

Contents

	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>ix</i>
	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
1	<i>The Pearl: A Voice Calling</i>	<i>3</i>
2	<i>Golden Pearls: The Amstutz Heritage</i>	<i>9</i>
3	<i>Selected Pearls: The Jacobson Heritage</i>	<i>17</i>
4	<i>Matching Pearls: Two People, One Prayer</i>	<i>26</i>
	5 <i>Matched Pearls: The Decision</i>	<i>33</i>
	6 <i>Prepared Pearls: China at Last!</i>	<i>39</i>
7	<i>The Dragon's Claws: A Spiritual Battle</i>	<i>48</i>
	8 <i>The Dragon's Power: A Tragic Summer, a New Ministry</i>	<i>56</i>
	9 <i>The Dragon's Lair: Datong</i>	<i>71</i>
	10 <i>The Dragon's Fury: Taiping</i>	<i>79</i>
11	<i>The Dragon's Fury: The Ultimatum</i>	<i>89</i>
12	<i>The Dragon Is Defeated: "Fear Not"</i>	<i>96</i>
13	<i>The Dragon Is Defeated: A New Attitude, a New Church</i>	<i>108</i>
14	<i>Pearls in the Dragon's Lair: Datong</i>	<i>119</i>
	15 <i>The Dragon's Work: Qingyang</i>	<i>128</i>
	16 <i>The Dragon's Fangs: Qimen</i>	<i>137</i>
	17 <i>The Dragon Attacked: Shanghai</i>	<i>146</i>

18	<i>Confronted by the Dragon: On the Air</i>	152
19	<i>The Dragon Fights: The Rising Sun and the Swastika</i>	162
20	<i>The Dragon's Defeat: The Great Escape</i>	175
21	<i>The Dragon's Defeat: Together at Last</i>	182
	<i>Epilogue</i>	193
	<i>Epilogue 2</i>	196
	<i>Epilogue 3</i>	198

The Pearl: A Voice Calling

The little sideroom smoldered with a deep oppressive kind of darkness, the form of a young man, his face in his hands, barely visible.

The figure shook and swayed, recalling those first terrifying days when many weeks earlier he and Pastor Hu (HOO) had entered Taiping (TIE ping). The whole city had risen up against their presence. Mobs surrounded the house.

"Sha, sha! Yang guei dze! Kill, kill the foreign devil," they screamed. Miraculously, Gerhard and Pastor Hu were still there. An official of Taiping, a walled county seat in South Anhui (AHN whay), had declared that they would never allow foreigners to live or buy land there because of the devastation resulting from the Taiping Rebellion.

Without the intervention of a small contingent of guards from the magistrate's headquarters who thwarted the crowd's murderous intent, the mob scene might have ended otherwise. But now the guards—and their protection—were removed.

Gerhard recalled how bravely he and Pastor Hu had set out from Datong (Dah TUNG). He could still see their two families waving and smiling tearfully as the men set out down the road. Now his heart became numb with an agonizing dread—he was jeopardizing his family's future. If the murderous mob returned and had its way, he would leave them fatherless.

The curtains of the sedan chair pushed back as Mrs. Li (LEE), the Bible woman, helped a small young woman and little girl to the street. The chair bearers shouted, driving the crowds away with spicy curses that left embarrassed looks on the sea of dark faces.

"I told you not to come to Taiping," Gerhard shouted above the din. "It's very dangerous here, Alma. Why did you come?"

"The Lord told me to come," his petite wife answered self-assuredly as she picked up a box and headed toward the house.

Pastor Hu dickered with the carriers. Mrs. Li shouted to the men as she directed traffic toward the large reception room where the bags were to be placed. The street seemed enveloped in utter confusion.

Inside, Gerhard bent over the boxes and turned to Alma.

"It's good to see you, darling," he said somewhat more gently, "but it makes the situation worse than ever with you two here."

Out of the corner of his eye he could see the stout Bible woman hobbling on her bound feet, heading for the kitchen where she would, no doubt, command the crew to make tea for the weary travelers.

Suddenly it seemed that all the weariness Gerhard had accumulated over the last three months drained from his body. It was as if his prison-house existence was forever gone. He rushed to the cupboard where his meager household utensils were stored and began to set a square wooden table.

Looking once more at his wife, he paused.

"Well, you always do what you want, Alma," he said with a slight smile. "Anyway, I'm thanking the Lord you arrived today since you did decide to come."

"Why is that, Gay?" Alma asked, using the abbreviation she reserved for intimate discussions with her husband. Then without waiting for a reply, she continued. "This is a nice big room for services, but so dark and stuffy. Can't we open the doors a bit?"

"And have everyone cramming in to stare at us?"

"Oh, yes, of course. We all had to have our skin and hair felt every time people got near

enough to touch us as we came into the city. They thought Doris's brown hair was golden."

Alma glanced at the diminutive five-year-old running from corner to corner, delightedly squealing something in Chinese at each new discovery. Her yellow, pongee-silk dress fluttered like butterfly wings in the dark shadows.

"So why did you feel my coming to Taiping today was so providential?" Alma asked again, this time waiting for a reply.

"Actually, my faith was at its lowest point since coming here," Gerhard responded, a painful shadow crossing his face. "I was just sitting on the cot in the next room thinking about how to get out, and . . ."

"You'd never leave after this long a time," Alma interjected. "You're not a stubborn Swede for nothing." Her girlish laugh brought stares from the Chinese nearby.

What a pleasing sight these two missionaries made—Alma with her dark brown hair coiled neatly at the nape of her neck, her softly rounded, heart-shaped face and large expressive blue eyes lending a look of vibrant innocence. She was fanning vigorously, hoping to dry out her silk blouse and black Chinese pants. The pointed cloth shoes hung off her feet. It was cooler that way.

Gerhard was also laughing. To the Chinese he seemed tall and well-built, his face more classic, with a fine straight nose, a sensitive mouth and strong chin. In some ways Gerhard

and Alma were look-alikes, at least to Chinese eyes. Both faces were radiant with the happiness they felt after months of separation.

"Let's have a look at the bedroom and start arranging my things," suggested Alma as she lifted herself out of the hard bamboo chair and followed Gerhard into another dark but spacious room.

There were a few shelves and a large black Chinese cupboard along the wall. Black chairs stood here and there around the room. The bed was just boards set on two trestles. Piled on top was a nicely stuffed straw mattress, along with an assortment of pillows and quilts—*all bought on the street*, Alma decided. Above the bed was a fairly large dark hole.

"Things look very comfortable here. But what is that hole?" Alma asked, pointing to the ceiling. "Does it lead to the attic?"

"Yes. That's where the pet snake stays in the daytime." Gerhard grinned.

"How about at night?"

"He has come and shared my bed with me. Not exactly my idea of a good bedfellow though." Now Gerhard was laughing out loud.

Alma sat down on the bed but she didn't laugh. *And I'm supposed to sleep here?* she thought to herself.

Her mind wandered back to the early years when she and Gerhard had met in Chicago. Now, here they were in the Land of the Dragon. Suddenly Alma looked up at the win-

dow. A brilliant sunset was bidding its daily farewell from behind a crinkled hill.

Oh, there was a fascination about it all. It was as if a voice was calling, "Come see what's behind these far off hills. There's something here for you, something you are looking for."

But what was that something? Could it be the Pearl?