer in a nightclub. Later she joined an acting troupe and hopes to break into TV or movies. She tells Lilian anecdotes about her brother, Benning. Juli promises to send Lilian his email address. Juli asks about Gary. Lilian only tells her that he had missed Yufeng and his job forced him to live a displaced life.

Although he has feelings for Nellie, Gary thinks of his previous life with Yufeng. He feels guilty about leaving her. He is grateful that she looks after his aging parents. Gary is known as the intelligence community's top translator of Chinese. Gary is eager to become naturalized so that he can access Secret and Top Secret documents. He is preoccupied with events occurring in China. U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles has secret talks with Chiang Kai-shek on a strategy to deter Red China aggression. A nuclear attack is ruled out. Gary takes photos of documents containing the conversation between Dulles and Chiang. He travels to Hong Kong and delivers the photos to Bingwen. During this visit, Gary learns that he is the father of eight-year-old twins. The news makes Gary feel worse and long to return to his Chinese family. Bingwen reminds him of his duty to the Party and country. He has to stay in the enemy's camp.

Lilian travels to Guangzhou to watch Juli perform in a concert. Juli is involved with the band's manager, Wuping, who is older and married. Lilian is impressed with Juli's singing. The final act features a couple who feigns sexual acts but is stopped when a team of police rush on stage and apprehend them. Juli fears that the police will be after her. The police do call her in later for questioning but do not detain her.

Analysis

Gary represses his own wishes and desires for the sake of his country. He is not selfless, because he doesn't do so completely out of his free will – again it's out of fear and happenstance and no options that he stays. One way for a person to live a lie is to buy into it. Gary does so by determining a way to be more effective in the role that he's playing for his country. He will be more effective if he becomes a naturalized citizen. Doing so will allow him to change his status from attaché to regular full-time employee in the CIA. With that new status he will have access to secret and top secret information.

Perhaps he thinks deep down that if he does an even better job that his request to return home will be looked upon more favorably. But Gary is fooling himself. He is a dedicated and thorough worker in both of his jobs. He will be rewarded by his Chinese operatives with laudatory remarks and deposits in his bank but they will not let him go. He is too integral to their goals to release. China has Gary gripped in its hand and will only liberate him if he is no longer useful to them. And if he's no longer useful, he may face a punishment that is far worse than his current existence. There are no good options for Gary. The status quo, as bad as it is, is better than any alternative.



Gary's superiors do their part in making the continued employment of Gary with the CIA more certain. They urge him to marry his American girlfriend. It doesn't matter to them that Gary is committing bigamy. They are throwing him a bone to stay quiet and content. Gary's marriage to Nellie does not dispel his desire to return home. If anything, it complicates his life in a negative way and makes him yearn more for the familiar, for the homeland that has been so idealized in his mind that nothing else could ever measure up to it.

Gary's handler, Bingwen, always assures Gary that his family is being watched over and cared for. But as bright and as knowledgeable as Gary is, can he genuinely believe him? He sees the CIA reports that China is in shambles, people are desperate and starving to death. It must be an effort for Gary to discount the reports he reads and still believe that his family is safe. Does he consider that he is being told his family is safe in exchange for his silence and continued cooperation? There is always the unstated threat that dissidents and their families suffer when they are found guilty of betrayal. When Bingwen senses Gary's frustration in not seeing his family, he gently reminds him of his duty to the Party and country. But Gary doesn't have to be reminded; he lives it every day.

Discussion Question 1

What impresses Gary about America? How does Gary feel when he first arrives in Virginia?

Discussion Question 2

Gary has plans to become a naturalized citizen. What will that change in status mean to him personally and professionally?

Discussion Question 3

Manrong had never met her father. Discuss why Manrong collapsed into tears when she learns that he died thirty years before.

Vocabulary

wariness, galvanized, predisposed, rambunctious, bigamy, capriciously, boilerplate, relativism, incarceration, plagiarism, ambience, incapacitate, anthology, unabashedly, mercurial, lucrative, ambiguity, moniker, obtuse



1959, 1961, 1962 and 1963

Summary

Gary is awakened by the cries of his two-year-old daughter. Nellie has become neglectful of Lilian. She tells Gary she is tired of Lilian and him. Gary slaps and beats her. In their 25 years of marriage, it is the only time he hit Nellie. They argued but he learned to just walk out of the room. Nellie wants to move to a quiet residential area. Gary agrees but first they have to save the down payment.

Gary is concerned about the communes that are being built in China. The communes in the Soviet Union were a disaster. China is selling the communes as a way to surpass the U.S. and the UK. Gary is preoccupied by the changes in his country. He often debates the relationship between China and Russia with a co-worker who hates Communism. Despite the distance and ocean between him and China, Gary feels he had his finger on the pulse of his country. He compiles data for his Chinese superiors which indicate that Americans believed China might implode.

When Gary meets with Bingwen, his comrade concedes that China has problems – its steel production has shown no increase and the villagers will have nothing to eat if the harvest is bad. Word from the top is still that Gary must stay in America and become a mole in the U.S. Intelligence system. Gary knows he must be compliant so that his family is taken care of. Gary takes his money from a Hong Kong account. When he returns home, he tells Nellie that his cousin repaid an old loan and that he now has the down payment for a house.

At school, Lilian attends a lecture on managing China's cyberspace. The speaker is Professor Fang who warns that China's enemies are penetrating their communications systems and trying to sabotage the Party's leaders. Someone shouts for Fang to get off the stage. He is pelted with shoes and eggs and led off the stage. Voices demand online freedom. Lilian hears from Benning who runs a small software and computer parts store in Boston.

In 1961, Gary and Nellie move to a ranch home on a quiet street in Alexandria. The year is a chaotic one for Gary. He becomes a naturalized citizen in the spring. He passes a polygraph exam with the CIA in order to become a regular employee. He reads secret reports that China is in shambles. People in his home region are suffering from dropsy, starvation and other conditions. There are rumors of cannibalism. Gary becomes friendly with Suzie Chao, a Mandarin broadcaster at Voice of America. They often talk and share what they hear about Taiwan and China. Gary relates to her because although she is an American citizen, she tells him she will always feel that she is Chinese. Their relationship escalates to a personal, intimate and very passionate one.

Gary begins writing analyses of the voluminous amount of secret files he reads. He notes that the U.S. is aware of the dire conditions in China and that it could be



vulnerable to a U.S. attack. He travels to Hong Kong and provides the reports to Bingwen. He learns that the twins are fine but his parents had both passed away from old age the winter before. Gary is grief-stricken and is seething that his superiors had kept him from his family all those years.

When Lilian returns to the U.S., she visits Benning (Ben). Ben remarks that Gary spent a miserable life in the U.S. and sacrificed himself for his country. Ben has been working hard for China. Lilian comments that one's country should not be placed above one's loved ones. Ben says he loves China unconditionally. Lilian responds that it's a two-way street; a country should not betray its citizens. Ben knows that Gary was a top Chinese spy. Ben likes America but it's corruptive and seductive. He doesn't want to love it.

Gary is surprised that the chaos in China has not gained more attention. The Cuban Missile Crisis takes attention away from everything else. Suzie feels their relationship can't continue. Gary tells her he can't divorce Nellie. He visits Bingwen in Hong Kong in the fall of 1963. Bingwen tells him the intelligence he is providing is invaluable. He tells Gary to contact Father Kevin Murray in Baltimore in case of emergency. At the CIA, Gary is involved in discussions on how to stop Red China in North Vietnam. Gary steals a report in which the issues are laid from Thomas' office. He photographs it and passes the copy off to Father Murray.

Lilian hears from Juli that officers from the local National Security bureau questioned her about Lilian's activities in Guangzhou. They asked if Lilian told her about Gary. She was warned to stay away from Lilian. The police had also questioned Juli's parents. Lilian tells Ben about the police questioning Juli. He cautions Lilian to avoid politics in messages to Juli or on phone calls. Her phone is probably bugged. She promises to let Ben have Gary's journal when she completes his story.

Analysis

Gary's compliant nature proved to part of the ordeal that was to become a daily challenge. Gary's hopes and dreams were to return to his wife and his homeland. Yet, when the Americans shut down operations in Okinawa, where Gary worked as an interpreter, he had the chance to go with them. Not one cell in his body wanted to go, but his superiors found the prospects of having a spy implanted in the very heart of U.S. intelligence was too alluring to pass up. He was ordered to accept the Americans' offer to move to the U.S. with them.

Gary was driven by more than dedication to duty and a compliant nature. At one point, Gary had to realize that his dream of returning home was one that had little chance of being fulfilled. Gary's people-pleasing nature was partly what got him entwined in something that was not a natural fit for him. But there was another force that kept him in tow – the specter of harm, perhaps even death, to him and his family. It wasn't consequences from the Americans that he feared; it was repercussions from his Chinese superiors should he want to turn in his spy kit. Those who did not comply with



the wishes of the Red Chinese government were considered dissidents, and dissidents were known to have a short shelf-life and to mysteriously disappear forever.

The author illustrates the irony of Gary's life and career. The longer Gary stayed in his position, the more entrenched he became and the more dangers and uncertainty he faced. Sadly for Gary, his outstanding performance that pleased his superiors also served to diminish the chances that he could ever leave and return home.

There was another layer to Gary's "chosen" profession. He was a complicated person. While he wanted to go home more than anything, he truly thought that he could help his country and that he had an obligation to do so. There was a naiveté about Gary in that he idealized a partnership, even an alliance, between Red China and America. In his lack of sophistication, he thought he could help make that happen. He wasn't facing the reality of the wide divide between the two countries and ideologies and the remote possibility of an alliance. Another dream that Gary had was to see China as one – to see mainland China and Taiwan as one again. That eventuality has proven, to the current day, to not be in the cards.

The sadness of a life of isolation and separation is captured when Lilian travels to mainland China and tells Gary's eldest child, Lilian's half-sister, that Gary died thirty years before. Gary had never seen his twin boy and girl who were made to live without a father by the country that he served.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Gary treat Nellie so harshly? Discuss how his behavior is against his nature and why he was not able to control his anger.

Discussion Question 2

What are the students upset about at Professor Fang's lecture at Lilian's school? Describe how life would be different in a closed society like Communist China for young people.

Discussion Question 3

What signs is Ben showing that are troublesome to Lilian? How could her knowledge of her father's life guide her in helping him?

Vocabulary

Raucously, obscenities, prudent, nascent, technocrat, arduous, tempestuous, limpid, insurmountable, nouveaux, pragmatic, sumptuous, ostentatiously, sophomoric, Politburo, galvanized, pariah, prescient



1964 - 1969

Summary

Suzie convinces Gary to see her again. He tells her to find a single man. His life is too complicated. But he caves to her charms and resumes the affair. Nellie discovers the affair in the summer of 1964. Nellie confronts him and they have a huge fight. He will agree to a divorce only if he can keep Lilian. Nellie has a brief affair with her boss. The conflicts between her parents are negatively impacting Lilian. Nellie talks to her sister on the phone about her problems; Lilian reports everything to Gary.

In late 1964, China shocks the world with the testing of its first atomic bomb. As a result, the U.S. increases reconnaissance missions flown by U-2 spy planes, most of which are shot down by Chinese missiles. Under the code name, Thunderclaps, the CIA and Taiwan form a group of paratroopers with expertise in demolition to be dropped into China to destroy its nuclear facilities. There were already secret agents in place on China mainland. Gary photographs documents about the operation and passes them off to Bingwen. China apprehends the secret agents and thwarts Operation Thunderclap. Gary is notified by Father Murray that he has been promoted to lieutenant colonel. The promotion comes with an increase in pay. He assumes that the additional money will be sent to Yufeng. He doesn't know that she hadn't been receiving money from the government for four years.

Lilian's student Minmin is offered a job with the military which she doesn't want. Lilian receives a disturbing message from Juli. Her boyfriend had taken up with another woman, she was out of the troupe and Wuping had beaten her up. Ben tells Lilian that he is traveling Guangzhou to help Juli. His company will pay for the plane. He will not resort to violence but Ben is well connected and Wuping will listen to reason. Her conversation with Ben reminds her of Gary. Lilian tells Ben to contact Minmin while he's in China. When Ben returns, he tells Lilian that all is fine with Juli; she is with her parents. Ben had threatened to expose Wuping's father for tax evasion. To avoid the scandal, Wuping gave Juli 50,000 yuan. Ben warns Lilian to be careful writing to Minmin because of the military's interest in her. If she turns down the job offer she'll be considered a dissident.

Since summer of 1966, Gary has lost contact with Bingwen. The country had fallen into complete disarray. Father Murray isn't able to contact anyone either. The Red Guard is running the show. Gary follows the news with a heavy heart. He and Thomas discuss Mao and his appeal to youths, even some students at Georgetown carry his little red book around. Gary tells Thomas that Mao is China's biggest problem. His huge ego prevents him from focusing on the needs of the country and his people. Mao should have retained Soviet aid for China but he would not be subservient to Khrushchev. Most of China's problems can be laid at Mao's feet. Gary nearly bites his tongue. He had never spoken of the supreme leader in these terms.



Since there is no one to pass it to, Gary no longer collects intelligence. Nellie has accepted Gary's mistress. Perhaps he needs someone from the same culture. Gary discovers a document that indicates a possible Soviet attack on China through Mongolia. He is frustrated because he can't send them the information. In 1969, conflicts break out between the Soviets and Chinese. There is speculation that the two Communist nations may engage in all out war. The intelligence that Gary is privy to indicates that there would be little hope for China in such a battle. He is anxious to inform his Chinese superiors of the perils ahead for the nation. But Gary's life is without stress and peaceful now. Should he risk disturbing it? The Apollo moon landing in July 1969, confirms America's superiority to the world.

Henry has a package delivered to the house. It is a box of microchips that he ordered for Ben. Ben had asked him to order them because his last name was difficult in placing orders. Ben had promised to give Henry some of his profit for doing him the favor. Lilian discovers on the Internet that some Chinese nationals are shipping banned microchips that can be used for aircraft and missiles to China. Ben assures her that the microchips are not illegal. She pleads with him not to do anything illegal. The FBI could catch him and he'd be imprisoned. She will send him some articles on Gary to see how he messed his life up. She sends him seven of the articles the next day.

Analysis

The kind and gentle Gary beats Nellie, his American wife, because she is neglecting their young daughter, Lilian. However, there were also underlying passions and pain driving Gary, and he took them out on Nellie. When Lilian cries and her mother does not tend to her, Gary envisions his two older children who do not have him to nurture and protect them. Lilian is there with him and he can defend her against her uncaring mother. Lilian is symbolic of his other children who are thousands of miles away and who he probably senses he will never have a relationship with and never be able to protect.

It is against Gary's gentle nature to beat a woman. The frustration of years of separation from his other family explodes within and he strikes out not just against Nellie but all those who have kept him from his family. How Gary maintains the hope that he can one day return to his homeland is mystifying. Perhaps hanging onto that dream is the only thing that keeps him together, keeps him from falling apart and taking an action that would cause him even more suffering. Gary strikes out at Nellie who is an American. Perhaps deep down he blames the Americans for his isolation and loneliness. If the Americans were friendly to his homeland – if they had allied with China – he wouldn't be there. Nellie is a symbol of the enemy who he subliminally blames for his misery.

But frustrations over culture are not exclusive to one being in a foreign land. A speaker at Lilian's school lectures on the danger of cyber attacks by America. But the views of the Chinese students who Lilian teaches are leap years away from those of Gary and others in his era. The speaker is pelted with eggs and shoes with students shouting for on-line freedom. If Gary could only hear those voices he would feel a measure of



satisfaction that the Chinese youth are rebelling against the secretive and dictatorial government that Gary was forced to live and work under. This passage provides a brilliant contrast between times and attitudes in a closed society like Communist China.

Gary's dissatisfaction with his marriage and secret agent status that keeps him in a foreign land makes him vulnerable to the comfort and companionship of another woman who had a similar background and came from the same culture. By having an affair with Suzie, Gary helps and hurts himself. She is at first an escape from the stress and strain of his very existence. She represents home in a somewhat distorted sense. However, she eventually wants more. He can't get a divorce because there would be too many questions and too much scrutiny. Suzie does not yet know of his entanglements and winds up getting hurt by the kind-hearted Gary who really wants to hurt no one – not even his sworn enemy.

Lilian realizes through her increasingly close relationship with her nephew, Benning, that unless she corrects lies about her father, that his distorted story could leave a legacy of even more pain and suffering. Although at first she tries to deny it, Lilian comes to realize that Benning is involved in spying. The pressure is on Lilian to correct the record or else her family could well lose another victim to the dark world of espionage.

Discussion Question 1

How did Lilian show her allegiance to her father when she was a small child? What indications are there that she has a closer affinity to her father? If so, why does she?

Discussion Question 2

How must Gary have felt when he lost contact with his Chinese superior? Discuss what choices he could have made as a result of this loss of contact and the ramifications of each choice.

Discussion Question 3

Why is Lilian suspicious of Henry's involvement with Ben and his microchips? What compels Henry to help Ben, and what dangers might both of them face?

Vocabulary

confabulations, phlegmatic, profanities, taciturn, reconnaissance, infallible, inane, exemplified, emblazoned, incendiary, charisma, plethora, doldrums, chauvinists, warmonger, embargoed



1970 - 1980

Summary

In August 1969, there are reports that the Soviet Union is planning an attack on China's nuclear facilities. Gary is convinced by the reports he reads that the Soviets are intent on attacking China. The U.S. remains mainly neutral but leans towards China. Gary envisions the U.S. and China becoming allies. In an effort to steer his superiors in that direction, Gary writes a report on a meeting between Soviet and U.S. officials. It is an opportune time for China to develop a relationship with the U.S.

Gary gets word through Father Murray that Bingwen has returned to his office. Gary flies to Hong Kong and provides Bingwen with intelligence reports from the last four years. Bingwen tells him the information is invaluable and that Gary will be paid well.

Ben enjoys reading about Gary. He confides in Lilian that his girlfriend, Sonya, is pregnant. They are arguing about what to do. He wants her to have an abortion. He's afraid he'll be like Gary and have a complicated life if he marries Sonya, a non-Chinese woman. He loves Sonya but has bigger responsibilities. He is dedicated to his country.

Mao is impressed with Gary's reports, saying that Gary is "worth four armored divisions." For years, the U.S., who considers the Soviet Union as its archenemy, had wanted to establish a relationship with China. Ultimately, President Nixon visits in February 1972 and relations are normalized by 1979. Gary travels to Hong Kong where he receives a promotion to vice minister of national security and is given \$20,000. Three months later Gary is honored by the CIA for distinguished service. Gary accepts the award with thanks and humility.

Ben and Sonya are fighting over whether to have the baby or not. Ben finally admits to Lilian that he cannot have a family until he figures out what happened to his grandfather. Lilian sends him more information on Gary.

Suzie has grown frustrated with her relationship with Gary. After she promises to never say a word to anyone, he tells her his entire story – about his first family and the espionage. She is dissolved into tears. She has a better understanding of him and their relationship is improved.

Gary no longer digs for intelligence; he just picks up what happens to come along. After so many stressful years, he is taking it easy. His infrequent reports that he passes through Father Murphy are valued in China. Gary is considered "China's ear to the heartbeat of the United States."

Ben has delved into his grandfather's past and has doubts about him. Lilian tells Ben that he loved his grandmother but was a complicated man. He was traumatized by the separation from his family. Lilian is sure that Gary loved China until the day he died. Ben



worries that he, like Gary, will love two countries and be torn between them. It is what is keeping him from settling down.

Gary passes films to Father Murray twice each year; \$1,000 is deposited into his Hong Kong account each time. Gary's health is declining and he thinks of early retirement. Nellie wants to buy the bakery she works for. Gary can cover some of it but asks Bingwen for \$70,000. The money is deposited in his Hong Kong account. He begins transferring the money in small amounts so the FBI doesn't notice. Nellie buys the bakery in her name. With Nellie secure in her new business, Gary requests that he be returned home to China.

The FBI visit Lilian and Henry about the microchips which are banned from export to certain countries. Lilian tells the agents that Henry bought them for Ben. The agents tell them that shipping the chips to China is a crime. After the agents leave, Henry and Lilian discuss the probability that Ben is involved in espionage. Lilian plans to visit Ben later that week to warn him.

Beijing disapproves Gary's request for early retirement. Unknown to Gary, the FBI had been following him ever since the money transfers and he is targeted as the mole. The interview lasts seven hours after which he is cuffed and arrested. Agents attempt to arrest Father Murray but he had fled. Gary refuses to plead guilty opting for a trial in which he is accused of espionage. He denies the charges and claims to be a patriot of China and the U.S. However, the unanimous verdict is guilty and Gary is given 121 years in prison and \$3 million in fines. He publicly asks for the Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping to intervene. The Chinese deny knowing who Gary is.

Lilian only visited Gary once in prison. After she heard of his suicide, she had a breakdown. Ben confesses that he is a spy, but nothing in the realm of Gary. They visit Suzie in Montreal. Ben knows that he could be arrested at any time. If Ben defects, his family would be in danger. Lilian points out that his country has used and betrayed him. Suzie had appealed directly to Ding Hao to help Gary but was told that China had nothing to do with Gary. Ultimately, Ben defects and flees with Sonya to make a new life. He asks Lilian to help his family in China. Time passes without word from Ben. Lilian hopes the silence means that he is okay.

Analysis

After decades, Gary still longs to return home. He knows that his parents died, and he grieved over the loss and the pain of not being able to hold their hands as they lay sick and dying. Gary's dream of an alliance with China is heartened when he reads intelligence that the Soviets are intent on attacking China. The U.S. officially remains neutral but Gary sees reports that tell him that the U.S. leans toward China because the Soviet Union is its archenemy. He supplies this "positive" intelligence to his Chinese superiors in hopes that it would bolster talks between the U.S. and China.



Gary is doing his job but the underlying passion that drives him has not changed. He envisions a perfect world in which China and the U.S. are allies and his role as a secret agent in the CIA is no longer a viable one. Such a scenario would free him to return to his homeland.

Gary grows closer to Suzie when he finally tells her his true status. He is finally, after literally decades, able to be himself with someone other than his handler that he sees only infrequently. Suzie proves to be a true friend. She understands the miserable and lonely life that he has been living. Their relationship improves and she no longer makes demands that she now knows he could never fulfill. Telling Suzie the truth was a liberating experience for a man who has lived in the shadow of his public persona. Suzie is a symbol of his homeland. Telling her the truth was a way for him to feel if even for just an instant how returning home would feel.

Lilian feels drawn into the world of her father when young Ben is mimicking his grandfather's life. Although she warns Ben against going down that dark path, it somehow gives her the opportunity to go back in time and see her father when he was young and innocent like Ben, to see how he'd been drawn into something nefarious. As she counsels Ben against his continuing in his low-level espionage work, she is actually lecturing her father. Why did you do that, Father? Why did you put your country above me and my mother?

When she tells Ben that there are more important things than one's responsibility to country, she is actually talking to Gary. Lilian is grateful that she is able to convince Ben to flee just as the FBI is closing in on him. If only she could have warned her father. A child's guilt is usually spawned from events and things that she has no control over. Lilian's guilt and shame about her father's crimes has remained a part of her psyche for a lifetime. By turning Ben in another direction, she has a measure of resolution. Suzie commented that Ben resembled Gary. Lilian couldn't save her father but she saved his legacy by telling his story and saving his grandson who represented the young Gary.

Discussion Question 1

How is Ben paralleling his grandfather's life and career? Why is it important for him to have a deeper understand of his grandfather?

Discussion Question 2

What mistake does the normally cautious Gary make that leads to his exposure as a mole? Gary is very bright and savvy in the dangers involved in being a spy. Why does he take the risk that leads to his arrest?



Discussion Question 3

What confirms to Lilian that Gary was betrayed? How does she use that knowledge to help her nephew? Describe the resolution that Lilian achieved in her quest to learn the true story of her father.

Vocabulary

gambit, fondant, animosity, sumptuous, syllabus, harried, humongous, pessimistic, torpid, cognizant, paltry, umbrage, repatriated, crème-de-la-crème, sanctimonious, nefarious



Characters

Weimin “Gary” Shang

Weimin “Gary” Shang was a secret agent for Red China. As a young man, he had an advantage of his fears by having an excellent education and learning to speak fluent English. His education and language skills attributed to the government seeking him out for espionage work. His first mission was to infiltrate the internal security system of Red China’s number one enemy, the Chinese Nationalists.

Weimin does so well that he is pushed to apply for a foreign service position with the Americans. It is suggested that he use the first name, Gary, so that he will not seem as “foreign” to the U.S. officials. Gary impresses the Americans and soon he is serving as a radio translator for U.S. intelligence in Okinawa. Even at the early stage of his long career in espionage, he longs to return home to his homeland and family. He had been married only a few months when he transferred to Japan. His parents had arranged his marriage but he was happy with his young and attractive new wife and wanted to make a life with her. But it was not to be.

Gary’s superiors instructed him to move with his American agency back to the U.S. They saw in him the unique position to infiltrate American intelligence at the highest order. Gary is not happy with this turn of events but he has no choice but to go. Gary spends the next 30 years in the U.S. as a translator of Chinese for the CIA. Over those years, he turns over valuable information to Red China and lived with the hope of someday returning to his home and family. His handlers give him permission to marry an American woman named Nellie. He has a 25 year marriage to her and has one daughter, Lilian. Gary didn’t learn that he was the father of twins until they were eight-years old. He never returned to China and was never able to see his children.

The CIA suspects they have a mole in their operation. Due to some risky and questionable financial dealings, the FBI begins to focus on Gary as the possible mole. When they confront him, he confesses to everything. He is tried for espionage and uses the defense that he truly loved both countries. But the jury didn’t buy it. He was convicted of all charges and sentenced to spend 120 years in prison. It was Red China’s official stance that they didn’t know who he was. Gary’s suicide spared him from serving his sentence.

Lilian Cohen

Lilian Shang Cohen is the daughter of Weimin “Gary” Shang. She is half-Chinese from Gary’s side and half Irish-American from her mother’s, Nellie, side. As a little girl, Lilian always felt closer to her father. When her mother had telephone conversations about a divorce, Lilian reported everything she heard to her father. Gary adored his daughter and didn’t care how much a good education for her would cost. He saw to it that she



went to the best private schools as a youngster and then on to Bryn Mawr and Boston University for her higher education.

Lilian was a young student when her father was arrested for espionage. He was tried and convicted of all charges and sentenced to 121 years. She visited him only one time in prison. He couldn't bear a future in jail and committed suicide. Lilian was haunted ever since about the life Gary had been forced to live and about the sacrifices that were necessary for him to be a successful secret agent.

As the story unfolds, Lilian Shang Cohen is a teacher at the Beijing Teachers College. She is an American citizen and lives with her retired husband, Henry Cohen, in Maryland. Lilian is determined to learn the truth about her father's career as a secret agent and tell his story. Her suspicions that his dedication to his country was not returned in kind to him.

A bright and unexpected result for Lilian during her quest to find the truth is meeting a niece and nephew she didn't know she had. Lilian becomes close to both of these young people and is able to be there for both of them when they need her most.

Yufeng

Yufeng is Weimin's wife. It was an arranged marriage but Weimin liked Yufeng immediately. He traveled to Shanghai as an espionage officer just one month after their marriage.

Colonel Hsu

Colonel Hsu was puzzled by Weimin's interest in working in espionage. He advised Weimin that his education would have allowed him to make more money in foreign services.

George Thomas

George Thomas was a young official who interviewed and hired Gary as a translator for U.S. intelligence. Gary and Thomas were friends throughout Gary's entire career. Thomas' testimony at Gary's trial was emotional and as supportive as he could be under the circumstances.

Nellie

Nellie is Gary's American wife. They meet in a restaurant where she is a waitress. After they start dating, Nellie is anxious to get married. Gary's superiors think it's a good idea for him to have an American wife and urge him to marry Nellie even though he's already married and has a wife in China.



Bingwen

Bingwen is Gary's handler. He is the liaison between Gary's superiors and Gary. He delivers orders to Gary and Gary passes off his intelligence to Bingwen. Gary visits Bingwen frequently in Hong Kong to pass off the information. Bingwen always assures Gary that his Chinese family is being taken care of.

Juli

Juli is Lilian's niece. She is the daughter of Manrong, Gary's eldest daughter. Lilian discovered her half-sister and niece and nephew while she was in the process of trying to find the truth about her father's life. Lilian develops a close relationship with Juli who has aspirations to be a singer.

Benning

Benning is Lilian's nephew. Benning lives in Boston where he runs a computer parts shop. Lilian develops a close relationship with Benning and discovers that he is following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Gary. Benning admits that he is a low-level spy for Communist China. Lilian convinces him not to waste his life like his grandfather did. Benning flees with his pregnant girlfriend to parts unknown just as the FBI is closing in on him.

Father Murray

Father Kevin Murray is a priest at a Catholic church in Baltimore. He grew up in the Philippines and has Asian connections. He is an operative for Red China who Gary hands off some of his intelligence gathering to. After Gary's arrest, the FBI goes after Father Murray, but he has fled.

Suzie Chao

Suzie Chao is a Taiwanese woman who is the Mandarin broadcaster for the Voice of America. She and Gary become friendly because of their similar backgrounds. Eventually, the friendship turns into a love affair which continues on and off for decades. Suzie tries to help Gary when he seeks permission to retire and return to his homeland.

Henry Cohen

Henry Cohen is Lilian's retired husband. He receives a large profit from the sale of the microchips that he orders for Ben.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Formosa Resolution

The U.S. Congress passed the Formosa Resolution which granted President Eisenhower the power to protect Taiwan.

Ping-Pong Diplomacy

When tensions were high between the U.S. and Red China, a U.S. table tennis champion became friendly with a Chinese champ. It broke the ice between the two nations and led to President Nixon's visit in 1972 and the normalization of relations in 1979.

“Nail”

When referring to spies, a “nail” was a spy who was entrenched in his position. He would have to live and die in his false identity. Such a spy was “nailed” in. Gary Shang was known as a “nail.”

The Trojan Horse

The Nationalists' internal security system, Eighth Bureau, had a large-scale plan code-named “The Trojan Horse.” It trained a large number of agents who would be required to remain in the city after the Nationalists retreated to Taiwan.

Thunderclaps

Under the code name Thunderclaps, the CIA and Taiwan formed a group of paratroopers with expertise in demolition to be dropped into China to destroy its nuclear facilities. Intelligence about the operation was supplied to the Chinese by Gary.

CIA

When Gary enters foreign service, he works as an interpreter of Chinese in U.S. Intelligence. When he transfers with the unit to the U.S., he works at the CIA in Langley, Virginia. He works as an interpreter for the CIA and as a secret agent for Red China for 30 years.



Polygraph Examinations

Gary had learned how to calm himself before polygraph examinations so that he could pass them. When the CIA suspects that there is a mole within the agency, all employees are required to take a polygraph exam. Gary is very nervous when he takes this exam and feels he may have failed it. Not long after, the FBI is targeting him as the possible mole.

Microchips

Henry Cohen, Lilian's husband, is asked by Ben to order microchips for him. Ben claims that his Chinese name confuses deliverymen. In reality, Ben is ordered the banned microchips that are used in missiles to send to China.

Gary's Diary

Lilian has access to some of Gary's documents during her efforts to find the truth about his life. Gary left one of his diaries with Suzie Chao for safekeeping. She assumed he wanted her to eventually give it to Lilian.

Mole

The CIA suspected that there was a mole in their organization. A mole is a member of an organization who pretends to be loyal and dedicated to the same cause as the organization. In this story, Gary is an example of a mole. He was a secret agent for China yet was employed with the CIA for 30 years and gathered intelligence all that time.



Settings

Guangzhou

Gary Shang's homeland village was named Guangzhou. It was the village where his family lived for years after he entered into espionage. Although he longed to, he was never able to return there. In her quest to learn the truth about her father's life, Lilian visited there and met the few members of Gary's family that still existed.

Hong Kong

Gary took frequent trips to Hong Kong which was the designated place where he handed off intelligence to his handler, Bingwen. Gary's bank account there and his frequent trips to Hong Kong were the issues which drew the attention of the FBI when they were searching for a mole in the CIA.

Virginia

Although Gary's heart was in mainland China, Gary spent his adult life in Virginia. He worked at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, and lived with his wife and daughter in Alexandria.

Boston

When Lilian discovers that she has a niece and nephew, she is thrilled to learn that her nephew, Benning, lives and works in Boston. She becomes close to Benning but is disturbed when she learns that he is a low-level spy for China.

Beijing

Lilian lives in Maryland but accepts a teaching position at the Beijing Teachers College where she teaches American history and a graduate seminar in Asian American history and culture.



Themes and Motifs

Deception

The main theme of “The Map of Betrayal” is deception. The main character, Gary Shang, is a Chinese national who becomes a spy who infiltrates the very heart of U.S. intelligence as a Chinese interpreter for the Central Intelligence Agency. Deception is a natural element of Gary’s “profession.” He keeps up the front of being pro-American and anti-Red China for decades. He is not only able to deceive his American superiors and colleagues, he has become adept at passing polygraph examinations.

Gary, of course, can tell no one that he is a spy for China. Therefore, he is careful not to get too involved with people who will naturally ask questions about his job and his life in Red China before leaving it. Those are subjects that he cannot be truthful about and the fewer people he has to deal with the better. But Gary is lonely and feels isolated. His colleagues have families and personal lives that he aspires to. It was only natural that he eventually becomes emotionally involved with an American woman named Nellie.

Gary and Nellie marry but even such a close personal relationship does not allow for Gary’s honesty under the circumstances. He deceives Nellie for decades about what his role is with the Chinese government. Gary must be deceitful not only for his own survival but for his wife’s and later his daughter’s welfare as well. Gary was well aware that if his position was found out and exposed his family would be under U.S. scrutiny and in serious danger from his Chinese superiors.

Gary chose to be a spy and in so doing, he had no other pathway through the rest of his life other than one of lies and deceit.

Isolation and Loneliness

When the subject of espionage and secret agents comes up, many people would think of a glamorous life like that of the fictional British spy, James Bond. But the real world of espionage is much darker, and nothing about it has anything to do with glamour. Gary Shang began as a low-level spy in China but was quickly elevated to a more important position. He was the reluctant spy who was desperate to return to his wife and family in mainland China. However, his superiors ordered him to go with his U.S. intelligence unit when they shut up operations in Okinawa and returned to the States. Gary did not want to go. He wanted to return home. He really didn’t want to be a spy but there was no turning back. His destiny was to live a life of isolation, loneliness and fear of exposure.

In the United States, Gary was flung into a land and culture that he had absolutely no connection with. He had no friends and no family. As a spy, he knew that it was dangerous to develop close relationships with others because there are always questions and chances for slip-ups that would expose who Gary really was. Gary was devoted to his country but he also liked the U.S. and the people he worked for. He knew



that he was betraying those who trusted him with the secrets of their country. Although he had a love of America, he was dedicated to China.

As a result, Gary spent literally decades of loneliness feeling isolated and apart from the people in his new home and desperate to return home and see his family again. But it was not to be. Gary found out through his handler that he was the father of twins when the twins were eight-years-old. He never got to see those children. He married and had a child but his double-life precluded him from relaxing and thoroughly enjoying them because the possibility of being caught and arrested always loomed over him.

Conflicted Loyalties

Gary Shang is depicted as a kind gentle man who is not given to violence. He is a secret agent but one who specializes in photographing and copying documents not targeting enemy operatives for assassination. Gary is the epitome of a successful “mole.” Gary was hired by the enemy – in this case the United States – as a attaché. But once his status was normalized, he was hired as a regular employee even passing polygraph examinations to do so. Gary ultimately worked for the CIA while being a double-agent for 30 years. He was even honored in a ceremony and lauded with by his friend and boss for his great work and dedication.

Since there is every indication that Gary was a sweet-natured man who appreciated the kindness of others, it is not surprising that Gary began to form relationships and friendships with some of his colleagues. He had to be cautious, because getting too close to members of the opposition could be risky if not deadly. The main exception was his superior and friend, George Thomas. It was Thomas who, as a young intelligence officer, first hired the 30-year-old Gary Shang for their Okinawa operation.

Once they arrived in America for permanent assignment, Thomas took Gary under his wing figuring that the young Asian was lonely and missed his family. Thomas took Gary to nightclubs with him and introduced him to jazz which became a lifelong obsession for Gary. The two men were friends and truly liked each other. Deep down, Gary who was man of values and ethics even though he was a spy, had to feel guilt and shame for betraying his friend. It was Thomas who praised and honored Gary in a ceremony at CIA headquarters. Even after Gary was arrested by the FBI and exposed as a mole and secret agent for Red China, it was difficult for Thomas to testify against him. In fact, it was obvious from his testimony that he still admired and liked Gary.

Gary admired many things about America. In another time and life, he may have wanted to be a loyal American citizen. In many ways he was an American. He was a naturalized citizen. He had an American wife, American child and worked for one of the bastions of American government.

It was in Gary’s testimony at his trial that the unexpected results of a long association that a spy has with the enemy was best captured. Gary told the jury that he loved China and that he loved America.

Styles

Point of View

“Map of Betrayal” by Ha Jin is the story of Weimin “Gary” Shang who was a Chinese spy who infiltrated U.S. intelligence from the late 1940s through the late 1970s. It also tells the story of Lilian who is Gary’s daughter. The story of Gary is told through a narrator who provides a factual account of Gary’s years of espionage. Lilian is determined to find out the truth about Gary’s life as a Chinese spy for Red China living as an American and working for the CIA as a translator. The narration is told in third person omniscient while Lilian’s account about her father and his work reflects her emotional involvement in Gary’s life and her struggles to grasp the reality of his story and understand it.

The author, Ha Jin, is a native of China which he left in 1985. His own personal experiences with the communist country undoubtedly provide valuable insight into his crafting of this story. Throughout the story there are references to historic events that took place in China as well as the severe and protracted suffering of the Chinese people living under the oppressive regime.

Ha Jin is the author of other novels and story collections as well as books of poetry and essays. He has been awarded for his writing, having received the National Book award and the Asian American Literary Award among other honors. Ha Jin currently lives in Boston and is a professor of English at the University of Boston.

Language and Meaning

“Map of Betrayal” by Ha Jin is the story of Weimin “Gary” Shang, a Chinese man who spent his adult life as a secret agent for Red China. There are many references to the intelligence that Gary gathered for his country. After being assigned as a translator of Chinese with the CIA, his goal was to become a “naturalized” citizen so he could have access to more substantial documents that were categorized as “secret” and “top secret.” Gary was known as a very successful spy with his Red Chinese superiors. He was known as a “nail” which is a spy who must remain embedded – like a nail hammered into wood – in his assignment until he dies.

Gary’s performance was considered outstanding by superiors who promoted him to Vice Minister of National Security for the Chinese government. His outstanding work has proven invaluable to Communist China. He even comes to the attention of Chairman Mao who comments that he is more valuable than four armored divisions. Gary was considered to be, “China’s ear to the heartbeat of the United States.”

Gary was responsible to his Red Chinese superiors; however, he had very little direct contact with them. He passed the intelligence he stole and gathered from the United States to his “handler,” Bingwen, who he met when necessary in Hong Kong. Gary also



passed intelligence off to Father Murphy, a local man and priest whose sympathies were on the side of Red China.

There are Chinese and other foreign names, locations and references throughout the book. Gary's homeland village on mainland China was named Guangzhou. Gary's first assignment was in Okinawa, Japan. There were worries about war breaking out on the Mongolian Border between the Soviet Union and Red China. Gary had concerns that the U.S. and Red China would go to war when the latter was advancing in North Vietnam. Suzie is Taiwanese from Taipei. Gary's designated rendezvous location for intelligence exchanges with his handler is in Hong Kong.

Structure

"Map of Betrayal" by Ha Jin is separated in to main sections by years. There are no actual chapters or section numbers. For example, the first section is entitled simply, "1949." Subsequent sections are marked by a single year like, "1954" while other sections group years together like, "1966 – 1969."

The structure of "Map of Betrayal" has another unique element. The story of Gary Shang's involvement in espionage and his 30-year career is told in two ways. In each of the sections, there is a third-person narration that describes the events and occurrences of the year or years that are focused upon.

Following each of these sections, is a sub-section describing Gary's daughter's quest to find the truth about her father and his secret agent existence in America. She uncovers facts and anecdotal evidence of his life and career that mainly matches the narration. However, in these latter sections, Lilian injects the emotional and psychological pain and tribulations that Gary was forced to face isolated in an alien nation and living under the constant pressure and fear of being exposed.

The story comes full circle. Gary's grandson, Ben, who Gary never knew became a low-level spy for Communist China. Through her research on her father she became acquainted with Ben, and when she learned that he was going down the same dark path as her grandfather, she had learned enough about Gary's difficult life to convince Ben to abandon his career in espionage. He fled just as the FBI was closing in on him. Lilian hopes that not hearing from Ben is a good sign.



Quotes

He [Weimin] had come with the task of working his way into the Nationalists' internal security system, specifically into the Eighth Bureau, which had been executing a large-scale plan coded named the Trojan Horse.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1949 paragraph 1)

Importance: This quote captures Weimin's mission as a young espionage officer for the Chinese Communist party which is the fundamental premise of the story. In his first mission, the target was Nationalist China.

Through reading reports, interviews, and private talks, Gary could see that the Americans didn't trust Chiang Kai-shek. They believed that the Nationalist government and army were too corrupt to have any future. Just a few years back the United States had granted them two billion dollars in aid, assuming they'd be able to hold the Communists in check... but all the money vanished... the Americans had no plan for defending Taiwan.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1950 paragraph 9)

Importance: This intelligence told Gary that there was a schism between the Chinese Nationalists and he relayed his analysis that the timing could be right for Red China to attack the vulnerable Nationalists.

We avoided regular hotels, fearing they might request my ID. If they discovered I was a foreigner, they would report me to the local police.

-- Lilian (Chapter 1950 paragraph 64)

Importance: Lilian traveled into Communist China. She was aware that had she shown her American passport she would run the risk of being arrested.

The semi-military life gave him a sense of discipline, while his daily work helped him keep at bay the memories of his family and homeland.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1953 paragraph 2)

Importance: Even during Gary's first assignment with US Intelligence in Okinawa Gary was homesick. He had no idea at that time that he would never return home.

Your brother died of brain inflammation, but it was also believed he started to death. All the Shangs in the village got angry at Yufeng because the boy was the single seedling in your father's family.

-- Uncle Weiren (Chapter 1954 paragraph 57)

Importance: This quote reveals how Lilian's half-brother died and that starvation played a role in his death. The Shangs were angry at Yufeng over the boy's death. They didn't dare blame the real culprit – the Communist government.



American life amazed him, particularly the good wages; the fabulous libraries, out of which he could check as many titles as he wanted; the streets, big or small, all illuminated by lamps at night; and the supermarkets... In spite of everything, Gary was sure he'd feel miserable if he lived here for long.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1955 paragraph 4)

Importance: Despite the wonderful living conditions and opportunities that Gary enjoyed in America, he knew he would not be happy and longed to return to his homeland.

Gary, isolated and lonely, was predisposed to friendly conversations, which brought the two of them closer and closer. Soon they began to go out.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1955 paragraph 17)

Importance: Due to Gary's isolation and loneliness, he gave into temptation and began seeing Nellie who he later married. He already had a wife in China but he had been warned not to try to contact her.

Her parents, despite having accepted the marriage, still could not appreciate Gary, who in their eyes was too introverted and too tense. He seemed never to let his guard down and even at parties wouldn't touch alcohol.

-- Narrator (1956-1957 paragraph 1)

Importance: The foregoing is the reaction of Nellie's parents to their new son-in-law. They would have understood his demeanor much better had they known he was a secret agent.

In discussing the topic of one's proper relationship with the collective, almost without exception they claimed that had to serve the country and the people heart and soul. As an individual, you could find the meaning of life only in 'a harmonious relationship' with the people around you. In other words, the individual had to be subsumed under the collective.

-- Lilian (1956-1957 paragraph 20)

Importance: The foregoing is Lilian's description of a class discussion that she had with her students at the Beijing Teacher's College. Lilian being an American could see the stark difference between Chinese students who had an allegiance to their country versus American students who were more concerned with their apparel and phone.

He slapped her, then grabbed hold of her forearm and pulled her off the sofa. She yelled. He went on beating her. 'Don't ever abuse my children again.'

-- Narrator (Chapter 1959 paragraph 9)

Importance: Uncharacteristically, Gary became violent when he thought Nellie was abusing young Lilian. His anger was as much from his heartache from not being able to see his other children. He missed and said "children" instead of "child" when he warned Nellie not to be abusive.



It was reported that Mao Zedong had been so impressed by Gary's analyses of the U.S. motivation in publishing news about the Soviets' planned air strikes on China's nuclear bases that the Chairman told his comrades in the Politburo, "This man is worth four armored divisions.

-- Narrator/Mao Zedong (1971-1972 paragraph 1)

Importance: Gary even impressed Chairman Mao of the Red Chinese government with his performance. Unfortunately, Gary was not an armored division or a machine. He had a heart that was broken and a soul that was tortured by the very tactics that Mao dictated.

I was devastated when I heard about his suicide. I had a breakdown and couldn't help my tears whenever I saw an older man.

-- Lilian (Chapter 1980 paragraph 4)

Importance: This captures Lilian's devastation after her father's suicide. Her pain over his taking his own life drove her determination to learn the truth about his life and career as a secret agent for Red China.