



Dick's Vacation

Arthur Hoppe

"GUESS WHERE we're going on our vacation, Pat. Peking!"

"In February, Dick? How nice."

"Julie and David advanced our trip this time. Who needs Henry? They say The Great Wall, which I said was great, is still great. And they still really know how to cook Chinese food, which you said they really know how to cook."

"Do I have to visit those nursery schools again?"

"No, Pat. We're going as just plain old ordinary private citizens. Jerry sure made that one thing perfectly clear."

"Well, I suppose it would do you good to get away it would from it all, dear. But why China?"

"To get away from it all. It's the one place in the world where they still respect me."

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"NONSENSE, dear. There's . . . Well, no, but there's . . . Or what about . . . Hmmm. Should I pack your hair shirt?"

"No, I'll wear it. But it sure will be good to get back to China where they only look at you inscrutably."

"Yes, dear, the Chinese would make wonderful friends if they weren't Communists. But as you've been saying for 30 years, you can't trust these treacherous, bloodthirsty, power-mad fiends who want to enslave . . ."

"Darn it, Pat! That's what I used to say. Actually, the Chinese are swell

guys. And great judges of character, too!"

"But I thought you said they'd murdered millions of people."

"You never listen to me any more, Pat. For a whole year now I've been saying let's let bygones be bygones. Just because somebody makes a few little mistakes . . ."

"Like the rape of Tibet?"

"That, too. But I say we should all be good Christians and forgive people their trespasses. Like into their political opponents' headquarters. Not to mention their tax evasions, their tape erasures . . ."

"Yes, dear. It's too bad that spirit didn't catch on around here."

"Which reminds me. Don't forget to pack my tape recorder. You can't trust anybody."

"But you told me to burn it, dear, and I did."

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"DRAT IT! I didn't want you to burn the recorder. Only the . . . Well, never mind. I'll take notes."

"On your vacation? Whatever for, dear?"

"Just a little business, Pat. I thought I might apply for an important job that's opened up in Peking."

"Oh, I forgot. Our Special Envoy, George Bush, has been recalled to become the CIA Director. That would be a wonderful job for you, dear."

"Not Bush's job, Pat. Chou En-lai's."