

twelve-hour flight across the ocean. He wouldn't return to Korea. He would never have a memory of it outside the scope of war. He would never interact with the people as a man, not a soldier. Just a man. A human being to another human being. Somehow the years had melted away and he was ninety. His wife would never have gone. He loved her, but she had never understood the wonders of the world that existed outside the U.S. The myriad of cultures and foods, and the unknown lands to traverse. She had never understood that people were people no matter where you went. She had been born in the town she would die in, and she had never wanted more than that. He remembered taking her and his son to the Mediterranean once. A hard earned, once in a lifetime trip, meant to be a precious memory-making experience for all of them. His wife had hated it. So, after that trip they had traveled exclusively around the U.S.

He would never see Korea again. His life was coming to a close, a few pages remained to be written and then the book would conclude. Maybe Dave would go, or his grandchildren, and they would see it. Maybe what mattered wasn't that he would never see Korea again. Maybe what mattered was that his son, his grandchildren, and anyone else could see it for themselves. They could immerse themselves in the culture, eat the food, and see the ships passing at the Port of Pusan. They could see Seoul, and the city it had become. He could be content knowing that Korea was no longer at war, and that people could come and go. Children could grow without the fear and heartache he had known. A single tear fell from his eye. It rolled down his cheek and fell, into a void of remembrance that came to a close.