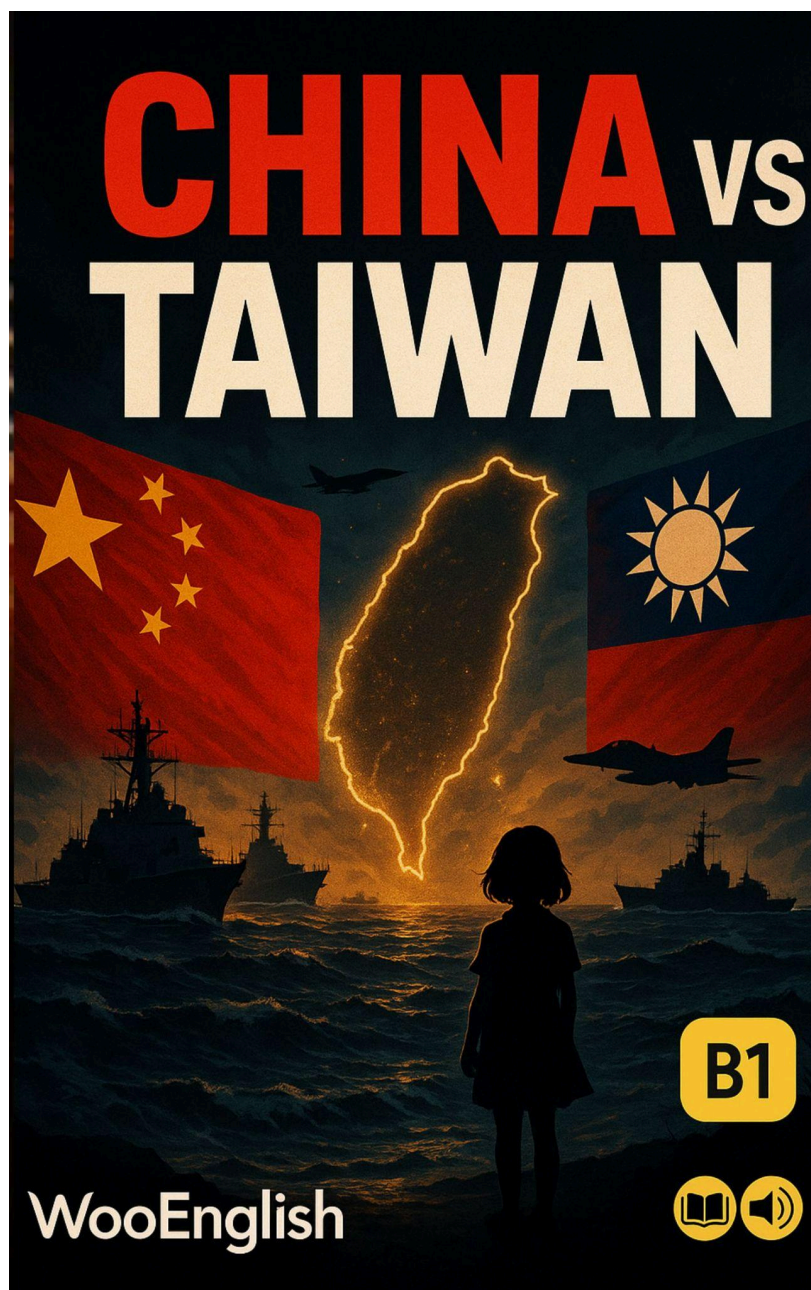


China and Taiwan

by WooEnglish



The sea is calm... but danger waits beyond the waves.

Two worlds. Two dreams. One small island standing between peace... and war.

This is the story of Taiwan... my home.

Chapter 1: The Island Between Two Powers

The sea waves crash softly against the shore... but behind them lies a storm.

I stand at the edge of the beach in Tamsui, near Taipei. The wind touches my face, gentle... yet cold. I look out at the endless blue water. It looks peaceful. Safe. But I know better.

My name is Mei. I am twenty years old... and I live on an island that many say does not exist. Or... should not exist.

You may have heard of us.

Taiwan.

A small island... with big dreams. A place full of life—busy night markets, temples full of smoke and prayer, scooters racing through narrow streets. My home. My world.

But to the west... across the sea... a giant watches us. China.

A country so large, so powerful, it feels like a shadow stretching over our island.

I take a deep breath.

The waves continue... slow... strong... like time itself.

How did we get here?

Why does China claim us?

Why do they call us "a part of their land"?

Let me tell you.

It all started long ago... after a war.

In 1945, World War II ended. The world was tired. Broken. But a new fight began in China. Two sides, two ideas...

One side: the Communists, led by Mao Zedong.

The other side: the Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek.

The Communists won. They built the People's Republic of China. The Nationalists fled... here, to Taiwan.

And since then... we have lived in this strange place between peace and fear.

I look up at the sky. Clouds move quickly tonight. They remind me of the news I hear every day... the warnings, the statements, the military exercises.

Sometimes I wonder... are we safe?

Taiwan has become something different. A democracy. We vote. We speak. We live freely.

But China says, "One China."

They say we must return.

We say... we are already home.

The world watches.

The U.S. sends ships. China sends planes. We stand here... on this small island... waiting.

I hear a boat's horn in the distance. It echoes like a question.

Will the storm come?

Or will the sea stay calm?

I hold my jacket close as the wind grows stronger.

I am just one person. A student. But I know this: I love this island.

Its mountains. Its people. Its courage.

The waves hit the rocks harder now.

I shiver.

"Will my home survive what may come next?" I whisper to the night.

No one answers.

Only the sea.

Chapter 2: A Normal Day... Until It Wasn't

The morning was calm... until the sirens screamed.

I remember it so clearly.

The soft sun. The blue sky. The smell of fried chicken and sweet milk tea floating in the air. Taipei was alive... busy, noisy, happy.

I walked down Yongkang Street with my best friend, Li Wei. We laughed as we ate *baozi*, warm and soft in our hands. The streets were full of scooters, bicycles, children running, and old men playing chess under the trees.

Everything felt normal. Safe.

Then... the sound came.

Wooooooooo! Wooooooooo!

Loud. Sharp. Cold.

The emergency sirens.

We stopped. Everyone stopped. The street fell silent.

The pigeons flew away quickly... as if they knew what was coming.

I looked up. The sky was still blue... but my heart was racing.

A voice came from the loudspeakers.

"Attention! Chinese military planes have entered the air defense zone! Stay calm. Stay inside!"

I could not move.

Planes? Here?

I grabbed Li Wei's arm. His face was pale.

"Is it starting?" I whispered.

No answer. Only the sound of sirens... and fear.

People began running. Shops closed their doors. Mothers pulled their children close.
Tourists stood frozen, unsure of what to do.

I stood there, in the middle of the street, listening... waiting... hoping.

My phone buzzed. News alerts filled the screen:

"Chinese fighter jets near Taiwan."

"Government asks people to stay calm."

"World leaders call for peace."

I felt my legs shake.

I had heard about these drills.

But this felt different.

Real. Too real.

The sounds of the city changed. The music stopped. The scooters disappeared. The life
of Taipei slowed... like time itself was holding its breath.

I looked at the sky again.

Was that a plane?

Or just a bird?

My mind played tricks on me.

I thought of my parents... my grandparents... my little brother.

Were they safe? Were they scared too?

Li Wei spoke softly.

"Let's go, Mei. We should get inside."

We walked quickly but carefully. I looked back at the empty street. It had never felt so
lonely.

Inside the small tea shop, the old radio played.

"...the government says there is no danger for now. But they ask all people to stay
alert."

The owner gave us two cups of hot tea.

His hands were shaking.

Mine too.

I sat near the window, staring at the sky.

I whispered, "Will this be the day? Will war come?"

No one answered. Not Li Wei. Not the shop owner. Not the silent streets outside.

I sipped the tea. Warm... but it did not calm me.

The sirens stopped. But the fear did not.

I looked at the clock. The hands moved so slowly... as if time was afraid to go forward.

The peaceful morning was gone.

The normal day had ended.

And something darker... colder... had arrived.



Chapter 3: “This Is My Home”

I stand still... watching fighter jets cross the sky.

So fast... so loud... so close.

The ground shakes.

The sky roars.

My heart beats faster... and faster.

I cannot move.

I cannot speak.

I only stare... up.

The planes disappear into the clouds.

Silence returns.

But my fear stays.

I walk slowly back to my neighborhood. The streets are quiet now.

The same old buildings.

The same trees.

The same people... but different.

We all feel it.

A question.

A shadow.

A cold wind that touches us all.

I pass the temple where my grandmother prays. The red lanterns swing softly.

I pass the small park where children used to laugh. Today... no laughter. Only empty swings.

I stop in front of my family's house.

The lights are on.

The door is open.

Inside, I hear voices. Soft... worried.

My mother turns to me.

“Mei... you’re safe.”

Her arms wrap around me.

I close my eyes... and for a moment... I feel safe too.

Later, I sit by my bedroom window.

I look out.

The city glows under the night sky.

So beautiful. So alive.

The tall Taipei 101 building stands strong in the distance.

Bright lights. Fast cars. Smiling people.

This is my home.

I love every street, every sound, every smell.

I think about my school.

About Li Wei.

About my little brother, who sleeps without worry.

And then I think...

Will I lose all of this?

I whisper to the stars, “Why must we live like this? Always waiting... always watching... always afraid.”

I remember what my father told me once.

“Taiwan is small, Mei... but it is strong. We stand. We do not run.”

I hold onto his words.

They give me courage.

But still... the question stays.

Will there be war?

Will the ships come?

Will the planes return... and not leave?

I do not know.

No one knows.

The wind blows gently.

The trees outside my window dance.

The night feels endless... heavy... full of silent questions.

But I make a promise to myself.

I will stay.

I will not leave.

This is my home.

I touch the window glass.

Cold. Smooth. Real.

“This is my home...” I say softly.

No matter what comes next... I belong here.

With my family. My friends. My people.

The clock ticks.

Tick... tick... tick...

Time moves forward.

I watch the dark sky... waiting for the morning.



Chapter 4: The World Watches... and Waits

The world holds its breath...

What will China do?

I sit on the floor of our living room.

The TV screen glows in the dark.

The voices of world leaders fill the room.

Calm voices... but I hear the fear beneath the words.

The news anchor speaks.

“China has sent more planes... more ships... closer to Taiwan.”

I feel my mother’s hand on my shoulder.

My father stands near the window, staring at the night sky.

My little brother sleeps... safe, for now.

I whisper to myself, *Why? Why now?*

The U.S. sends navy ships to the South China Sea.

Japan speaks out, saying, “We will protect peace in the region.”

Europe calls for calm.

Everyone watches Taiwan.

But no one knows what will happen next.

The TV shows a map.

Our island looks so small...

So alone...

Surrounded by water... and by danger.

I bite my lip.

I try to be brave.

But I am only a student.

What can I do?

The news shows a large ship moving through the waves.

Gray. Silent. Strong.

An American ship.

Will it protect us... or make things worse?

A reporter says,

“China warns the world to stay away. They call Taiwan part of their country.”

My father shakes his head.

“We are not theirs. We are Taiwan.”

His voice is calm... but I know he is angry inside.

The reporter continues,

“Both sides say they want peace... but both prepare for war.”

I close my eyes.

I hear the clock ticking on the wall.

Each tick feels heavy... like a countdown.

Outside, the night is quiet.

Too quiet.

No scooters. No music. No people.

I look up at the TV again.

I see world leaders, serious faces, reading prepared words:

“We call for peace. We ask for talks.”

Talks...

Will words be enough?

I remember my friend Li Wei.

He told me this morning,

“Maybe this is just a show. Maybe nothing will happen.”

I wanted to believe him.

I still want to believe him.

But deep inside, I feel it...

A cold fear... growing.

The TV changes to show the sea.

Waves crash against metal ships.

The ships do not move back.

Neither does China.

Neither does Taiwan.

The world watches... and waits.

I whisper softly,

“What will happen to us?”

No answer comes.

Only the steady sound of the clock...

Tick... tick... tick...

I pull my blanket around me.

I stare at the screen.

I cannot look away.

I cannot sleep.

Somewhere, out there in the dark waters, ships are waiting too.

Waiting for a decision.

Waiting for a mistake.

Waiting for... something.

I breathe deeply.

The world holds its breath with me.

Will we wake to peace?

Or to war?



Chapter 5: The Shadow of 1996

We've been here before... but this time feels different.

The night is quiet.

I sit at the kitchen table with my father.

The tea between us grows cold... untouched.

Outside, the wind blows softly.

Inside, the fear stays heavy.

My father looks at me. His eyes are tired, full of memories.

"Mei," he says, "this is not the first time we have waited like this."

I listen carefully.

I know this story... but I want to hear it again.

"It was 1996," he begins. "I was young, like you. I was a student too."

His voice lowers.

"The Chinese army sent missiles into the sea around Taiwan. Loud... frightening... close."

I hold my breath.

Missiles? Near our island?

"We watched the sky, day and night. We didn't know if the next missile would hit the land... our homes... our schools."

I imagine the fear.

The loud explosions.

The dark skies.

The waiting.

My father's hands tighten around his cup.

"The U.S. sent warships then. They sailed near Taiwan to show support. But the danger was real. We didn't know if a single mistake... a wrong move... could start a war."

I feel a cold shiver down my back.

Is it happening again?

I ask softly,

"Were you afraid?"

He smiles, but only for a moment.

"Yes... we were. But we were also proud. We stood strong. We did not run."

I nod.

That is Taiwan.

Small... but full of courage.

My father looks out the window into the dark night.

"The world watched us in 1996... just like now. But today feels different."

I whisper, "Why?"

He sighs.

"Because the weapons are stronger... the ships are bigger... the leaders are louder. And this time... we are more alone."

Alone.

That word hurts.

I feel it deep inside.

I look at the news on my phone.

The words flash cold and sharp:

"Ships near Taiwan."

"Planes crossing lines."

"Talks fail."

I put the phone down.

I don't want to read anymore.

I stare at the small Taiwan flag on the shelf.

Red. Blue. White star.

Our star.

Our hope.

I whisper, "Will history repeat itself?"

The clock ticks slowly.

Tick... tick... tick...

Like a soft warning in the dark.

My father reaches out and holds my hand.

"We do not know, Mei. But remember this... no matter what happens, this is our home.

We will protect it. We will stand together."

I squeeze his hand tightly.

The fear is still there... but so is something stronger.

Love.

Pride.

Courage.

I walk to the window.

The sky is black.

No stars tonight.

Only clouds... heavy... waiting.

I speak to the night,

"Please... let history stay history. Do not let it return."

There is no answer.

Only the sound of the wind.

I stay at the window.

I keep watching.

The shadow of 1996 feels close...

Too close.



Chapter 6: Voices of Courage

Even when the sky is dark... some lights never go out.

The news is everywhere.

The tension grows.

People whisper on the streets.

They check the sky... the sea... the news on their phones.

But they do not run.

They stand.

I decide to do something.

I take my phone... and my courage.

I walk through the city... to listen.

To record.

To remember.

First, I visit Mr. Chen.

He owns the small noodle shop near my school.

The red lanterns still hang outside.

Inside, the smell of hot soup fills the air.

Mr. Chen looks up as I enter.

His face is tired... but kind.

“Are you worried?” I ask softly.

He smiles, then shakes his head.

“I lived through 1996. I am still here. My shop is still here. I will not close my doors.”

I nod.

His words are simple... but strong.

Next, I visit my old teacher, Ms. Lin.

She is in her classroom, writing lessons on the board.

The windows are open.

The soft sound of birds mixes with distant sirens.

“Ms. Lin,” I say, “aren’t you afraid?”

She looks at me... calm and steady.

“Of course. But I will keep teaching. The children must learn. They are our future.”

I smile.

Her courage warms me.

I walk through the market.

Vendors sell vegetables, fish, and rice cakes.

The colors are bright... green, red, yellow.

The smells... sweet and sharp.

I speak to Auntie Mei, who sells flowers.

She holds a bunch of white lilies in her hand.

“Why do you stay?” I ask.

She laughs softly.

“Where would I go? This is my home. My mother sold flowers here... and so do I.”

The people of Taiwan... they are like the mountains.

They do not move.

They do not break.

At the university, students hold small flags.

They talk. They share news. They hope.

One student speaks loudly,

“We love peace... but we will protect our land!”

I record their voices.

I know I must keep them.

For me. For my family. For the world.

The sun begins to set.

The sky turns gold... then orange... then dark.

I walk home slowly.

The streets glow with soft yellow lights.

Scooters hum past me.

The night market opens.

Life continues.

I stop and listen.

To the sounds of the people.

To the heartbeat of Taiwan.

Strong. Steady. Brave.

I whisper to myself,

“Even when the sky is dark... some lights never go out.”

The voices of courage stay with me.

I know... whatever happens... we will not run.

We will stand tall.

We are Taiwan.



Chapter 7: Behind the Red Curtain

What does China really want?

Why now?

The questions sit heavy in my mind... like stones I cannot move.

I sit at my small desk.

The soft light of my lamp glows against the dark window.

Outside, the city sleeps.

But my thoughts do not.

I scroll through the news on my phone.

The headlines are sharp... cold... urgent.

"China calls for peaceful reunification."

"Beijing says Taiwan belongs to China."

"Tensions rise as both sides refuse to step back."

I close my eyes.

I take a deep breath.

What does it mean?

I remember what my father told me.

"In 1949, the Nationalists came to Taiwan. The Communists took control of China.

Since then... two governments, two paths, two worlds."

But only one truth for Beijing.

"One China."

One China... with Taiwan as part of it.

The leaders in Beijing speak of "reunification."

They say it is their right.

Their history.

Their pride.

I read more.

Some Chinese people call Taiwan “the lost child.”

They say we must come home.

But this is my home.

Taiwan *is* my home.

I look out my window.

The streets below are quiet.

I wonder... what are they thinking over there, across the sea?

I imagine a young girl like me in China.

Does she worry too?

Does she want peace... like I do?

The news tells me that the Chinese army grows stronger.

More ships. More planes. More missiles.

Some say it is for “defense.”

Others say it is to send a message.

To remind Taiwan: “We are watching. We are waiting.”

I feel the weight of those words.

Heavy.

Cold.

The U.S. says they will help us.

Japan warns China to stop.

Europe calls for talks.

But what does China really want?

Is it pride?

Is it power?

Or something else I cannot understand?

I press my hand against the window.
The glass is cold.
So close... yet so far from China.

Two lands.
Two peoples.
Two dreams.

I whisper, "Why can't we just live in peace?"

No answer.
Only the soft wind outside.

I sit back and look again at my phone.
The images of Chinese leaders.
The faces of Taiwan's leaders.
No smiles.
No warmth.
Only strong words and hard eyes.

I wonder...
Will they choose peace?
Or war?

The clock on my wall ticks softly.
Tick... tick... tick...
Time moves forward... but the answers do not come.

I close my phone.
I pull my blanket around me.
I stare out at the night sky.

The sea between us is dark tonight.
Silent.
Waiting.

What does China really want?

Why now?

I do not know.

No one knows.

I close my eyes.

I whisper one last hope,

“Please... let the answer be peace.”



Chapter 8: Waiting for Midnight

The clock ticks...

Every second feels like an hour.

I lie in my bed, wide awake.

The soft glow of my phone screen lights the room.

The news updates keep coming... faster... louder... colder.

"More Chinese ships near Taiwan."

"Fighter jets cross the line again."

"World leaders call for calm."

I put the phone down.

I close my eyes.

But I cannot sleep.

I sit up.

I walk to the window.

The sky outside is black... heavy... endless.

Somewhere out there... they wait.

The ships.

The planes.

The people in uniforms.

All holding their breath... just like me.

I look at the clock.

11:07 p.m.

The hands move so slowly.

Tick... tick... tick...

Like a heartbeat in the dark.

I whisper, "Will something happen tonight?"

No answer.

Only the wind, soft and cold, touching my face.

I imagine the sea.

The waves crashing against metal warships.

The sailors walking quietly, watching the horizon.

Do they feel fear... like I do?

Do they hope for peace... like I do?

I think of my parents.

They sleep, but not deeply.

They pretend to be calm... for me.

I think of Li Wei.

He sent me a message.

"Stay safe, Mei. I'm scared too. Let's hope for tomorrow."

Hope for tomorrow...

But what about tonight?

The news says no one moves.

Not yet.

But the silence feels loud.

Dangerous.

I step back from the window.

I walk quietly through the house.

Everything looks the same.

The family photos.

The small Taiwan flag on the shelf.

The soft red glow of the lucky cat in the corner.

I touch the flag gently.

It feels strong... but small.

Just like us.

The clock now says 11:38 p.m.

The longest night of my life.

I sit by the window again.

I stare at the stars.

They blink weakly behind thin clouds.

I imagine the ships... the planes... watching each other.

Waiting.

Waiting for a mistake.

Waiting for a signal.

Waiting for midnight.

The thought makes my heart race.

Will the sky stay silent?

Will the sea stay calm?

Or will everything change... in one terrible moment?

I hold my breath.

I press my hand against the cold glass.

The city lights shine far below.

They look like tiny candles in the dark.

So fragile.

So brave.

I whisper, "Please... let us have another day."

The clock ticks on.

11:59 p.m.

I watch.

I wait.

The world holds its breath with me.



Chapter 9: Will My Home Survive?

The morning light comes...

But the fear remains.

I open my eyes slowly.

The soft yellow sun touches the walls of my room.

The night is over.

We are still here.

I sit up and listen.

No sirens.

No breaking news.

No sounds of war.

For now... peace.

I walk to the window.

The city wakes slowly.

Scooters hum on the streets.

Vendors set up their small shops.

The smell of warm bread and sweet tea fills the air.

Life returns... as if nothing happened.

As if the world did not stand still last night.

But I know.

We all know.

The danger is not gone.

I pick up my phone.

The news says,

"The ships move back... for now."

"Leaders speak again of peace."

"Taiwan stands strong."

I smile... but only a little.

I want to believe.

I try to believe.

I walk outside.

The sun feels warm on my face.

Children laugh at the park.

Old men play chess under the trees.

Friends drink bubble tea and talk about school, music, and dreams.

I breathe in the air of my city.

Taipei... my home.

So full of life.

So full of hope.

But deep inside, a small voice whispers...

“Will it last?”

I walk to the sea.

The waves crash softly on the shore.

They have seen many storms... and survived.

I sit on a large rock and watch the endless blue water.

The same water that separates us from China.

I think of the ships.

The planes.

The leaders.

The choices.

I close my eyes and place my hand on my heart.

I speak softly,

“This is my home. I will not leave.”

I remember my father's words.

“We are small, Mei... but we are strong.”

I believe him.

I must.

I open my eyes.

The sea shines under the bright morning sun.

The birds fly free in the sky.

The wind touches my hair gently.

Peace... for now.

But for how long?

I stand and walk back toward the city.

I hear laughter, music, the sounds of a normal day.

I smile.

Because I know... we will not stop living.

We will not stop hoping.

We will not stop standing tall.

But as I walk, the question stays in my heart.

Will my home survive what may come next?

The answer... only time will tell.



THE END

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