

A Sparrow

In Grand Central Terminal in December of 1941 a local train pulled into track 7. The passengers got off, then either walked toward the lower concourse or a narrow, back staircase. One passenger was a young, Japanese man, who walked with his two hands held behind his back and with his back straight. He was called Akira.

It was cold, and he wore a thin coat over his suit but no gloves. He felt tired, and he blinked as though to pull himself out of it. It was no more than five thirty, but he was in a hurry. As the crowd he was with came to where the track ended, where the lower concourse was, he looked straight ahead of him but he did not seem to see anything. He could not have told you what he had seen. He was thinking of the broadcasts. *Been going on for almost three hours. A bomb dropped. Severe bombing, severe bombing.* All the announcers had said that. They kept saying that. Then there was another line, he had tried to hold on to it then, as he had heard it, it was *bombing, by enemy planes, Japanese planes.* No *undoubtedly Japanese,* it was. *Undoubtedly Japanese.* Those words, they seemed to peal.

He had understood the inevitability of war and what the scale of the war would be, as they all had, all Americans, all Japanese, and he had known that America could not stay out of it, but he did not think, he could not have thought that his country would be the country to begin it. He had not thought about who would begin it or how America would be drawn in, but if someone had asked him, asked him if the Imperial Army would attack America, his answer would have been, *No, that could not be, no* and then, afterward, after the broadcasts, *no, that cannot be.* It is a lie, or it is not the truth.