

Act Two Scene 7

Action continues without a blackout

Saigon, Vietnam — later that same day

START

VINH and EMILY are standing in front of Emily's hotel. There are two chairs off to one side, one in front of the other representing a motor bike. There are two helmets sitting on the chairs.

EMILY

I'm so grateful for this day. Thank you for making it perfect.

VINH

(VINH bows slightly to EMILY.)

I'm glad it is good for you.

EMILY

Can you tell me about your family. How is it for you now?

VINH

We have it a little better than most because I have my license from the government to be a tour guide. We have two daughters, and we have to pay for their school — there are no public schools. My children can only go to a half day of school because that is all I can afford. My wife works as a teacher when she can.

(Pause)

Emily, your husband died fighting for freedom for the people of my country. We did not understand and wanted the Americans to leave. Now we live in poverty.

(Pause)

I would like to show you how we live. Would you like to come to my house and meet my family?

EMILY

I would love that! But what will your wife say?

VINH

My wife will be surprised! In 23 years of being a tour guide I have never brought someone to our house. I will tell her you are very special, and she will understand. There is one thing I need to tell you. I do not own a car. When I come to your hotel each day, I ride my motorbike.

(VINH gestures toward the two chairs.)

The company that hired me to be your tour guide has the car waiting for me here when I arrive to pick you up. We can take their car but...would you **like** to take a motorbike ride?

EMILY

Yes!

VINH

Yes? I have invited many people to try a motorbike ride before. No one has ever said “yes”. They are too afraid.

EMILY

I get that! You only need to be in Saigon traffic for five minutes to believe there are 7 1/2 million motorbikes here.

(VINH walks to the motorbike and gets a helmet for EMILY.)

VINH

I always have this extra helmet; when I leave you each day I sometimes go to the school, pick up my daughter and take her home. Please, I will help you put it on.

(VINH helps EMILY fasten the helmet. He also gives her a mask to put over her mouth)

This mask will help protect you from the bad air here in Saigon traffic.

(EMILY puts on her sun glasses.)

Now you look like a ninja!

(VINH laughs and smiles and EMILY looks a little offended.)

No Emily, do not worry. I just mean to say you look very strong — like a warrior.

(EMILY laughs.)

VINH gets out his cell phone to take a picture.

EMILY poses with her arms up, flexing her biceps.

After VINH takes a picture they climb onto the motorbike.

There are sounds of a motorbike engine revving and then traffic noise.)

EMILY

(EMILY is holding on to VINH with both arms wrapped around his waist. She yells over the engine)

Vinh, how do you decide when there are enough motorbikes to go through an intersection?

VINH

It depends very much on what time of day it is. When it is so very busy, like it is now, 25 or 30 motorbikes is enough to move into an intersection.

(He laughs as he says)

25 or 30 motorbikes should be enough to make the oncoming motorbikes stop.

(More laughing)

Not really, Emily. You just get a sense of when you have a force large enough to move through safely.

END