

WRITE A NARRATIVE ABOUT A TIME YOU HAD AN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY

THE MESSENGER



Dawn unfolded slowly over the village, spreading pale gold across the flooded rice paddies. A thin layer of mist hovered above the water so that the fields reflected the sky like a scattered mirror. Farmers moved quietly through the paddies, their straw hats dipping as they planted young rice shoots into the mud. The soft splash of their steps mixed with the distant cry of birds and the creak of bamboo baskets, forming the calm rhythm that had guided the village for generations.

Thanh walked along the narrow ridge separating two paddies, careful not to slip on the damp earth. A worn satchel rested against his hip, its leather strap darkened from years of use. Inside were several folded letters meant for Mang Ca station, where messages from nearby villages were gathered and passed along. Thanh had carried letters many times before; though he had never opened one, he knew every single word of those tactics and the names in there.

He paused briefly and looked back toward the village. Thin smoke curled from cooking fires, drifting lazily above the thatched roofs. Children ran between houses, their laughter floating across the fields. Everything looked ordinary, as if the morning had no intention of becoming anything else.

The first gunshot cracked through the air.

Birds burst from the bamboo grove in a frantic cloud of wings. Farmers straightened abruptly as more shots echoed across the paddies. Thanh turned and saw smoke rising above the rooftops — thicker and darker than the gentle cooking fires. Soldiers flooded into the village, their boots pounding against the ground as flames began climbing the dry roofs.

Panic spread quickly. Villagers ran through the narrow paths between houses, voices shouting over one another.

Thanh felt the satchel strike lightly against his side.

Mang Ca station had to know.

He turned and ran.

Mud splashed beneath his feet as he raced along the winding ridges toward the forest path. The bamboo canopy swallowed the sunlight as he pushed deeper into the trees, his breathing growing heavier with every step.

Suddenly, figures stepped out from the shadows.

Rifles lifted.

A French soldier grabbed Thanh's arm while another tore the satchel from his shoulder and handed it to the officer. The officer opened it slowly and unfolded one of the envelopes.

A feral smirk appeared on the corner of his lips.

"So," he said in accented Vietnamese, glancing at Thanh, "a message."

Thanh remained silent.

The officer continued reading, but the smile gradually faded. His brows knit together as his eyes moved across the page.

"What kind of message is this?" he muttered.

Thanh forced himself to shrug.

As the officer read the first line, his crazy smirk faded.

At that moment, a sharp whistle pierced the forest.

Viet Cong fighters burst from the surrounding bamboo, rifles raised from every direction. The soldiers spun in alarm, but they were already surrounded. The French officer dropped the letter in disorientation.

Thanh snatched the letter promptly from the ground, tucking it securely into his satchel.

Quickly, Thanh quickened his pace and sprung away immediately.

"No need to rush, kid!" shouted a Viet Cong soldier.

"Commander Huy?" Thanh turned his head.

"And why's that? The Mang Ca station needs them!"

"Open it then," Huy laughed.

Thanh froze, but then curiosity consumed his heavily beating heart. White pieces of paper appeared in front of his eyes.

"A trap," Thanh muttered to himself.



Vinser

BÙI BÍCH PHƯƠNG

GRADE 9