

clothes. His mouth hung open and his face was ashen. He was eager to clutch at any straw which might give him the chance of life. Shrinking from the scowling presence in the chair, he began to talk a sing-song babble of words that tumbled over each other.

"I will help you get away alive if you do not kill me. Captain O'Shea, I will explain about Jim Eldridge; I will not lie to you. All the secrets I will tell you. There was a steamer, the *Tai Yan*, and she came over the bar from the sea in a big storm, at the time of a flood. It was do this or go to the bottom because the engines had broke. A boat with sailors rowed up the river. They were foolish men who believed the stories that gold and silver treasure was hidden in the ruins of this old Wang-Li-Fu. And they found this temple, and they knew too much.

"All but two of the men were able to run quick to the river, but Eldridge and one named McDougal ran into this place, trying to hide. They ran into the temple before they were captured. There was a little building, but now it is ashes and much sticks of burnt wood. In that building those two men were locked to be killed next day. The red-headed man was a demon, I tell you. Walls could not hold him. In the night he set fire to the building, and it was a great blaze. But he was caught and punished."

"Ye left him for dead, and he came to," growled O'Shea. "And so McDougal got away!"