

**Sample Reading From**  
**Quester, A Story of the River Warriors**  
**By Robert C. Powers**

Harry drove the jeep across the bridge into the village of Go Dau Ha. He found the neatly kept pink house at the end of the village. It was set back from the other, lesser houses, and Harry could see the river behind it. The house was made of concrete blocks. Harry went to the door of the Pink House and knocked. Lai came to the door and Harry's heart leaped. She wore a light blue Ao Dai over silky white pants. Her long blackish-brown hair was pulled up in a pony tail behind her head, accentuating the finely chiseled features of her face. The eyes that were brown with a touch of blue sparkled at him.

"Harry...I am so glad that you have come. I have wanted to see you again."

"Lai!....but what are you doing here in Go Dau Ha?"

"Oh...I go with my Father on his selling trips some time... and when I hear that you are in Go Dau Ha, my heart tell me to come here."

"I'm sorry that I did not see you before I came to Go Dau Ha... but it happened very quickly."

Lai grasped Harry's hands and pulled him into the pink house. She put her slim arms around his waist and lifted her head to him. Harry gathered her into his arms and kissed her lightly on the lips. Then he kissed her hard, feeling the fragile slimness of her body against his. She pulled herself away and walked lightly toward a door in the back of the house. She opened the door, smiled and beckoned to him to follow her. Harry followed her out into an enclosed garden behind the house.

The garden was a floral paradise hidden behind the dusty streets of Go Dau Ha. Palm trees lined a rock walkway that made a circle behind the house. Bright red, white and yellow flowers lined the walkway. Delicate ferns and purple-white orchids climbed the trunks of the palms.

"This is beautiful....beautiful," said Harry. "I didn't imagine that anything like this existed in Go Dau Ha."

"Do you think that we do not have beautiful things in Viet Nam," asked Lai as she leaned over and stroked the stalk of a flower.

"Of course.....I know there are beautiful things in Viet Nam... but I don't see them often. First, there was you... and now this."

"Oh? And which is more beautiful?"

Harry walked over to her and stroked the stalk of the same flower.

"Well... I don't know. This is certainly a beautiful garden... and this flower is elegant and very bright."

"And the other?" asked Lai, her voice musically soft.

Harry turned to Lai. He put his hands on her slim waist and moved them down to her hips, and then up to the sides of her breasts.

"But if I stroke this flower, I find it much more beautiful..." said Harry.

She laughed softly and slipped away from him. "You are a devil with your words.....and your eyes. I shall have to watch you closely."

Harry followed after her. "Please do. Watch me all of the time... and I shall watch you."

They turned into another section of the garden. In it was a small cottage with windows that lifted up to expose the inside to the garden. The cottage was made of bamboo stalks, woven together. It was painted a light shade of pink.

"What is this place?" asked Harry.

"It is.... of course...the Pink Garden House. A place for tea and enjoying the garden."

"Sort of a Garden Tea House...really fancy! Whose place is this, anyway?"

"Of course, it is my father's house."

"I see... and where is he?"

"He is here... in Go Dau Ha. To do his business. He brings goods from Saigon to the people of Go Dau Ha, you see."

"Yes... I know," said Harry.

They walked into the Pink Garden House. Inside was a large, plush couch that covered the entire side of one wall. In front of it was a teakwood table, low to the floor, and on top of it was an elaborate oriental tea set. There were several other chairs, and a table in the corner with a well stocked bar cabinet on top of it. A small refrigerator stood beside it.

"Would you like an American or a Vietnamese beer?" asked Lai.

"Give me a Bami Ba."

Lai smiled and removed one of the Vietnamese beer bottles from the refrigerator. She popped it open with a nearby opener, and handed it to Harry, along with a glass. She poured herself a small glass of wine.

"Come to the river window, Harry... here," said Lai.

Lai walked to a large window at the back of the house. Harry followed her, and was surprised to see not only the river, but his River Boat Base.

"Damn! You can see the Base from here," said Harry in surprise.

"Yes. I can sit here and watch your boats. When I do, Harry, I think of you. I can not help it."

Harry turned to Lai. He poured the Bami Ba into the glass and took a sip. His eyes burned into hers.

"And on the long nights in the boats... and at the base.... I dream of you... I can not help it."

Lai lowered her eyes. "And what do you dream of Harry... as your boats ride the river to Hiep Hoa?"

Harry took her in his arms. "My boats go up the river, Lai....right by this bend in the river," said Harry. "And now every time I pass this bend I will think of you even more. But I can not tell you what I dream about. The feelings I have can not be described. But I can show you!"

Lai looked up at Harry. Her brown eyes with the hint of blue were moist. Her softly pink mouth opened slightly.

"Show me what you dream of, Harry."

Harry put his lips on hers. They savored the tenderness of the first touch. Then Harry felt her tongue flicker over his lips. He kissed her hard and deeply, pulling her slim body against his. He felt the warmness of her breasts pressing against him.

"How do you take off an Ao Dai, Lai?"

Lai laughed her soft laugh. "It is most easy. It has a zipper in the back."

Harry reached behind her, found the zipper and slid it gently down. The Ao Dai came away, and Lai stood in front of him in white silky pants and a laced brassiere. The brassiere came away as easily as the Ao Dai. Harry ran his hands over the upturned breasts with the brown nipples and raised Lai's face to him. He kissed her and ran his hands down and inside the white, silky pants. Her skin was soft....very soft, and the hair on her body was straight and more silky than the pants. Harry felt his heart pounding and a great surge of warmness in him. He picked her up and carried her to the plush couch against the wall.

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