

THE MOONLIGHT TRILOGY

月光三部曲

The Moonlight Trilogy, Chang Chia-Hua's latest series for middle grade readers, brings to life Taiwan's northern port town in three different periods of history. Mixing magic, folklore and historical fact, the Moonlight Trilogy uncovers the tragedies of three kinds of colonisation and war wrought on the locals, opening up questions of forgiveness and how we deal with the scars on our past.

The Tamsui Witch and Her Magic Map:

Chi-Hua Moon has received a letter from his aunt, begging for his help. The only thing is, the cloth on which it was written is over a hundred years old, and is no longer in production. Just then, he discovers a most precious and fantastic family heirloom; a deer skin map with magical powers to transport its owner through time and space. Before he knows it, Chi-Hua is back in the Tamsui of one hundred years ago and in perilous danger. Only then does he realise his aunt has been captured by a Galicean spell caster, because he wants to harness aunt and nephew to help him turn present-day Tamsui back to the Spanish...

The Prince and the Enchantress of Japan:

Aunt Moon and her nephew Chi-Hua are on a mission, to use the deer skin map to travel back to 1945 when Taiwan was still occupied by the Japanese and find a piece of black jade that went missing during the 1937 Nanking Massacre in China. But this is also a time of chaos, as war is drawing to a close across the globe and people are fleeing for safety. No one knows who is friend and who is foe, and somehow in the confusion, the spirit of the Japanese Prince Kitashirakawa Yoshihisa is disturbed after fifty years of rest. The Prince's return, along with the help of a Japanese shrine maiden, has the power to change the course of history. If aunt and nephew don't do something thick to stop them, millions could end up losing their lives...

The Boy Who Remembers and the Spirit Who Forgets:

A nameless spirit that has been lying at the bottom of the Tamsui River bed has awoken in a state of amnesia. What happened? How did he end up there? A boy, somehow young in age but with the silver-white hair of a man many years his



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senior, is trying to find out what happened to the father he lost in 1947. Taiwan had just been taken over by KMT military government from China. When the Taiwanese couldn't stand the corrupt new government and the locals rebelled against them, bloodshed was widespread. A chance meeting with Aunt Moon and Chi-Hua results in a sudden chance to go back in time and solve the two mysteries. But can the aunt and nephew team heal scars now over sixty-five years old?

Chang Chia-Hua 張嘉驊

Chang Chia-Hua studied Chinese and children's literature both in Taiwan and Mainland China, before going on to work as a magazine editor, journalist, teacher and textbook editor. He has also acted as judge on the Hong Kong Biennial Awards for Chinese Literature. Chang is always innovating and trying new styles in his writing, mixing a deceptively light prose with considerable research. He is always curious and resists growing comfortable in his approach to creative work. He has published over thirty books for young readers, including the Moon Trilogy and *Strange Books*, and he has been published in traditional and simplified Chinese, as well as Korean. Awards include the prestigious China Times Open Book Award, as well as a special recommendation by the Taiwanese Pavilion at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

THE BOY WHO REMEMBERS AND THE SPIRIT WHO FORGETS

By Chang Chia-Hua. Translated by Darryl Sterk.

Late one night, when Aunt Moon and her nephew Chi-Hua Moon were fast asleep in their rooms, the filing cabinet in the Moon household started rattling again.

To be precise, the sound was coming from a book of magic banging about inside the cabinet. The tome was the life's work of the necromancer Acevedo, who was born in northwestern Spain into a priestly family in the 1880s and spent most of his life learning the dark arts. Acevedo used his native tongue, the ancient Spanish dialect of Galician, to record charms, spells, and enchantments. He even visited Formosa, as Taiwan was called in those days, and dedicated a volume to the magic of the Basay aborigines. Aunt Moon had chanced upon this volume while living in Europe many years before. Poring over it, she had solved the mystery of the deer hide map that had been in her family for generations.

After moving back to Taiwan, Aunt Moon had locked the magic book away. She knew it contained many supernatural arts, but neither she nor her nephew ever touched it out of the conviction that greater power brings only greater ambition.

For that, they thought, had been the cause of Acevedo's corruption, and the reason for his downfall. Once a kindly priest, Acevedo had died a necromancer, a master of the arts of death, because he had become too powerful, and too ambitious.

Aunt and nephew knew that they possessed a gift, and that the best way to cultivate it was to maintain a healthy respect for the supernatural, and to prevent ambition from getting out of hand.

The filing cabinet in which the book was locked was almost rusted shut, so long had it been since Aunt Moon or Chi-Hua Moon had opened it. But then, one night, it started to shudder, emanating an emerald light.

The source of that emerald light was Acevedo's magic book, out of which a spirit now slowly peeked his head. Soon, like a puff of wind, the spirit squeezed out of the crack in the door of the cabinet and floated around in the living room.

Before long, the spirit had left through the window, and glided off towards the old street in Tamsui Town.

As the night was inky black, and everyone was fast asleep, nobody knew that a spirit was out and about. But even in the middle of the day, who could have seen him? He was a spectral being, after all, without form or shadow. Nor could anyone hear anything he might say, excepting of course powerful psychics like the Moons.

The spirit drifted down to the riverside where the ferryboats were moored, alighting on the roof of a store. Looking down, he seemed to recall the scene from that strange day, February 28, when he had woken up at the bottom of Tamsui River.

'Why would I have gone to bed in a river? How long had I lain there?'

By that time his skeleton must have completely disintegrated. He had been sleeping there unnoticed by anyone for who knows how many years. And so he might have stayed for all eternity, had not the blare of a *suona* and the clang of brass bells called him out of his watery slumber.

Hearing that dreadful music, he sat up in his river bed, burst out of the water and glided towards a temple, where a crowd of people was watching some kind of ceremony.

A young person in the garb of a Daoist priest was waving a ragged banner. 'Did he summon me with the spirit summoning flag?' the spirit asked aloud, but the only answer he got was a gust of wind and rain.

The spirit found a place in the crowd. He had no idea why they were gathered, and was beginning to feel a bit bored when a girl by the priest's side started to sing a familiar song. Somehow the spirit knew the song was entitled *Hope*. Like iron to a magnet, he was captivated by her voice, rising and falling despite himself with the modulation of the melody.

'Ah!' he cried. He had heard the song before; it was the first thing he was sure of since he had woken up in the river. In fact, he knew it so well that he could sing along.

But when had he heard it? What did it have to do with him? Who was the girl? And why was she singing such a familiar song?

Looking around, he recognised nobody: the people in the crowd were strangers all. But during his survey he was delighted to discover a middle-aged woman with a faint aura.

She was glowing with a kind of fluorescent light that spirits find irresistible and which only they can see. He couldn't resist approaching her and standing by her side, under the umbrella she was sharing with a young man.

'Who is this woman? And why is she glowing like a firefly?' The spirit decided to follow her.

Just then he discovered someone else out of the ordinary, on the other side of the crowd. A young man with white hair staring his way with a look of astonishment on his face. Before the spirit knew it, the white-haired youth had slipped away from the crowd and was gone.

Two young men, a middle-aged woman and a girl. Eventually the spirit came to know all of their names, despite never finding out his own. He was a spirit with a bad case of amnesia. Aside from the song *Shao-Ting*, for that was the name of the girl, had sung, the only other thing he remembered were the circumstances of his own demise: he had been shot to death, executed at the Mound, at the place where the Tamsui River pours into the Pacific Ocean.

Visiting the beach at the Mound had become a daily ritual for the spirit. He went there every morning at dawn in the hopes of finding clues in his fragmented memory of who he used to be.

The seaside wind would whine and whine, and the rise and fall of the tide was a faint sigh. At the dawning of every day, the spirit would fall upon the beach in a replay of his execution, in an attempt to jog his memory.

He remembered being driven to the beach in a black sedan. The car lights went out, the engine died, and the world went dark. Two men in Chinese tunic suits got out of the car—one from the front seat, one from the rear—and each unhipped a Browning HP. One of them grunted at him to get out of the car. The other escorted him to the sea.

Hands bound behind his back, he stumbled barefoot across the beach, almost tripping on a stone. The farther they

went, the more keenly he felt the chill of the nighttime breeze, as cold and brutal as the uncaring world itself.

He caught a whiff of faintly bitter light, and looked up to see a yellow moon hanging sourly in the sky.

The two men brought him by the water and ordered him to kneel.

He remembered the bitter words he had spoken that night. 'I never thought you two would send me to my grave. You may have won in this lifetime, but I'll get even in the next!'

He also recalled the mocking tones of the reply: 'I've killed a lot of criminals, and I thought I'd heard it all. Fine! Come and haunt me, if you can. I'll be waiting for you.'

At that, the man fired three shots into his back: *Bang! Bang! Bang!* Three bullets passed clear through his torso, exiting through his left breast. He died instantly, and was never heard from again.

The spirit was certain they'd dumped his body into the sea, and that he'd drifted inland with the tide and sunk to the bottom of Tamsui River, where he had lain for who knows how long.

The spirit stood on the beach by the Mound probing the three bullet wounds, still clearly visible, on his left breast. It was as if he was holding a memorial for himself.

Everything was shrouded in darkness, even now as dawn drew nigh.

So many problems and no solution!

He still didn't know who he was or why he had died.

'What kind of person was I? Why was I executed on the beach at the Mound? Was I a victim of the 228 Incident? Did I die on February 28, 1947? If not, then when and why? Is it because my memories are so traumatic that I can't remember them even after death?' The spirit tried hard, but aside from that song and the scene that night at the Mound, he couldn't remember a thing.

It wasn't easy for him to find answers. After all, given the division between the human and spirit worlds, how was he supposed to ask anyone? Even if someone did know something about his death, they'd have no way to tell him, or even know of his existence.

Actually, his investigation had not been completely unsuccessful. The spirit was thankful that he'd been lucky enough to meet Shao-Ting, Aunt Moon and her nephew Chi-Hua Moon, through whom he'd gotten some leads. In fact, in pursuing them, he'd even come to suspect they might be relatives or friends. The spirit was sure meeting them had been no accident, that some kind of otherworldly power was arranging everything. 'Maybe Heaven above has taken pity on a lonesome ghost, and plans to let him find the way home,' he thought.

The spirit had started following Shao-Ting, Aunt Moon and Chi-Hua Moon around to find out more about himself, and here he was, still following them two weeks later. In the interim he had discovered many secrets. The Moons were such an amazing family! To think that an ordinary looking apartment would contain such a formidable magic book and a deer hide map with the power to teleport people through space and time!

That first afternoon, the spirit followed Aunt Moon and Chi-Hua Moon to their big, comfortable apartment located on the ninth floor of a new building with a view of the quay and the mountain on the other side of the Tamsui River. When Aunt Moon turned on the indoor lights it was like a sunny day in spring. The spirit liked the place a lot.

But every night when aunt and nephew went to bed, the spirit found himself at a loose end. He'd tried to go to sleep, but couldn't. Soon he was bored out of his skull.

His boredom was temporarily relieved by a big mirror hanging on the wall. How strange that a spirit like him

would be incapable of making himself visible to other people but have no trouble seeing his transparent form in the mirror. He saw that he was thin, with sharply defined features. He looked rather melancholy.

‘Oh! So that’s what I look like!’ said the spirit aloud, startled to see his spectral appearance for the first time.

But he couldn’t very well stand there and stare himself in the mirror all night. Aunt Moon and Chi-Hua Moon were both asleep, so he couldn’t follow them around. All he could think of to do to pass the time was look over all the works of art in the flat.

‘What might be locked in the filing cabinet?’ he wondered. He squeezed himself inside and bumped against an arcane book written in the alphabetic script of some foreign language, along with sundry runes. While he was looking it over, the pattern on the cover flashed green. It must be a magic book.

On impulse, he decided to jump in.

Like an electric shock, he bounced his way through a labyrinth of words and runes, sensing their power at every turn.

Que a Verdade Sexa Dita! the book said.

What language was this? And why did reading it aloud captivate him so? How come the more he read the more he felt that a Spanish necromancer was by his side, guiding him? Why, when he reached the end, did he hear such a roaring in his head, and see clouds of stars spinning before his eyes? What language could make one’s head swell up, until it felt ready to burst?

Like a pair of huge and powerful hands, a power from deep within the book started groping him, condensing his airy substance into a solid sphere. A new planet swam into his ken, and the words and runes in the book rained down upon it like asteroids, each impact drawing him in further into their mystic spell.

What could account for the intense effect a close encounter with that book had had on him? He had no way of knowing. All he knew was that he could now somehow read the words written within it. He seemed to have figured out the principles of this strange language’s grammar.

The very first night, he studied a spell of telekinesis.

The next morning he found a deserted place to try the spell out. But no matter how many times he cast it, he just couldn’t get anything to move.

Failure would be no obstacle on his quest to learn. Failure only motivated him to study harder! Over the following days he learned other kinds of magic.

On his fourth afternoon in the Moon household, when Chi-Hua Moon was still at school, he saw Aunt Moon use magic with his own eyes. He saw her besieged by bright lights and buffeted by strong winds as she plunged into the deer hide map that was hanging on the wall in her room. The name of the spell she cast was *Lévame Nunha Viaxe no Tempo*. He remembered reading about it in the magic book. He just wasn’t sure about its practical use. He certainly never expected it would have anything to do with time travel!

He couldn’t believe his eyes. He was much too slow this time to follow Aunt Moon on her journey into the past.

Later he tried to cast the spell himself and go back in time like Aunt Moon. But his attempt was anti-climactic, to say the least. There was no bright light, no strong wind, and he didn’t move an inch. That’s how he realised his limitations as a spirit.

It seemed that only a living person could make the magic work.

About ten days later Aunt Moon cast the spell again, but this time the spirit followed close behind, on a trip back to 1967 in Tamsui Town. Aunt Moon went to learn about the deaths of Tseng Chiu-Hsiung and his father Ching-Huang. She was so distraught, and he wasn't feeling much better himself.

After Tseng Chiu-Hsiung was executed, his father Ching-Huang collected his remains at the seaside at the Mound with the help of a family friend, Mr Lin the antiques dealer. Aunt Moon went back in time to visit Mr Lin's son, who had inherited the family antiques shop. The son told her all he knew about what had happened that day.

Tseng Ching-Huang had embraced the body of his only begotten son and wailed. He kept trying to plug the three bullet holes in his son's breast with sand. 'I told you not to go off and fight, but would you listen? Chiu-Hsiung! My only son! I thought I'd never see you again, but you came back to us, only to die after the war, when Taiwan was returned. Oh, the irony! How is your poor father supposed to carry on?'

Hearing these words, the spirit felt sad, but also stunned. *Bang! Bang! Bang!* Three shots hit him from out of the past, so hard that his chest hurt.

Tseng Chiu-Hsiung had died at the seaside by the Mound of three bullet wounds in the left breast. 'What a coincidence! Could it be that Mr Lin is talking about me? Is my name Tseng Chiu-Hsiung?' he asked himself.

And now that he stood on the beach facing the cold breeze blowing in from the sea, the spirit felt like he might be Tseng Chiu-Hsiung. But at the same time, he wasn't quite so sure. He'd spent the past two days trying to resolve two doubts that had crept into his mind.

First, he knew from Mr. Lin's account that Tseng Ching-Huang had buried his son, while if there was anything the spirit was sure of it was that he had woken up lying in the riverbed. So could he possibly be Tseng Chiu-Hsiung?

Second, Shao-Ting's great uncle wrote *Hope* as a tribute to his father, who had died on February 28, 1947, and to his father's whole generation, including Tseng Chiu-Hsiung. But the spirit was sure he had heard *Hope* before. So how could Tseng Chiu-Hsiung be his name?

But then he thought further, and realised that his spirit might have left his body right before his execution and slipped into the sea. And instead of directly drifting up the Tamsui River, perhaps his spirit wandered the world for a time, long enough to hear the song? Thinking along these lines, the spirit wondered if he might be Tseng Chiu-Hsiung after all.

On the other hand, maybe he was someone close to Tseng Chiu-Hsiung? In fact, before hearing about Tseng Chiu-Hsiung's death, he'd suspected he might be Shao-Ting's great uncle, the author of the song.

Maybe he was so familiar with the lyrics because he wrote them himself.

He had gone home with Shao-Ting on two occasions to try to investigate this hypothesis, but had nothing to show so far for his trouble.

As a result, the spirit couldn't be sure if he was Tseng Chiu-Hsiung, Shao-Ting's great uncle, or someone else.

He'd passed the night at the Mound mulling these possibilities in his mind.

Standing on the beach, watching the waves roll in, he felt lost. Who could give him a straight answer? he wondered.

Just then, the spirit heard the sound of a car engine drawing near. He looked back and saw a black sedan come to a stop by the side of the road. The driver got out and opened the rear door.

And the man that stepped out of the back seat of the sedan was none other than the white-haired young man who had been spying on Aunt Moon, Chi-Hua Moon and Shao-Ting that day by the side of the Tamsui River. Wearing a

smartly pressed suit, he walked across the beach. His chauffeur waited by the car.

The white-haired young man stopped beside the spirit, and gazed out to sea. 'I thought might find you here,' he said. 'Are you still replaying the scene of your execution?' The white-haired young man could see him and communicate with him, as nobody else had been able to do.

The spirit turned towards him and said, 'Didn't we arrange to meet later on this morning at your mansion? What are you doing here so early?'

The white-haired young man smiled and said, 'I get mansion fever if I stay inside too long. I like to go for a walk by the ocean first thing in the morning. And I thought I might find you here. To be honest, I'm dying to hear if you've made any progress in your investigation.'

'Any news from the Moon household?' the white-haired young man asked.

'Chi-Hua Moon has invited Shao-Ting to come over for a visit this Saturday,' the spirit answered.

The white-haired young man nodded: 'Is Aunt Moon still making trips back in time?'

'She is. She went back to old Tamsui again, just two days ago.'

'Did you go with her this time? And do you know what the purpose of her trip was?'

'Yes, this time I managed to tag along. She met an antiques dealer... to talk business.'

The white-haired young man shook his head and laughed. 'The Moons are really something!' he said. 'They've got two incredible heirlooms, and have mastered such powerful magic, but all they do with it is travel back in time to talk antiques. What a waste!'

The spirit took another look at the white-haired young man, unsure what he was really up to.

The white-haired young man standing beside him was named Chen Tien-Hsiang. The spirit knew quite well that looks can be deceiving, that even though Chen Tien-Hsiang appeared to be callow, inside he was worldly wise. When the spirit first made the his acquaintance he was surprised at how deceiving looks can be, no less surprised than he had been when he first encountered Aunt Moon.

The spirit had met Chen Tien-Hsiang three days after waking up in the river. After aunt and nephew had gone to sleep one night, the spirit drifted off to the ferryboat quay, close to the place where he had woken up.

The chill of February rain was in the air, but there were still a few loiterers by the riverside.

Moonlight sparkled faintly on the river waves, and the sound of the tide washed in. The spirit was still standing by the river and thinking about what had happened that day...

...when he noticed a man in a hooded down jacket walking his way. The man came over and stopped by his side.

The man had the hood up, and was looking down, so the spirit could only see the lower half of his face. The spirit thought that the man was unaware of his existence just like everyone else, and was startled when he opened his mouth to say: 'I don't know why you woke up in the river, either. But I can imagine that you must feel very lonely living among men but being unable to communicate with anyone. If you have anything to say, you can tell me. I'll listen. And I have some things to ask you, too.'

'What? You can see me?'

'Yes.'

'But how?'

'I've had this ability since I was a boy.'

'Who are you?' The spirit couldn't help feeling a bit suspicious. 'Why are you out so late? Have you come here just to wait for me?'

'That's right, I've come here just to wait for you.' The man removed his hood and said, 'In fact, I've been waiting for you to show up for two whole days!'

The spirit looked at his face, now fully exposed, and was shocked to see the young white-haired man from the performance at the riverside.

That evening, they had a long conversation. They got to know one another, and from then on became companions of a sort. The spirit agreed to help Chen Tien-Hsiang find out what was going on at the Moon household, and to follow the Moons around, while Chen Tien-Hsiang promised to help the spirit solve the mystery of his identity.

They'd met every two or three days, four times in total. Each time the spirit could take a break from following Aunt Moon around he'd flit over to Chen Tien-Hsiang's oceanview mansion for a colloquy. This was their fifth meeting. Somehow Chen Tien-Hsiang had known he might find him way out here at the beach at the Mound.

In the faint light of dawn, the young man's white hair was billowing in the wind, like a silver flag. He turned to the spirit and asked: 'How is your magical training progressing?'

'Pretty good. It's fun. And it gives me something to do at night. But it turns out that only people can cast these spells. I've studied some of the most advanced ones, but I don't seem to be able to get them to work.' The spirit held out a pair of transparent hands, gesturing his helplessness. With hands like these, he couldn't even pick up a pair of chopsticks.

'Why don't you try possessing me?' the white-haired young man suggested. 'We might be able to make magic together.'

'Good idea!' the spirit said, raring to give it a try. *Poof!* He had squeezed himself into the white-haired young man's body.

Just two seconds later, though, he was forced out. He tried again. The same thing. After the third try he didn't want to try again.

'You have a kind of vital essence in your body that blocks access,' the spirit said.

The young man nodded, 'That must be the positive energy of the living. Too bad! If you could possess me, then we would be as one, and if I could somehow harness your knowledge of magic. We could get a lot of things done.'

What's with you, Tien-Hsiang? For all your positive energy of the living, you've already sighed twice in little over half an hour, thought the spirit.

'Oh yes, I meant to say. I sent my assistant to look up Shao-Ting's great uncle,' said the white-haired young.

'Oh, really?' The spirit was pleased. All the questions he'd been asking these past few weeks might finally find their answer.

'Shao-Ting's great uncle was named Wang Li-Yen. His father, Wang Keng-Chin. Wang Li-Yen died in the White Terror: he was incarcerated in Tamsui, and later moved to the Eastern Temple of the Past Vows in Taipei. He was executed by the Xindian River, at a place quite a ways inland called Machangding. In other words, he didn't die at the

Mound.'

Hearing this, the spirit was certain he wasn't Shao-Ting's great uncle. He felt a bit disappointed. But then he realised that the likelihood he was Tseng Chiu-Hsiung had increased.

The white-haired young had never heard of Tseng Chiu-Hsiung, so the spirit filled him in, based on what he'd overheard at Mr Lin's antiques shop. 'Please help me look up Tseng Chiu-Hsiung!' he implored. 'Maybe that's who I really am.'

Hearing the spirit's description, the white-haired young man paled.

Was the white-haired young man lamenting the fate Tseng Chiu-Hsiung and other young Tamsui intellectuals had met? There were still so many things the spirit longed to know. 'I overheard Aunt Moon mention that state troops assaulted people in the streets of Tamsui. What was that all about?'

At this, the white-haired youth was incensed. His eyes opened wide, his fists clenched, and he said: 'Assaulted, you say? No, let me tell you. It was a massacre!'

The spirit had never seen the white-haired young man so angry before. 'A massacre?' the spirit asked. 'Why do you say that?'

Now furious, the white-haired young man continued, 'Over two hundred soldiers following a vehicle down Main Street, gunning everyone down. If that's not a massacre, what is? The poor people of Tamsui! Completely unarmed, they could only flee. Even if they managed to dodge the bullets they might not be able to dodge the secret agents, who descended upon Tamsui soon after to round folks up. Tseng Chiu-Hsiung was one of the men they took away.'

The white-haired young man had every reason to be upset. And what he had said made the spirit feel the same way. He imagined bullets raining all around, and saw the people of Tamsui collapsing in the street, one after another.

The spirit thought, if he were really Tseng Chiu-Hsiung, and he saw something like this happen in his home town, he would never forget, not even after death. And yet he had forgotten. Did that mean he wasn't Tseng Chiu-Hsiung? Or that the memory was so traumatic he had forgotten it on purpose?

If he had really witnessed the massacre, and gone on to forget it, then what about all the people who weren't there? Wouldn't they be even more likely to forget, if they ever knew?

Just when the spirit was going to make further inquiries, the youth spoke again, still incensed: 'Today is the sixty-fifth anniversary of the 228 Incident. And he picks today of all days to try to rewrite history.'

'Who would do such a thing?'

'A four-star general who served a term as premier of the Republic of China in the early 1990s, that's who. He's gone and published an editorial in the newspaper claiming there's a factual error in the history textbooks. The textbooks say over ten thousand people were killed or injured in the 228 Incident, but based on the compensation applications he reviewed, the former premier thinks this figure was a thousand at most, in what he is calling 'missing or dead from unnatural causes.' 'In fact, there is only satisfactory documentation for about five hundred,' he wrote.'

The spirit wanted to hear the white-haired young man's analysis, so he stayed quiet and listened.

'How many people were killed or injured in the 228 Incident? There have been a lot of different figures, some as high as a hundred thousand. 'Over ten thousand casualties,' as the textbooks say, is the expert consensus, the result of careful investigation. Actually, I don't want to argue with him over the exact figure or how they calculated it. I'm not a historian, and I don't know statistics. What bugs me isn't the number, it's his whole attitude. I mean, didn't the issue of

responsibility ever cross his mind when he was writing the editorial? Hasn't he ever asked himself who was responsible for all the 'unnatural deaths' and the 'missing persons'? If the regime in which he played such a leading role had governed properly instead of persecuting the people, nobody would have had to die.'

The white-haired young man was now almost apoplectic. Trembling, he said: 'As a general, he should know better. He of all people should know what soldiers can do. If he had witnessed how the soldiers and special agents caused innocent people to die 'unnatural deaths' and to make it onto the list of 'missing persons,' would he still have the gall to write such things in a newspaper editorial?'

Hearing this, the spirit couldn't help feeling the great injustice of it all.

Then the spirit had an idea. What if the general could go back in time to the scene of the crime? Would he be able to feel the pain of the common man? Even if the spirit couldn't take him back, perhaps there was some way of getting him to see what happened that day.

Could it really be done? the spirit wondered.

While the spirit was thinking about the possibility, he heard the white-haired young man say, 'You know, for the longest time, I've been trying to find out what happened to my father.'

The spirit nodded. 'Yes, I know. On the evening we made one another's acquaintance, you told me all about your late father. You mentioned his name. You even asked me if I had seen his spirit, and showed me his picture. I remember what he looked like pretty clearly.'

'Yes, I told you my father was a victim of the 228 Incident. But what I didn't mention was that he was taken away by secret agents, just like Tseng Chiu-Hsiung, and never heard from again. His death is just as much a mystery as Tseng Chiu-Hsiung's.'

This stunned the spirit. 'Then your father and I might have been martyred together.'

'I think that is a real possibility,' the white-haired young man solemnly said. 'If you get the chance to go back in time to Tamsui at the time of the 228 incident, and I believe sooner or later you will, please help me find out the truth about my father. Where was he taken? And how did he die?' He paused and said: 'If possible, please save my father. And save yourself. If you are in fact Tseng Chiu-Hsiung.'

What? Save the white-haired young man's father? And save himself, if Tseng Chiu-Hsiung he turned out to be? The spirit was stupefied. The former premier merely wanted to rewrite history, while the white-haired young man hoped to change it! It seemed too crazy to contemplate. But maybe, just maybe...

The spirit fell into a reverie. Suddenly he looked up and asked: 'What was the date of the massacre in Tamsui?'

The white-haired young man looked up and said: 'The date of the massacre is etched into my memory: March 10, 1947.'

The spirit thought it over and said: 'Who knows if what we talked about today is even possible. But for you, my friend, I will do everything I can!'

'My father died sixty-five years ago, almost a lifetime. How many years have I spent mourning my father, utterly alone? Who could ever understand my pain?' The white-haired young man walked several steps towards the ocean, which was sending one wave after another to the shore. He took a deep breath and spat 'Ah!' into the gale. Then he turned towards the spirit and said: 'I can't wait any longer!'

'You can't wait any longer?' the spirit repeated uncomprehendingly.

'I have to do something for my poor old Pa,' said the white-haired young man enigmatically. 'I am grateful for all that you've done for me. But I can't just sit around in my mansion waiting for you to bring me news. I have to take the initiative. When the time comes for me to act, I'll have to ask you to please forgive me!'

