



Bay's Journey

by Bob Frelinger



Bay, a young woman of sixteen, stood amidst the ruins of her family's tapioca farm. The once vibrant fields were now barren, destroyed by Agent Orange. Her father's absence and the loss of their livelihood cast a shadow over her future. Determined to provide for her family, she knew she had to find work.



She sought employment at the nearby US military base, a world away from her rural life. Bay started filling sandbags, her small hands working tirelessly under the hot sun. The bustling base, with its foreign faces and strange machines, was both intimidating and fascinating. The new life required her to be strong and resilient.



Bay eventually moved to the mess hall, then later to the living quarters. She became a 'hootch maid,' cleaning the soldiers' rooms, washing their clothes, and polishing their boots. One day, she met Bob, an American soldier, and a sense of connection started developing between them. Though they spoke different languages, they shared smiles and gestures.



Bob, with a smile, suggested they try being pen pals with his younger brother. They attempted writing letters, but the correspondence didn't flourish. Yet, their bond grew stronger. One evening, Bob surprised Bay with a proposal of marriage, something that seemed very foreign to her. She was intrigued by it all.



Intrigued by the unexpected proposal, and curious about this new experience, Bay agreed to consider it. The military required numerous documents for the marriage, sending her on a quest. She secured the necessary papers more out of curiosity than genuine romantic interest, a skeptical observer of her own life's turn.



Finally, after gathering the documents, the military approved their marriage. The wedding was set. Bay, once a young girl working on her family farm, was now preparing to become an American soldier's wife. It was a journey of curiosity, resilience, and an unexpected love story set against a backdrop of war.