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The Left Hand of God

By Alfred Hayes

More tea, Father?

No, thanks, Mrs Sigman,
this is fine.

You took a real chance, Father,
crossing the mountains alone.

You should've waited
for the trading party.

I was anxious to get to the mission
as soon as I could, Dr Sigman.

I was anxious to get to the mission
What is it, Celeste?

Father, I know you're very tired, but
there's a patient in the ward, dying.
He's been clinging to life,
waiting for you.

Scottie feels his immortal
soul's at stake, Father.

But it is!

Now, now, Scottie,
Lee Kwan is 80 years old.

A beautiful example of
the survival of the unfit
but don't tell me I have to take
him seriously as an immortal soul.

Dear, Dave!

Sorry, Scottie. When you're through with him,
Father, I'm going to enjoy doing a post mortem on him.
My bag was lost crossing the river,
the chalice, the holy oils,
my vestments.

He really needs your
blessing, Father.

Where is this man?

Lee Kwan, Father O'Shea is here.

Bless me, Father,
it's a long time since I...
confessed my sins.

Easy, old man, easy.

All he prayed for, Father,
was to stay alive long enough
for you to get here
and be with him at the end.

He had great faith and endurance.

I'm sorry he couldn't have had

the final rites he waited for.

Could we pray, Father?

Yes.

Yes, of course.

In the name of the Father,
the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who
trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is
the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now
and in the hour of our death. Amen.

Well, Scottie's pet is dead.

Let's go home.

Good morning, Father.

You say mass?

Mass?

I'm sorry, I'm...

not quite awake.

What's your name?

- John Wong, Father O'Shea.

I fix everything for priest, take care of
house, sexton for church, sometimes altar boy.

Clean and press clothes for you.

I keep list too.

Read list now, Father O'Shea?

Yeah, yeah, read the list.

What?

I see.

Maybe more come now.

Well, 36 is a good score.

What else?

Many people want confessing,
make quickly.
Work sure piles up, doesn't it?
How long since the last trade
caravan came through here?
Long time since last caravan.
All right, John, I'll get dressed.
Yes, Father.
Morning, I'll be right with you.
Yeah, take him into the
clinic and finish checking him.
Sit down.
I'm glad you came over.
Cigar?
- No, thanks.
My last box.
I ordered some from the coast,
if the caravan ever gets here.
Wong tells me it's been a long time
since the last caravan came through.
That's right.
I suppose they told you
I've recommended closing the mission.
What did the bishop decide to do?
Well,
would I have been sent all this distance
if the bishop decided to close the mission?
We'll keep it open, of course.
The bishop is mistaken.
The mission should be closed.
You saw my clinic,
one unwashed patient.
Once there were scores like him.
It's a waste of time and money.
There's a lot more to this mission than
just your clinic, isn't there, doctor?
Is there?
Look, one of our priests
was killed in a rock slide.
Father Coleman, the priest
before you, overtaxed his heart.
The Chinese figure there must be something wrong with
a religion that can't keep its own priests healthy.
They feel the same way about my

hospital so they stay away in droves.
There's no earthly reason
to keep the mission going.
The trouble is, the bishop
doesn't think earthly reasons
are as important as spiritual ones.
That's the difference between
my profession and yours.
I may be more interested in material
things that you think, doctor.
Let's get to the point.
It's not only a question
of my clinic.
In the mountains, there's a warlord
named Yang, We're sitting on
the edge of his territory.
Did the bishop tell you about him?
Yes, although I understood that
Yang's policy was not to interfere
with the missions.
Some of his troops have
raided the outlying villages
but in addition to Yang,
there's the political danger now.
Did they tell you how many
missions have been forced to close?
I, uh... I don't think
I know the exact number.
I'm surprised that the bishops sent
you out with so little information.
Perhaps he didn't
think it important.
There are three of us with our lives at stake in
this mission. My wife, an American nurse and myself.
China is being ripped apart
by civil war.
I think we're entitled to any
information the bishop gave you.
The bishop and I
are not exactly buddies.
Is that supposed to be funny?
This place has already
killed two priests.
I don't intend to add myself

and my wife to the list of martyrs.
And I expect a civil answer
- you're not talking to one of your parishioners now.
And you're not talking to
one of your coolie patients.
Don't depend too much on
that collar, Father O'Shea.
Would you like me to take it off?
I guess I have been a little abrupt.
My wife asked me to invite you
to dinner tonight.
She seems to think you must
be tired of Chinese cooking.
Well, thanks, I am.
We can continue the discussion
over a drop of something medicinal.
I'll look forward to it, doctor.
Morning.
Good morning, Father.
I was going to the village
but if you'd like to see
the hospital, I'd be happy...
That would be very interesting
but I'd rather take a look
around the village.
The village hasn't seen you either.
It'll be a great occasion.
I doubt that.
It's been a long time since I
went walking out with a pretty girl.
Do you always startle
people like that, Father?
Why?
One doesn't think of priests
ever walking out with girls.
I wasn't born a priest.
As a matter of fact,
I can remember the day I was voted
the loudest dresser in college.
Really, Father?
Where is your home
back in the States?
Columbus, Ohio.
It must be lonely for you out here.

Sometimes but Beryl and I do things together and there's always my work.

Beryl?

Dr Sigman's wife. She's amazing.

I've learnt a lot from her.

Well placed

to boast two amazing women.

That has the ring of the

Blarney Stone, Father O'Shea.

There's nothing amazing about me.

It's amazing at least to me,

that you should be here.

It's a long story, Father, and I'll probably bore you with it sometime if you're kind enough to listen.

I told you you were

a celebrity, Father.

So it seems.

- Good morning, Shen Fu.

This is Ben So Lin, Father.

Good morning.

We waited a long

time for you, Shen Fu.

I'm very happy to be here.

This, Shen Fu,

is the oldest man in our village,

the father of uncounted sons.

He seeks your blessing.

I too seek a blessing.

It was magnificent.

You knew them so well.

It was just the thing to do

to impress the village.

Perhaps it was just a

little too magnificent.

The Chinese love a gesture like

that. You'll see.

They'll flock to the mission now.

It ought to make the doctor happy.

I'll fill his clinic and the

mission can now stay open.

Aren't you glad, Father, to

have the mission continue?

Uh-huh.

Where does that road lead to?

Number Five village.

- Nowhere else?

No.

Dr Sigman tells me the trade caravans come through here often.

They used to. It's been months since the last caravan.

There's no other means of transportation to the coast?

You mean without the caravan?

- Uh-huh. - I'm afraid not.

Mmm, I see.

You're stuck here, Father

O'Shea, whether you like it or not.

That's the way it looks, doesn't it?

Sorry to interrupt, Father.

I make bed.

No, thank you, John.

I'll take care of the bed myself.

Father must visit six villages soon and meet people.

I must?

- Very necessary. Today visit one village and bless people.

Christ died for all.

You got a good point, John,

Christ died for all. No favourites.

You say mass tomorrow, Father?

Well, I'm afraid

I won't be able to, John.

Tomorrow Sunday, will be first mass at St Mary's since Father Coleman died.

Well the bag I lost in the river contained my vestments and chalice.

I'm afraid we'll have to wait until I can replace them.

Whole village be in church tomorrow.

Have to wait. They can carry their sins around with them a little longer.

No, Father O'Shea wrong.

Sins cannot wait.

People tired. Carry sins with them long time since Father Coleman.

Heavy. Father O'Shea lift, then people not tired.

Well, what would you suggest, John?
Father O'Shea preach strong sermon.
Very well. I'll see the parish gets
an extra strong sermon tomorrow.
Good night, John.
Yes, Father.
Good morning.
You'll have to go. John Wong will have
to excommunicate you if you're late.
Mm, Shalimar.
I had a little left.
For church? You look nice too, Anne.
Technically, it's spring.
Of course, a Father O'Shea does
have a terrific lot of appeal.
Beryl, please.
Is that sacrilege, darling?
But he does, you know.
It's partly his eyes,
they're so beautifully unhappy.
Beryl, please,
you can't talk like that.
But, darling, I'm complimenting him.
He's a good priest or he wouldn't
be way out here in this wilderness.
It's just, the man has magnetism, he has it,
it's not anything to do with the collar he wears.
Look, Beryl,
Father O'Shea is a priest.
I know you're not a Catholic
but you know what that means to me.
I can't think of him as a man.
I mustn't.
I know, I understand.
Now you've got me all flustered
and I can't even think straight.
I feel self-conscious
about getting dressed up.
Of course, it is spring. I added
a few touches myself and I wasn't
thinking of trading Dave in either.
Beloved, I taught you as strangers
and pilgrims
to abstain from carnal desires

which war against the soul.
Such is the will of God
that by doing good,
you should put to silence
the ignorance of foolish men.
Live as free men, yet not using your
freedom as a cloak for malice
but as servants of God.
Honour all men,
love the brotherhood,
fear God, honour the King.
I've just read you a letter from a
very good friend of yours, St Peter.
What are you doing here?
Fix tea, slippers.
No, thanks.
Father Coleman always take tea
after church.
Never mind, forget
it, I don't want any.
Never mind, forget
Good morning.
- Good morning.
Forgive me, Father,
I had to see if you were all right.
Of course I'm all right.
Sit down, won't you?
Want a cup of tea?
Wong fixed it with
all the loving care of a wife.
No, thank you.
- Wife for priest, no good.
Thanks for reminding me.
That man, the man you hit,
he was a stranger, wasn't he?
I've never seen him
in any of the villages.
He spit and I forgot
for a moment I was a priest.
You're disappointed in me,
aren't you?
Violence wasn't quite what you
expected from Father O'Shea.
Difficult to be what one is

expected to be all of the time.
Yeah, I just found that out.
Anne, I'm thinking of
closing the mission.
Closing the mission?
But you can't close the mission.
Why not?
- Because these people need a priest.
No more than people anywhere.
Even Father Coleman didn't accomplish as much
as you have in the short time you've been here.
I haven't accomplished anything.
I've been talking with Dr Sigman.
He thinks it's dangerous
to stay here and he's right.
You saw what happened
today in the compound.
China is becoming a nightmare, Anne.
Here we are, the four of us, what
are we really doing for these people?
You stick a thermometer in their mouths to
check their temperature and I check their souls.
You're wrong.
- Am I?
I get the villagers into church and preach
them a sermon about love and brotherhood
and I walk out and hit
the first stranger I see.
I don't belong here, Anne,
neither do you.
You belong back in the States,
married, raising a family.
I was married, Father.
Yes. That's why I'm in China.
He was a pilot
but he crashed somewhere up there.
I had a stupid, romantic idea that
Tom might be brought into a mission
hospital and I was a nurse.
I know now it's hopeless.
And yet you stayed on.
What else is there to do?
There's so much work
to be done here.

Somebody had to do it.
Even if we fail, Father, we'd still be
leaving something of ourselves in China.
The things we're doing, for
whatever reasons we're doing them,
are the things that are necessary
for the people of these villages.
They need them, medicine or grace.
And we have them to give.
No, Father, even if you
close the mission, I'll stay.
Alone, if I have to.
Do these people really
mean so much to you?
Yes, Father.
And you'll stay,
in spite of the danger?
Yes, Father.
I'm sorry,
I didn't mean to make a speech.
Goodbye, Father.
You know, Father, our professions
aren't too dissimilar.
I have my trinity too -
diagnosis prognosis and cure.
The difference is, my profession ends
where yours begins.
What do you mean?
Well, for example,
there's a beer joint, the Yellow
House, in number one village.
It's owned by a couple of rather
notorious women.
You didn't know that?
- No, I didn't.
Well, it's there and it's filthy.
I had the women in and treated them,
bawled out the town elders
but that's as far as I can go.
If these women are such a bad
influence, why don't you go a little
further and make the town elders put
the women out of business? Check.
That's stepping out of my field.

Morality is your department, Father.

Then you think as a priest,

I should do something about it?

Not necessarily.

Of course, the old method used to be

to stone women like that to death.

That's not the way

Christ handled the problem.

Check.

No, I believe not.

But you seem to favour direct action.

My wife tells me you knocked down

one of the villagers a few days ago.

He was not a villager.

I'm not objecting, Father. I like to

see a man get violent now and then,

it's good for the circulation.

I only wondered when I heard

the incident, what technique

you'd use on those women.

Well, I'm certainly

not going to stone them.

Check.

Well, when you decide what

you're going to do, Father,

let me know, will you?

I think I've got you, Father.

Not yet!

Mate.

You know, Father, I may

have underestimated you.

Keep him warm,

as the doctor told you.

Thank you, Shen Fu.

Shen Fu, Shen Fu!

Father, you must come.

This is my busy day.

Lead the way, son.

This is Shen Tin, Father.

You run along.

The baby was born dead, Shen Fu.

Leave us, please.

Tell me a story, Father.

What story would you like?

About the stable...

the mother

and St Joseph.

Well,

there was a woman named Mary
lying on a bed of straw in a stable,
waiting for her child to be born.

Is she dead, Father?

Yes.

Where's her husband?

He has gone to the Yellow House,
Father.

Jan Teng saw the baby born dead.

He will stay in the Yellow House and
drink now to forget his own pain.

He should be here.

Show me the way, Dan.

- It's not the place for Shen Fu to go.

Show me the house.

- It's a bad place, Father.

All right, Dan,

you go back to the village.

Chun Tien...

Pao Chu is dead.

I loved her, Shen Fu.

I think she's with someone
who loves her as much as you did.

I'm sure that where she is now

Pao Chu is happy.

You believe that, Father?

Yes, I believe it. Come on.

Let's go, Father. There's nothing
more either of us can do here.

Those blasted midwives.

If they'd sent for me in time, that
kid wouldn't have been butchered.

Stupid, ignorant old women!

This is the most backward
village in the whole lot.

The man who said ignorance is bliss
should have been boiled in oil.

Oh, the boy told me you went up the hill
to the Yellow House. How'd you make out?

You can't win all the time.

- You let it go at that?
Don't tell me the Church gives up on
them, Father. Medicine doesn't give up.
Moves right in wherever it
finds the thing it fights.
When medicine reaches a point where
it never has to walk hopelessly away
from a case, then you can criticise
the Church because it's left some
spiritual illness uncured.
I wish O'Shea would drink.
He's too tense.
This concern for Father O'Shea
is new, isn't it?
I suppose he does his job
as well as he can.
In China, you can't ask for more.
But you were so certain there
was something odd about him.
I could have been wrong.
I'm not so sure.
There seems to be so much in him
that wasn't intended to be a priest.
That magnetism again?
Yes.
Women can't understand celibacy.
Priests are men.
That's just female vanity.
The priesthood is also a
conditioning, a discipline.
O'Shea hasn't got anything that's more
important to him than being a priest.
What I'm worried about is his health.
All that tension.
It killed Father Coleman.
Light me a cigarette,
will you, dear?
There's something else
I wish you'd worry about.
What's that?
I think Anne ought to go home.
Scotty? What's wrong with her?
She's been too long in China.
She's been too long at this mission.

She looks all right to me.
Does she?
How nice and blind you are.
She's all churned up inside.
What about?
Father O'Shea.
You don't know what
you're talking about.
Don't I?
Say, that won't do.
You'd better speak to her.
I've tried.
And?
- It's not her fault.
Females are simple
biological structures.
Their bodies pay very little
attention to their minds.
I told you, there's so much in
O'Shea that isn't or wasn't meant
to be priest.
Her mind knows he's a priest
but... how she feels...
I don't like it, Dave.
OK. She's a good nurse but we
can't have her become a China case.
Will she go?
- Home? I don't know.
I think she should,
on the next caravan.
I wonder if we'll become
China cases, too.
I'd hoped they'd close the mission,
but obviously they aren't going to.
Would you respect me if I quit?
We never have before, have we, Dave?
Ken-tucky.
Ken-tucky.
Thank you.
Could you use
a slightly older soprano?
You'll have to audition first.
Right.
Now, let's see.

Ah, here's one.
Oh, a maiden went to Hong Kong
Then she went to Singapore
Then she went to Shanghai...
- Oh, you know it. #... to buy a loaf of bread
A boatman smiled in Hong Kong
A soldier smiled in Singapore
A farmer smiled in Shanghai
Now, which one will she wed?
All three?
No, not me
Two?
That will never do
Which one?
Only one, for him my love is true
Well, the boatman
stayed in Hong Kong
The soldier stayed in Singapore...
You win, Father.
I've forgotten the rest.
Besides, it's their bedtime.
They can find their way.
Good night, kids.
Good night.
Well, what do you want?
Kentucky!
You remember this one?
Once in a while, da da da
da da-da da-da da-da-dum da-dum...
Please, Father, I'd rather not sing
any more. It's late and I should go.
The mountains
stand like sentinels in the night.
Listening to our concert.
I wonder what they thought.
- Oh, I think they liked it.
Probably sounded Chinese to them.
It was nice singing.
We had fun, didn't we?
If you say a High Mass, Father,
perhaps I could be your soloist.
Oh, that would be fine.
I want to explain something, Father.
I know you must have wondered

why I haven't been to confession.
I hadn't thought about it.
I can't, Father, not yet.
And I can't explain why.
Suppose we discuss it some other
time, not in the confessional?
Good night, Father.
Isn't it time you went to bed, John?
Much work to do, Father.
Where did this come from?
Doctor gave to Father Coleman. Good
for heart. Spray pews in church too.
What?
Many people, many bugs.
That's a waste of good
Scotch, isn't it?

SPRAY HISSES:

All right, John, you can
finish that tomorrow. Good night.
Good night, Father. Spray tomorrow.
Good evening, Father. May I come in?
Oh, by all means.
The mission's a lonely
place, isn't it, Father?
For some of us, yes.
One feel so isolated, so cut off.
At least I always do.
China's a difficult country to
adjust to, don't you find it so?
Sometimes I do.
But then a priest has his church.
Of course, I didn't mean quite that.
I was thinking...
Well, to be frank,
I was speaking of Anne.
It is lonely here and...
Well, I think she has a
crush on you, Father.
But that's impossible.
That's not so impossible.
Whether you like it or not,
you have a problem.
Would you think me presumptuous,

Father, if I made a suggestion?

No, not at all.

When Dave has a problem,
I try talking to him,
but it doesn't always help.

What he needs most at a time
like that is someone like himself,
another doctor, a professional man.
Somebody who's had those problems
himself and can understand them.

I think you need that, too, Father.

Do I?

There's a small Protestant mission
on the other side of the mountain.

Oh, I didn't know that.

The Reverend Marvin has been
in China a long time, Father.

I see what you mean. You may be
right. Thanks for the suggestion.

Mr Marvin may be able to
solve some of my difficulties.

But do you think it's possible Yang could have
cut the road across the mountains to the mission?

He hasn't bothered it before. Father
Coleman made the journey once.

Mr Marvin visited here.

I'm sure you won't have any trouble.

I seem to attract trouble, don't I?

Well, we all do.

It is a bright moon, isn't it?

Good night, Father.

You know, I worked very closely with your
people in Ning-po during the war, Father O'Shea.

There were French and
Belgian priests down there
and one Irish
priest I'll never forget.

How long have you been in China?

We're a small establishment here.

I don't think we've entirely failed.

Our people are deeply loyal.

Our people won't leave us either
if we've run out of rice.

I guess I deserved that.

A bit competitive, wasn't I?

A bit.

I haven't any right to
compete with you, Mr Marvin.

I don't understand, Father O'Shea.

Well, I mean that's not my name
and I'm not a priest.

Well... who are you, then?

I'm a former pilot.

My name is James Carmody.

I was badly hurt three years ago when
I crashed in a DC-3 flying the Hump.

I was picked up in the mountains
by a warlord named Mieh Yang.

I went to work for him.

It wasn't a set-up I was happy with.

I was supposed to be his second
in command but I was his prisoner.

That shot was from
our scouting party.

Come on!

Who shot him?

Who knows, Captain? Shen Fu
rode into the village alone.

I tried to question him.

There was a shot.

You heard my orders.

I said no shooting.

When I give an order,

I expect it to be obeyed.

Put the Shen Fu on a litter.

Yang's headquarters was an old
Buddhist lamasery in the mountains.

He'd even imported a girl from
Chungking to keep me happy.

Have Jan Teng look at his wounds.

It's so dull here when you're gone.

You know, you should
have stayed in Chungking.

Why?

Well, it isn't dull there,
and it's 20 days nearer the coast.

Are you so tired of China?

It's not only China.

Three years I've been
running Yang's tin army.
You'd get tired of
anything in three years.
Poor Carmody.
Other men would envy what you have.
What, this?
You can buy this stuff at auction.
Could I be bought at auction, too?
Yeah. You could if they
were selling calendars.
Why do you stay here if you hated so?
Stay? How do I get out of here?
This is the greatest
prison in the world.
Sure, the accommodations on nice,
but out there's thousands of miles
desert and mountains and
no way to cross them without
a passport from Yang.
I'll hold the fort.
He likes his boys punctual.
So do I, Carmody.
Hello, Jimmy, still healthy?
Still healthy, Yang.
What did you find?
The report was true,
there was a scientific expedition -
mapping or exploring.
Mao Tsu's men wiped them out.
And the loot?
- Some binoculars. Half a dozen automatics, one of them Japanese.
Some sheep-lined coats, medical supplies
and canned goods. I had an inventory made.
You did well.
Pay-day.
One roll or three?
- One.
Beat three fives.
I weep for you, Jimmy.
Yeah. You paid me double last time.
For the gold trousers of Mary Yin?
You'll have to shoot dice
with Mary Yin for that.

Perhaps I will some day.

Anything else?

Yes.

Pao Ching a priest in one of the villages.

An American, I had been brought here.

Missionary? That's unfortunate.

Is he still alive?

Shooting a priest isn't smart,

Suppose there's an investigation?

By whom?

No, but I think you're right,

I think the offence is serious.

I shall find him 600 yen.

For shooting a priest?

Too high? I'd make it 300 yen

if he were not an American.

After all, and a graduate of one of your
universities. I think 600 yen is a fair price.

Of course it would

be awkward if Shen Fu lives.

Why?

Why? You know we can't
afford survivors, Jimmy.

Besides, you were
a little harsh with Pao Ching.

It isn't diplomatic, Jimmy,
for you to whip a Chinese.

He disobeyed orders.

Whose orders?

Mine.

I give the orders, Jimmy.

The important ones.

Why argue?

We'll see to it that our clerical
friend gets to heaven
a little sooner than expected.

And you'll apologise
to Pao Ching in the morning.

I think you'll have to get
yourself another boy, Yang.

This a joke?

Yes, a Chinese joke. I want out.

Out? You know I never

accept resignations, Jimmy.

The priest concerned you?!

I haven't been in church
since I was an altar boy.

Then why?

Look, Yang. Three years ago
you pick me out of a DC-3
and had Jan Teng patched up what
was left of me. You gave me a job.
Military adviser, tax collector.
Number-one boy.

Well, I paid you back.

I'm tired of this tea house!

I quit!

Jimmy!

The Priest of Christ
is dead, Excellency.

We quarrelled for nothing.

Came all this way to do good.

Some stupid greasy peasant with
a gun that never did anything
but feed his own gut killed him.

Sick of the whole stinking mess.
Only his body died.

It is his soul a man must save.

I'd gamble the soul if I
could get the body out alive.

Every man finds his own path.

It's 72 days to the coast,
that's a difficult path to find.

Trade caravans make the journey.

No trader would take me
without Yang's permission.

If I try to go it alone every gun in
the hills would be turned against me.

It is a great pity the priest of
Christ did not get to his mission.

It's only a week's journey
across the mountains.

Having been punished, the hill man would be afraid
to harm another priest. Such a man would be safe.

Yes.

For a time.

It is said that the caravans
which go to the coast stop there,

at the mission.
Good night, Carmody.
So there was my choice.
I could stay as Yang's bully-boy,
or take the long shot
and try for the mission.
I decided to try for the mission.
It's an incredible story, Carmody.
A scandal that touches any
mission in China hurts all of us.
It's dangerous for the mission
if Yang knows that you're there.
That's why I wanted to get away.
I'm afraid you can't escape the
consequences of your actions.
Since you've offended against the church, you
must inform the mission authorities at once.
Now I can give you the name of
your bishop if you don't know it.
I'd suggest you write him a letter,
I'll dispatch it for you.
I have a courier service to Sinkiang.
You don't understand,
I don't want to write a letter.
I want to go with
the courier in person.
Well, that's that, I guess.
Since you choose to
save your own skin...
Oh, it isn't a question
of saving my own skin.
There's the girl and her nurse.
I, well, I can't go
back to the mission.
I've taken this collar off and
I'm not going to put it back on.
Father O'Shea is dead,
the masquerade is over.
From now on in I'm James Carmody.
Come in.
Excuse me, sir, for intruding.
What is it?
- This gentleman, sir, has news.
Allah be with thee.

It is Mieh Yang, Shen Fu.
He's marching across the mountains.
You saw him?
I'm only the bearer of rumours.
A driver saw him in a village
west of the mountains.
Did the rumour say
where Yang was going?
Towards the seven villages.
East at the mountains, so they say.
All right, you can go.
You'd better put the collar on again.
No.
You're not going back? You'll
leave the mission unprotected?
Yang wants me, he won't
bother with the mission.
He'll be out in the
hills looking for me.
So, you'll desert again?
Seems to be my
speciality, doesn't it?
Before you were only
masquerading in that cloth.
Now you're dishonouring it!
I'm a fresh out of faith,
hope and charity, Reverend.
Wait a minute.
You might find this handy again.
To protect your neck.
Well...
Why not?
Stuck way out, isn't it?
Five days.
Where's O'Shea?
I'll bet he's headed south as
fast as the mule will carry him.
He would not desert us with Yang.
He picked a strange time
to make a social call, why?
And why it does Yang whip them and
say "The Shen Fu will cure them"?
Why should O'Shea mean
anything at all to Yang?

There's the smell of fish
about our theological friend.

He wouldn't leave us
without any explanation.
What odds would you give?
What odds would you take?

- Father.

How many of them has
Yang beaten like his?
There's been a half-dozen
come into the hospital.
Where have you been?

I was beginning to think...
- Dr Sigmund thought you were lost.

I was. Temporarily.
I wanna talk to you, Father.

All right.

- In the office.

Sit down, Father. Forgive me
if I skip the polite preamble.

I've been waiting
for you to get back.

Never occurred to me
that Yang would march on us.

I thought he would.

You? Why didn't you tell us?

There didn't seem much point. There
wasn't much you could do about him.

We could have prepared!

Prepared what?

I've been talking with
representatives of all the villages.

Yang has only 100 men,
we can raise double that!

Armed how?

There are a few rifles, not many,
but at least 50 men can fight.

We will have the hills, Yang will be outnumbered.

The villages will be defending their homes.

It Yang only have 20 troopers
he could still take the villages.

Your people aren't soldiers, doctor.

No, I won't sanction it.

I won't have the mission

turned into a fort.
That's not realistic, Father.
Yang's an animal.
Are you thinking of what your policy of
meekness would mean to our girls? To Anne, to me?
We can't leave ourselves to the mercy of someone
who doesn't know what mercy means, Father.
We're not going to trust his mercy.
Exactly what are we going to
trust, Father? A few loud hymns?
I'm asking you to trust me.
Let me deal with Yang alone.
If you fail, Father O'Shea, you'll
have that, but what will we have?
His prayers.
Well, I'm sorry, Mrs Sigmund,
I can't give you a sealed guarantee.
But we can't fight and we can't run.
Here I am, Lord.
I'm not going to pray.
What I'd like to say I'd like to say
standing on my feet.
These people think I'm a priest.
I have nothing to offer but faith in a
God I didn't believe in or think existed.
It doesn't matter now whether I
was right or wrong in what I did,
it's too late.
You dive into a pit easy and
then you have to crawl out hard.
Then there's nothing left to do but
to try to square the account a little.
Well, that's
just about how it stands.
I wanted you to know.
Wake up, John.
We have to go now.
Where is he?
Where's that military mastermind?!
You weren't going to turn the mission
into a fort - look at that mob!
I see it.
We've got that two-bit Napoleon
camping on our doorstep.

You're the mastermind here,
what do we do now?!

Look, Doctor.

Those men are Yang's boys. They are not going
to harm these people, they've come for me.

I'm going down to the
village to meet them.

Are you crazy?! Well, if you're
serious I'd better go along.

I may need you here.

You got a gun?

No.

Here, take this. I'll explain some
time how I happened to have it.

It's a very interesting story.

Have mercy, Excellency.

The harvest has been bad.

There has been much sickness.

Why do you stop?

Because of the Shen Fu?

He knows this is a miserable village.

Your merchandise isn't
worth the sweat of my horses.

Your men haven't the skill
to empty my slop buckets
and your women are old and withered.

The Shen Fu knows you are a fool to ask me to
even think of a vile dung heap like this village,
or to care what happens to it. It should be
burned! Down to the ground to purify the air!

Isn't that true, Father?

Clear the square.

Bring a chair for the Shen Fu.

That's a poor uniform, Jimmy.

You've come down in the world.

It's better than it looks, Yang.

Your troops would
never recognise you.

You wear skirts.

Mission territory is neutral,
you've always respected it.

Why change a wise policy?

You were here, Jimmy.

You're a deserter.

I don't like deserters, Jimmy.
You were getting fat and sloppy
while I did all the work.
Leaving you was good for you.
You're fed again, you look tough.
I am tough.
I could have you flayed with whips
and hang you up by your thumbs.
Yes, you could,
but consider this,
if I stood the torture well,
people would say I was strong
and that Yang couldn't break me.
If I were weak and stood it badly,
they'd marvel that I commanded
your troops. You'd lose face.
The soldiers begin to wonder
that maybe you too were weak.
And it'd be bad if the
soldiers started to wonder.
Shooting you might be better,
Jimmy, now that I think of it.
I could have it done with simple
dignity, with sadness almost,
right here in the village square.
Where all might see that shooting you
was a regrettable, but necessary thing.
That's a good way to die but
I deny your right to kill me.
Come now, Jimmy, you know better than to
talk about rights, you were never stupid.
But I don't want to shoot you.
I want you to work for me again.
What in skirts?
They are unbecoming. You should get
rid of them quickly, they offend me.
Not yet. You've told me what
you want, that isn't polite.
You're on my territory,
you should ask what I want.
You should have some troops, Jimmy,
before you start bargaining.
They always help.
What is it you want?

I want the safety of the mission,
I want the safety of the people and
their possessions in these villages.
I want you to go home
and leave them in peace.
You want a lot.
In exchange you offer what?
Not a thing.
It's an unreasonable bargain, Jimmy.
So I'll take what I want.
Ach, look at it.
What is there to steal?
Cheap loot not worth carting away, a burnt
mission and a lot of ill will. Is it worth it?
I could take you back with me,
Jimmy. Make you work for me.
As a prisoner?
You're right, you wouldn't be fun as
a prisoner. Slick, Jimmy, very slick.
How else could you have deceived
both the mission and me?
But you don't bore me and that's an
important talent. I'll tell you what,
I'll give you your mission
and your villagers.
If you come back and serve me
loyally for three years.
Those are a good terms, Jimmy.
There'll be no more bargaining.
All or nothing, Yang.
Bring out your dice.
Pao Ching, the dice!
Now let me be clear, Jimmy.
I leave you and these miserable
people in their stinking villages
and your den of superstition
if I lose.
If I win, you come with me
and no further escaping
and no treachery for five years.
Three years.
Five years, Jimmy.
This is no longer a sure thing.
All right.

Agreed, five years.
You can't win a dice
in those clothes, Jimmy.
Never mind the clothes, just roll.
Three sixes.
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Four threes. You lose.
You shouldn't have
involved the Trinity.
There's another mission.
The Protestant.
It's smaller than this so you'll only have
to bid three years of your life against it.
Or does your God
only have one house?
There's a text in the book you
don't believe in, Yang. It says,
"They parted my garment amongst them
and upon my vesture, they cast lots."
I know two soldiers shooting dice
in Jerusalem. You see, I read too.
Pair of threes.
Roll.
Twos. You lose.
Come back with me,
I'll double year salary.
You have to shoot me sometime.
I like being boss too.
I stopped the caravan in the hills,
there were two priests from Sinkiang,
you'll be unmasked,
you'll be disgraced.
Don't you worry about it, Yang.
They're here in answer
to a letter I wrote.
Well, I wouldn't have
enjoyed shooting you anyway.
I suppose I'll have to act
benevolent, create a legend.
I've been touched by the Holy Spirit and
I've decided to spare these villagers.
You'll become the most
celebrated priest in China.
They'll light bonfires of

thanksgiving. It'll be a miracle.
I myself will proclaim it.
You gave up a good woman
in Mary Yin, Jimmy.
Then Yang feel touch again.
"Who touch me?"
He said to Father O'Shea.
And Father O'Shea say,
"Holy Ghost touch you, Mieh Yang."
Mieh Yang look around and he say,
"I don't see Holy Ghost!"
And Father O'Shea say,
"Holy Ghost everywhere."
And Mieh Yang is afraid
Holy Ghost will touch him again
and he kneeled down and
he say to Father O'Shea,
"I will not have burn
number one village, Shen Fu."
Dr Sigmund and Beryl were looking
for you, but you left so suddenly
I didn't have a chance to
thank you for what you did.
Oh, nothing to thank me for.
My luck ran good, that's all.
Luck?
- Call it that.
It's more than that.
Even Dr Sigmund thinks so.
You finally overawed him. He's
willing to admit now you were right.
Anne, I'm leaving the mission
tomorrow with the caravan.
You? But that's impossible,
how can you after today?
My work is finished.
I'm not a priest, Anne.
I never was.
What?
What do you mean, Father?
I don't understand.
There are two priests arriving here tomorrow
by caravan, sent by the Bishop from Sinkiang.
They know who I am.

I wanted you to know
now before they came.
I won't believe it. You couldn't
have done what you did today
and not have been Father O'Shea.
Why, the people kiss the hem
of your cassock,
they followed you like a saint.
Saint?
You know how I got rid of Yang?
I shot dice with him.
Dice?
- Crap game. There wasn't any question of faith,
there weren't any miracles.
I just got lucky with the dice cup.
But if you're not a priest,
Father, who are you?
A liar, like your husband.
I crashed up there only I survived.
And I made one big mistake.
I tried to get out of Yang's trap
and I walked into a bigger one,
this one, this mission, God's.
And I found that His trap was
tougher to get out of than Yang's.
Well, now it's over.
Tomorrow everybody will know, Dr
Sigmund, the villagers, that I was a fake.
That nothing I did had
any authority.
Whatever the Church decides,
I'll do.
You're not the only one who
has something to atone for.
I have too.
You?
I fell in love with a priest.
Well, a man who wasn't a priest
was falling in love with you.
I'm afraid, Joseph, I'm a little
too old for transportation like this.
I'm not happy myself, Cornelius.
Good afternoon.
- Good afternoon.

I'm Father Cornelius.
This is Father Keller.
You want to wash up?
I've had the room made ready.
Thank you.
Shen Fu, the child is very sick.
Shen Fu.
Now go to the hospital,
Miss Scott will take care of you.
She'll know what to do.
It's nice to know that you still use
the hospital now and then
and limit your number of miracles.
I read your extraordinary letter.
You express yourself well.
I was inclined to
accept your sincerity.
I assume you understand how the
Church regards sacrilege such as yours.
Yes I do, Father.
Good evening, Doctor.
- Yep.
If you need me,
I'll be over at the clinic.
I'd like to ask about Mieh Yang.
I heard in the villages as we came
here several versions of what happened.
The very fact that you permitted
these people to think of it
as a miracle makes me doubt the
sincerity with which I credited you.
Precisely what were the terms
of your bargaining with Mieh Yang?
What was the price of that alleged
miracle? That so-called answer to prayer?
Well, I shot dice with Yang.
The stakes were five years of
my life against this parish.
Five years of your life?
And if you lost...
It may not have been justified, Father, but
I had an odd feeling I wasn't going to lose.
Sit down, Carmody.
- Thank you.

Are you asking me to condone
a sin because a good came of it?
I'm not asking for anything.
I know I wasn't
meant to be a priest,
it takes a different kind of a man.
But maybe, there's a bit of what it
takes to make a priest in every man.
Not much, but a little.
That's an interesting theory.
In your letter, you said
you're willing to accept
the discipline of the Church.
This is the bishop's decision,
continue to wear the cassock and
maintain the outward appearance
and dignity of a priest until you
see the bishop himself in Sinkiang.
He will talk to you then and he
will have my report to guide him.
You mean no-one is to know
I'm not a priest?
Would it be good for them to know?
- No.
Since no spiritual harm
has come to the parish,
it's better to preserve the faith
of the people than to expose you.
You'll leave with
the caravan tomorrow.
The parish will continue to think
you're what you pretended to be.
I'll remain here with Father Keller.
There's another matter, Father.
You mean Miss Scott?
- Yes.
Does she know that
you're not a priest?
Yes, since last night.
There was nothing between you before that?
- Nothing.
I think it's best for you not to discuss
the matter any more with Miss Scott.
Thank you, good night.

Good night.

Good night.

Shen Fu, you will go away?

Yes, John, tomorrow.

Tomorrow?

Church know best.

I shall miss you very much, John.

You shouldn't let them do this to you, you're giving in too easy.

Don't, Dave. You're only making it more difficult.

We've become very fond of you.

Oh, don't be sentimental,

O'Shea knows we're fond of him.

Where's Scottie?

With Father Cornelius, I think.

I thought I'd fallen in love with a priest

and I couldn't confess because the priest was the man I had fallen in love with!

But you didn't know that...

That he wasn't a priest?

You mean he was,

as much to the people of these villages.

A good priest, Father, who came here because we needed him.

Not quite, my dear.

He had other reasons.

Whoever he was, and for whatever reasons he came here, hearing the real love of these people, they put their faith in him just as I did

and he didn't fail them.

The bishop will understand that, wouldn't he, Father?

You'll make that clear, wouldn't you?

For a man with so little to recommend him, he seems to have aroused a remarkable amount of devotion in this parish.

Let me show you how much.

You know, Father,
I don't even know his name.
Carmody, my dear.
James Carmody.