

*Forbidden City***Prologue- p.49**

Consider what Alex writes about the soldier-king Ulysses. How might his observation connect to his own story?

“The thing is, he doesn’t fit in anymore. His adventures have changed him so much that the island kingdom he missed so much seems like a pile of barren rock...I know how Ulysses felt. How relieved he was that all was over and he was safe. How messed up and alienated and alone he must have felt after he had been back for a while.”

Make a list of characteristics that describe Alex Jackson and his father Ted.

Alex	Ted

Provide evidence of Alex’s passion for MILITARY HISTORY.

In your own words, explain Alex’s attitude toward “war.” (p.15)

To what is Alex referring when he writes, "*I knew that no matter whose fault it was we had to face it together.*" (p.16)

Make a list of characteristics/information that relate to Xu Bing-long (a.k.a. "Lao Xu")

- * Chinese given name means "Bright Dragon"
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

Chinese cultural traditions Alex's experiences/observes in Beijing:

Record the quick lesson in Chinese history that Lao Xu provides to “Shan Da.” (p. 35)

Explain what *Hu kou* is. (pp. 38-39)

Eddie informs Alex about distinct differences living in a communist state such as China. One of his “lessons” is about the press. Record what Eddie says on page 41:

Why do you think Alex says the following about his relationship with Lao Xu?

Maybe Lao Xu and I could still be friends, but now I knew there would always be a wall between us.

Alex begins to feel depressed. What is his “plan” to overcome his depression? (pp. 46-49)

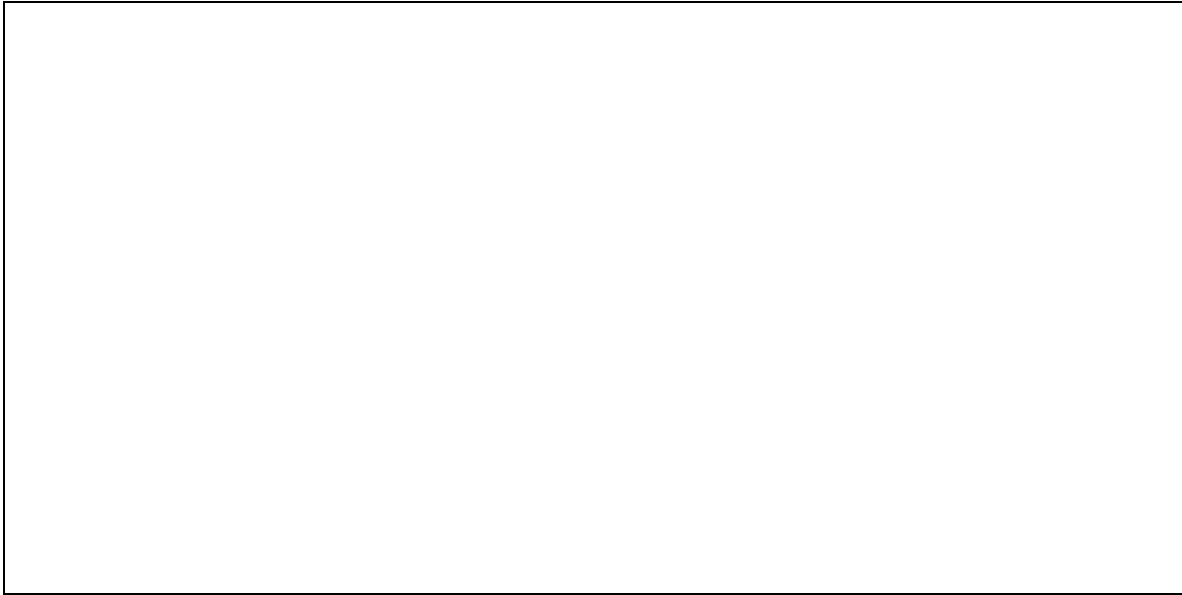
pp. 50-102

Create an appropriate TITLE for each of the following of Alex’s journal entries. Your title should remind you of the content or any issues therein.

April 8	
April 14	
April 15, 12:15 a.m.	
April 15	
April 24	
April 26	
April 27	
May 5	
May 20	

Copy the MAP Alex records on p. 57

Make notes about CHINESE HISTORY that Alex learns from Lao Xu:



Why is **Hu Yao-bang's** death relevant? (pp. 60-ff)

List some of Alex's observations about attending school in China: (p.75-76)

- *
- *
- *

What does Alex learn from the university student he interviews at Tien An Men Square? (pp. 82-84)

Explain how the peaceful student demonstration escalates. (pp. 93-102)

Additional notes (to p. 102)

- A) Storyteller (67-73)
 - a. Liu Bei vs. Cao Cao
 - “straw boat borrow arrows... use your opponents’s strengths against him.”

- B) Chinese School (75-76)
 - a. Teacher is revered/ goes unchallenged
 - b. Students are not involved in discussion
 - c. 10 minute break
 - d. classes 6 days/week

- C) April 27: Student Demonstrations + Demands
 - a. 3 demands
 - i. government should treat them as equals
 - ii. apology to students injured during the previous week
 - iii. not be misrepresented in the media
 - want the government to listen to the people
 - corruption of high officials to be stopped
 - bigger protest to come MAY 4th (remember May 4, 1919—students began the movement that led to the Communist Revolution)

- D) May 5: Alex Interviews “Hong” (86-89)
 - a. Hong means red—medical student/ student leader
 - b. Meets Han (blue)
 - c. Interested in speaking with Western journalists
 - d. Government controls student lives:
 - i. No dating
 - ii. No marriage
 - iii. Go to weekly political propaganda classes
 - COMMUNIST PARTY SPLITS (2 voices)
 - a. Zhao Zi-Yang vs. Deng Xiao-Ping

- E) May 20: Political leaders
 - a. Gorbachev
 - i. Russian Premier

- ii. Taken to Great Wall
 - iii. Not taken to Tien An Men Square (Students, an embarrassment)
- b. Li Peng
- i. Declares MARTIAL LAW in Beijing
- c. Zhao Zi-Yang
- i. Sympathetic to students: cries “too late”
 - ii. Loses his job as #2 in the Communist Party

pp.103-144

EVENTS

- PLA moves into radio and television stations and occupy newspaper offices (controlling information in an explicit way)
- Banners with pop bottles mocking *Deng Xiao Ping* in Tien An Men Square
- PLA retreats from the square
 - Remember in The Art of War: “Make yourself appear to be weak in order to make the enemy proud and rash.”
 - Even though you are capable, **feign incompetence**
- more than 1,000,000 in the square
 - banners: *Democracy Now! Support the Students! Stop the Corruption!*
- government declares the student demonstrators “COUNTER REVOLUTIONARIES”
 - “It means if they are arrested they can be shot.” (p. 117)
- students build a statue like the Statue of Liberty: they call her “Goddess of Democracy”
 - she’s standing in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace—staring at the picture of Mao (where he declared the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949)
- June 2nd –soldiers move in carrying AK47s
- June 3rd –troops use teargas and truncheons
 - 27th Field Army –hardened troops; tough and bitter and fanatically loyal to their leader

Lao Xu confides to Alex:

I am afraid, Shan Da. I'm afraid

pp.145-195

Notable quotations

June 4th – June 6th 1989

JUNE 4th

- time collapses as the violence escalates and Alex becomes directly involved
- Eddie and Ted are down in Tien An Men Square while Alex and Lao Xu have been told to stay back at the Beijing Hotel

12:30 A.M.

- Alex hears reports of a personnel carrier driving through the barriers

1:00 A.M.

- Alex radios his dad and Eddie about the reports; they confirm the action from the Square
- “No, no. He must be mistaken. The PLA wouldn’t shoot at the people!” (p.151)

1:40 A.M.

- “No! Don’t” A smashing sound. More yelling in Chinese. “Alex! They’ve...” Dad let out a blood chilling scream. The radio squealed and then went dead. (p. 153)
- “Are you insane? What are you doing? Stop the shooting!” (p. 157)
- Look at the description of LAO XU’s death:
 - “Lao Xu spun around... His blood began to run onto the road, a dark stream in the red light.” (p. 157)

2:15 A.M.

- “ I sat there, numb and paralysed, calmly watching the massacre.” (p.159)
- “We won’t give in to fascist PLA.” (p.161)
- “I struggled to get free, but the iron hands held me.” (p.164)

5:52 A.M.

- Alex awakens in a strange room on a *kang*
- “ I felt overwhelmed...Tears coursed down my face...I cried harder than I ever had, even harder than when Mom left us.” (p.169)

Alex has been saved by the students: WANG Xin-Hua (whose name means Emperor of New China) and Xiao Nie (the medical student Alex had nicknamed “Hong” because of his red cap)

- he learns that the government has been burning the bodies of those massacred to destroy the evidence
- PLA have torn down the Goddess of Democracy

JUNE 6th

- Alex spent the 5th moping and hobbling about in pain; sleeping fitfully
- Xiao Nie administers antibiotic and painkiller as well as acupuncture to promote healing and reduce the swelling
- Chinese Red Cross estimated 2600 killed so far
- 300,000 PLA troops in and around Beijing
 - The PLA shot an old woman shouting from her balcony and she toppled over the balcony railing and into the street

pp. 196-232

June 7th and 8th 1989

Xin Hua engineers Alex’s attempted escape and journey to the Canadian embassy

- on the back of a *Ping ban che*
- premise of transporting a new Peony washing machine
- disguise: sunglasses, hat, black shoe polish in his hair, Chinese traditional clothing

NB. Alex feels obliged to get the story out since the students saved his life. He will be willing to take unnecessary risk.

OBSTACLES

- 1) Cross 2nd ring road (27th Army defending it)
- 2) “avenue looked like a war zone”
 - a. pavement chewed by tanks
 - b. burn marks
 - c. bits and pieces of refuse
 - d. “truck after truck still smoking”
- 3) PLA roadblock
 - a. Tanks and soldiers with AK47s
- 4) physical challenge of pedalling the *che* in muggy weather
 - a. Alex is helpless—can offer NO HELP to Xin Hua

-Xin Hua breaks down after an innocent cyclist is shot down before her eyes by the PLA

“She trembled as she cried, her face pressed to my chest.” (p.224)

- tells Alex about how PLA liberated China before she was born:
 - “They fought imperialists in the Korea, fought Russians in the north because of the border argument, fought Vietnam, who were Russia’s friends at the time.”
- they bond through issues of common loss : “My friends,” she sobbed again, “I lost my friends.” I began to cry. “Me too,” I said. (p. 229)

- Alex considers Xin Hua a hero: “A strong woman with more character than most of the kids I knew, male or female, put together.”

pp.233-274

June 9th 1989- June 28th, 1989

- tension builds:
 - Alex suggests going to the FRIENDSHIP HOTEL to make a phone call to the embassy—no Chinese allowed in—he now appears to be Chinese
 - As they approach the Ring Road, a PLA soldier stops them
 - Xin Hua produces her *hu kou* card (doesn’t have her student ID on purpose)
 - Alex pretends to be deaf and dumb
 - “When I shout, run Shan Da!” (p.241)
 - gunfire distracts the soldiers and they escape
 - Xin Hua doesn’t think she can get Alex to the Canadian Embassy
 - She wishes they had remembered his western clothes and soap to wash his hair—he looks too Chinese
 - “I felt that cold hand of dread again, pinching my spine and squeezing my chest. I could hardly breathe. The thudding of my heart resonated in my skull.” (p. 251)

- “three men in civilian clothes lay on the ground...and I knew by the way they lay, arms and legs tangled, that they were dead.” (p. 252)
- 2 PLA officers stop them
 - panic creeps into Xin Hua’s voice
 - Alex tries to intervene but they jab the AK47 into his stomach (“I gasped, unable to move. The pain was incredible.” p. 253)
 - They rip his shirt open and shout, “ He’s a foreigner!” (p.253)
 - The officers slap Xin Hua—she pleads that she’s a worker and Alex is Canadian
 - They take Xin Hua to the trees and she pleads with Alex, “Shan Da, don’t fight them. Do as they say.” (p. 254)
- Xin Hua is executed before Alex’s eyes
- Alex shouts at the troops—they drag him away after smacking him with the AK47 and toss him in a passing taxi

June 28th, 1989

- Alex’s mom picks them up at the airport in Toronto
- Ted is ecstatic when the tapes fall from Alex’s pockets
 - He will get the word out
 - He explains what happened to him on June 4th when Alex heard him scream
 - “The soldiers got to me, smashed the radio with their gun butts, smashed the camera, and dragged me back behind their lines. I was thrown into the back of a car and taken away somewhere. They kept me overnight and criticized me and took me to the airport the next day. Told me to get out on the next plane.” (p. 264)
- Eddie sends Alex his journals—he’s still in Beijing
 - Tells them there is a hunt for student leaders and people who talked to foreign reporters
 - People are being shot
 - The government sends the victim’s family a bill for the bullet

- Alex watches the television news and learns that “Wang Ai-min was arrested. Yesterday he was executed.” (p. 268)
- “He was executed ...executed...executed. Then the spring snapped.” (p. 269)
 - Alex has a breakdown and smashes all of his models with a hockey stick and then melts the lead soldiers
- Ted admits to Alex that he thinks he’s finally started to grow up.
 - “Even when I was being arrested, part of me was saying, This is great! The big newsman arrested while he tried to get the story out to the public. Hero stuff. Then when I realized that you weren’t at the hotel, that you were *gone*, it wasn’t a game anymore.” (p. 273)
- Alex admits he had thought it was a game too:
 - “I had known two real heroes in my life and they were both dead. I had seen another on TV today and he was dead, too. Not one of them had worn a uniform.” (p.274)

You will write a **5 paragraph in-class essay**.

- You should prepare a detailed **point-form outline** ahead of time, which you will submit with your essay.
- You may also use your copy of the novel during class.
- Submit this sheet with your essay and outline
- You are expected to have read the entire novel.

TOPIC:

In the prologue, Alex Jackson compares himself to Ulysses, the soldier-king who “endures many adventures” on his journey. He claims his dad, Ted, “seems to think that writing will help... re-adjust to normal life.”

With specific reference to events in the novel, show that Alex’s journey to Beijing has been an extraordinary one in which the adventures he endures contribute to his emotional development.

Evaluation rubric

Outline (detailed, point-form, paragraph by paragraph)

0 1 2 3

Content (relevant, specific support including at least TWO quotations)

5 6 7 8 9 10

Style (proper sentence structure, transition words used, proper use of quotation marks)

1 2 3 4

Spelling and Grammar (accuracy)

0 1 2

Title (reflects essay content; creative)

0 1

/20 marks