

son, who had been only two when he fled, was now eighteen.

My grandmother yelled to the Red Guards. "You are liars! My husband is a good man!"

The Lead Red Guard, her favorite student in the senior class, strode forward and dangled a piece of paper in front of her. "He confessed! Look at his signature and fingerprints!"

She shook her head. "You must have tortured him."

The Lead Red Guard held up the paper. "The proof is clear. He is an enemy of the People." He turned to my grandmother. "And you are guilty by association."

Behind the wall, my young uncle almost jumped out and yelled. My mother and her sister grabbed him by his sleeves, covered his mouth with their hands, and pinned him on the muddy ground. He kicked and bit my mother's fingers. Her blood ran down his cheek.

"You can redeem yourself," the Red Guards yelled. "Draw a demarcation line with your deceitful, capitalist husband."



"A demarcation line?" I asked.

"It meant cutting all ties with her husband and declaring him a political enemy. The Red Guards had forced this on many against their dearest family members."

I remembered what had started this bout of self-revelation. "So, did she?"

"No. She stuck by him."



When the Red Guards asked my grandmother again to denounce her husband, she yelled: "Never!" She lost her voice in the crowd's chant.

"Purge the remnants of capitalism!"

"Overthrow the Five Black Categories!"

"Defeat the People's enemies!"

The Red Guards slapped her and dragged her down from the podium to inside the school building, which had been converted into prison cells.