

## CHAPTER 1

### *owels fly by night*

For a brief moment the shimmering Egyptian desert swung into focus far below the MIG 15 trainer. Dan Maukar squinted. There was a sudden sickening giddiness, and then he blacked out. The pull up at the end of the practice loop was lost in a blurred swirl of desert, sky, and instruments.

Even amid the reeling confusion, he detected an anxious voice calling over the intercom.

“Mr. Danny! Mr. Danny! Are you all right?”

Dan’s head lolled from side to side. At the moment he could not place the voice. It seemed to be detached somewhere in time and space. His hands, clammy and weak, hung loosely on the controls. His whole body seemed suspended in a strange limbo of uselessness.

“Saja pusing,” he answered in his native Indonesian.

“Are you feeling all right, Mr. Danny?”

Now he knew who was calling. Only his Egyptian flight instructor ever called him Mr. Danny. This time Dan responded in English, the common language used in training.

“I’m dizzy.”

As the plane leveled off, Dan felt the dual controls moving gently in his own hands. He was glad for them now. Steadily the instrument panel came into focus. He blinked his eyes several times just to make sure.

“Now how do you feel?” his instructor asked.

“I’m OK.”

“Are you sure?”

“Positive.”

Dan felt the firm grip of the controls again and hopefully awaited word for further training. The few seconds of silence from his instructor were shattered by the terse command.

“Descend!”

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It was with reluctance that Dan landed the MIG trainer. He knew it might mean the end of his jet training. Obviously his instructor would make a detailed report of the incident which would immediately be followed by a protracted medical examination. He had always been in good health. This sudden unaccountable vertigo puzzled him.

As one of ten pilots chosen from the Indonesian Air Force for jet training, Dan Maukar felt proud that he represented his home area of the North Celebes. Although born in Bandung, he had always claimed that long arm of land as "home." He had joined the air force in 1956 and two years later received his commission as second lieutenant in the 11th Fighter Squadron. Secretly six pilots had been whisked out of the country as the first group chosen for jet training. He had not been able to inform his relatives or friends of his whereabouts. The military attaché had locked the whole scheme away from even the high ranking government officials.

Now all the excitement and adventure of becoming one of the highly selected jet pilots seemed about to vanish. What had caused this strange dizziness?

He soon found out. When the authorities learned of the experience, they wanted to get a firsthand glimpse of Dan's problem. Within the hour they were putting him through the high altitude simulator test. Dan sat inside the capsule, face mask and earphones in position, watching the panel of instruments in front of him. As the instruments registered 23,000 feet, a doctor outside the capsule called off a series of arithmetic problems.

"What Is the sum of 53 and 45?" the doctor's voice came through the intercom.

"98," Dan said.

"What is the difference between 27 and 14?"

"13."

The questions and answers flew back and forth until Dan heard the command to descend. He began bringing the simulated jet down and soon found himself sliding down

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vertigo alley again - swirling, drifting, losing control. Waves of dizziness and uncomfortable heat pounded his senses.

"I'm getting hot!" he complained.

He could see the doctor outside the capsule, cupping his hands to his eyes and peering through the porthole. It all looked blurry and faraway. Dan felt smothered. He reached up to loosen his face mask.

"Leave your face mask on!" he heard a voice call through the intercom. But it was too late. Dan had torn it off and was slumped in his seat.

The next thing Dan knew, he was lying on a bed in the medical ward with a doctor standing nearby writing out his orders. "Anemia," the doctor said, noticing Dan was awake. "You're not eating right."

"I just don't like what you have to eat here," Dan said.

"If you plan to fly, you'll have to make the proper adjustments in your eating habits," the doctor answered. "You must rest for a week. That means no flight maneuvers. Bed rest. Report here every day in the early afternoon for a vitamin B shot." The doctor turned to an officer standing nearby. "Make sure he gets plenty of corned beef, eggs, and bread."

Lying in bed while the rest of his Indonesian colleagues put their trainers through the paces was excruciating. Dan winced every time he heard one of the jets scream overhead. The agonizing wait while he lost valuable flight time and daily dropped behind in class seemed almost unbearable.

Later, after he was pronounced fit to fly, Dan overheard one of the officers from the training center talking about him with the squadron leader.

"I wouldn't take any chances with that Indonesian. You ought to send him home."

The squadron leader shook his head. "Give him a little more time. He has great possibilities."

A shake of the head - a second chance - and Dan sensed how the delicately balanced circumstances had nearly altered his whole career. He set his jaw. Somewhere, somehow he was determined to leave his mark on the pages of Indonesian

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history. He felt certain that now he had a rendezvous with destiny.

When Dan completed the last two required solos, he rejoined his group. Days of practice dog fighting followed hard on each other. The pressure to perform, to succeed, built up. The six months' allotted time in Egypt was almost over, and soon the men would return to their homeland.

A physician routinely checked each pilot but took special precautions when he came to Dan. There was never any detection of physical problems, and Dan continued without a recurrence of dizziness. Only once did he ever black out again and this he felt was due to lack of sleep. He had made a desperate tight turn to avoid a chase jet when he momentarily forgot where he was. It never happened again, and he did not file a report on the incident.

As the six months of training drew to a close, there was seldom time for relaxation. But the Indonesian pilots made their own. Whenever the sleeve from the tow plane in target practice was brought in for hole count, they gathered around and laughed. Knowing full well the Egyptians could not understand their banter, they joked freely about their ability to outshoot their instructors.

"It would really be interesting to know if they could shoot straight in actual combat," they always said.

The Indonesian pilots had another joke. It happened when an American military attache queried one of the Egyptians.

"Are you training Chinese here?"

The Egyptian smiled and nodded. "Yes, we have one here."

The Indonesians knew he had reference to Dan because his facial features resembled those of a Chinese. They laughed with Dan about this whenever the opportunity arose. "Maybe you're a Chinese spy? What international crisis are you brewing now? Could it be that you are a member of some secret underground organization?"

Dan thought all their mock suspicions were humorous. But as time went on, his thoughts and ideas changed.

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Two years later the idea of becoming involved in some political intrigue was not that ridiculous. Times had changed. Back in Djakarta he still flew for the air force. He'd honed his Egyptian training to become one of the best jet pilots Indonesia ever produced. Capable, highly skilled, bold - his talents seemed to fit his nickname of "Tiger."

But disturbing developments kept shifting the situation toward involvement regardless of Dan's personal distaste for politics. He repeatedly said he was interested only in flying. History and government were a bore, and yet he could not escape the facts that stared at him daily.

It was quite obvious to him that the central government under President Sukarno was corrupt. While the luxury of the leaders created a lavish landscape, the foreground was filled with long queues of stolid citizens waiting for paltry rations of rice. The consistent reports of bribes, double-dealings, elaborate expenditures for self-aggrandizement and glorification, amidst a people who in their daily rounds desperately tried to exist, could not be totally ignored. Dan would gladly have shared his feelings with some of his comrades, but this was impossible. He sensed that there were some of the pilots who felt as he did. The quick knowing glance while two read the newspaper together - the quiet nod whenever they passed some evidence of internal decay - but that was all. The central government authorities were too volatile to permit any open discussion. Their forces were always on the ready to crush anything that might be considered antigovernment. Suspicion was rife.

Dan saturated his life with flying, but he could not be in the air all the time. He was still very much earthbound. In spite of his attempts to enjoy the sensation of flying, he could not flee the sights and sounds below. When his jet touched down, all the irritating problems were still there.

Other developments also contributed to the transition in Dan's thinking. A year after he had joined the air force, a rash of rebellious movements erupted against the central government. In Sumatra a Revolutionary Republic was

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proclaimed, while in the North Celebes the Permesta (abbreviation for “Developing the Country”) came to life.

It was not long before the rising smoke from bombed cities and villages signaled the success of the central government’s crushing campaign against these organizations. The vigorous onslaught against any form of rebellion was consistent and ruthless.

Weeks turned into months. The nightmare of guerrilla warfare continued. Forced into the jungle, the rebels continued fighting. From this mottled green setting emerged a secret youth organization more determined than ever - the Manguni. Named after an owl, which for centuries had been considered a sacred bird, the Manguni attracted those smarting under the bombing of the North Celebes region. This group became the lodestone which drew Dan’s older brother into full participation.

“You ought to consider joining too,” Herman had suggested on several occasions.

Dan was always rather disinterested. “I can’t contribute anything to your cause.” It seemed final, but time waited in the wings with many more offers.

The mastermind behind the Manguni was Samuel Karungdeng, an employee of the Garuda Indonesia Airways. His frequent “business” trips to Singapore were urgent efforts to find funds for the continuing fight. He was never successful in these forages, but by the latter part of 1959 he had established enough contacts with other antigovernment organizations to warrant a possible coordination of effort.

“You could at least go with me to meet Samuel Karungdeng” Herman said. “I meet him in Bandung.”

Dan’s eyes opened a little wider. Bandung was the hometown of his girl friend, Molly. Spread along the high flanks of the mountains about 150 miles from Djakarta, this city was relatively safe from the prying eyes of the central government. Besides, it had long been noted for sheltering rebel elements who swarmed about the city. It was easy to find sympathizers here;

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Dan shook his head. "Sorry, Herman, but I'm not interested." On the inside Dan knew he was interested. His inner anger against the injustices of the central government smoldered. He felt useless and unable to do anything, but something about Herman's persistent offers seemed to fan his internal heat into flame.

As the days dissolved into weeks, Dan's time ceaselessly circled around flying, the happy hours with Molly, and gnawing resentment against the government. Each weekend when he would get a pass to visit Molly in Bandung, it was almost with the feeling that he could escape those inner feelings of antigovernment altogether.

Late in January, 1960, Herman and Dan happened to meet at the Djakarta station. Each had his going to Bandung.

Herman leaned on a guard railing leading to watching the milling crowds. A slight dust rose from the floor of the depot enveloping the masses moving to trains. Without turning his eyes toward Dan he toward the humanity shuffling through the dusty haze.

"If you're just going to see Molly, you won't need your ID card," he said.

Dan glanced at his brother, and for a moment their eyes almost met. Dan turned away and faced the tracks too. He sensed how casual this conversation must look. Soldiers with their stub-nosed submachine guns slung over their shoulders were ubiquitous.

"Are you in trouble?"

"Not yet."

"Then why do you want my card?"

"Because we look alike, you know."

"So?"

"So the government has found out about the Manguni and has already rounded up some of our members for illegal possession of weapons."

Dan's eyes squinted into mere slits. He really didn't need his ID card at the airbase gate because he was so well-known. But if Herman were caught, there would be an immediate

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investigation. He would be implicated even if he had formally joined the underground movement. There was a Ion silence while his mind tried to investigate all the angles. He bit his lip.

A train whistle suddenly punctured the depot's cacophony. Its piercing wail above the constant jumble of crowd noises forced Dan to a decision. He reached into his wallet and handed Herman the ID card. It had been done. Dan felt a tingling excitement mixed with fear. He walked briskly toward the waiting train to Bandung. Herman hurried to catch up.

"Better not make Father nervous about this," he said.

Dan understood all too well. The ID card transfer must remain a secret not only to protect both of them, but to keep from implicating the rest of the family as well. Fifi, one of their two younger sisters, already was aware of Herman's underground activities, but she was the kind who would understand. It would crush their father.

The train trip to Bandung was usually filled with thoughts of Molly and the possibilities of marriage, but this time Dan's mind swirled with thoughts of his family. He gazed out the window at the passing villages, rice paddies, and tea plantations; but the quiet beauty of the Indonesian countryside was secondary. Nothing registered.

His eyes looked beyond the distant mountains and, as if their faces were superimposed over the scenery, he saw his mother and two older sisters - the one who died in 1949, and the other who had left for the Netherlands in 1957. But his mother dominated the scene. He could see and hear her in his mind. She had died when he was seventeen. He remembered it so very well. Protecting Herman had triggered a reminiscence that touched his heart.

He had been in a Dutch secondary school in North Celebes when his mother was taken ill and rushed to Djakarta for medical attention. And then the last letter came. "Take good care of your little sisters," she had written. The words burned into a soft recess of his heart so deeply that when the news of her passing reached him he found they had left an indelible



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mark. He had interpreted those last words to mean a family protection beyond anything others could ever conceive.

When his father planned to remarry, there seemingly was only one course open to Dan - liquidate the woman who would dare attempt to take his mother's place. It made no difference that she was his mother's sister. She was an intruder. Dan felt she had no right to attempt being mother to his younger sisters, She must go. If it had not been for the kind counseling of a Dutch minister, Dan would surely have murdered his mother.

Now he was once again faced with a protective family situation. The clattering of the train wheels along the track only agitated more tension in his mind. The vertical blur of telephone poles, and distant greenery that never remained steady in the swaying train, added to his mental discomfort.

"How soon do you think the government will make their move?" Dan suddenly asked.

Herman shook his head. "I don't know - soon though."

"If you are ever caught, we'll all be indicted."

Herman did not respond to Dan's last remark. Silence settled over both of them as the train labored toward the higher levels of Bandung.

That weekend was not unlike the others. Herman qu disappeared to meet with the underground, and Dan went visit Molly. And Molly was especially good for Dan right then. Her radiant smile and soft eyes eased Dan into the familiar pattern of happiness. Her touch was gentle. Being with her smoothed out the wrinkles of worry that had creased his forehead. For those few precious hours the thoughts of the ID card and Herman's imminent danger temporarily slipped away.

By mid-February Herman informed Dan of the serious nature of developments. The police had pieced together nearly a total pattern of the underground movements. From the shadowy design of isolated arrests they had detected an alarming operation.

"We know they'll try to make some sort of raid soon. How or when is anybody's guess, but one thing is sure - none of us want to be around when it happens," Herman said.

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Dan suspected that the police already knew far more than Herman would admit.

“They’ve probably traced your goings from Samuel Karengdeng’s home in Kebjoran clear to those nighttime Manguni meetings in Bandung.”

“Maybe.”

“Well, all I can say is you’d better be on the alert. You know what being caught can mean for both of us now.”

“I know,” Herman answered almost pleadingly, “but I have to arrange at least one more meeting at Samuel’s home.”

“Just supposing they trigger the dominoes from both ends?”

Herman sat up straight, obviously startled by the question. “What do you mean?”

“I mean simultaneously raiding both ours and Samuel’s home.”

“I doubt they will move that fast.”

“Well, I don’t. Not if what you tell me is true. They just might crystallize the whole thing into some sort of concerted action.”

Herman looked away from his brother and shook his head. “I’ve got to meet with Samuel once more. From then on we’ll try to work out of Bandung.”

Dan felt completely frustrated. On the eve of a massive government crackdown, and Herman holding his own ID card! He could envision all sorts of terrible developments. He had to help his brother, but there were others in the family too.

He slammed his fist into the palm of his hand, muttering a portion of Herman’s last statement under his breath. “Got to meet with Samuel once more -”