

CHAPTER 1



DECEMBER 7, 1941

8:05 A.M.

PEARL CITY, HAWAII

America was under attack!

Hundreds of bomber planes were swarming over Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. They swooped down, machine guns roaring. Bombs and torpedoes rained down.

Explosions ripped through the blue Hawaiian sky.

Kaboom . . . Kaboom . . . KABOOM!

America's mightiest warships were in flames. A curtain of smoke—black and bloody red—surrounded the harbor.

Eleven-year-old Danny Crane had moved to Hawaii just weeks before. Ma had brought Danny to Hawaii to get him out of trouble, away from the crime and the rats and the dirty, dangerous streets of New York City.

But he'd never felt more terrified than he did right now, alone and running for his life. One of the attacking planes had burst out of the smoke and was closing in on him across an empty beach. Danny sprinted through the sand, but there was nowhere to go, nowhere to hide. He peered over his shoulder as the plane flew closer. He could see into the cockpit. The pilot was glaring at him through his goggles.

Rat, tat, tat, tat.

Rat tat tat tat.

Machine-gun fire!

Danny pushed himself to run faster. Searing pain filled his chest as he inhaled the smoky air.

Rat, tat, tat, tat.

Rat tat tat tat.

Sand flew up into Danny's eyes. And then from behind him, a huge explosion seemed to shatter the world.

The force lifted Danny off his feet and threw him onto the ground.

And then Danny couldn't hear anything at all.

CHAPTER 2



ONE DAY EARLIER
DECEMBER 6, 1941
PEARL CITY, HAWAII

Danny stood with his mother at the kitchen window of their tiny house.

Ma put her arm around Danny. “Just look at that view,” she said. “Can you believe we live here? I think it’s the most beautiful place on earth.”

Ma was right; it looked like a postcard out there, with the palm trees swaying in the breeze, the bushes covered with pink and white flowers, and the ocean a sparkling silver strip in the distance.

Danny couldn't stand looking at it.

All he wanted was to be back in New York City, looking out his old apartment window at the jumble of dirty buildings, the smoke thick in the air, the garbage in the streets, and his best friend, Finn, waving to him from down in the alley below.

Ma thought that coming here to Hawaii would give Danny a fresh start. She wanted to get him away from danger and trouble, away from Earl Gasky and his gang.

It was true that Danny and Finn had gotten into trouble sometimes.

But nothing big! Just skipping school and sneaking into movie houses and nabbing an apple or two from the fruit stand.

Sure, they ran with Earl and his gang. Some folks in the neighborhood said Earl was a vicious criminal, that he'd break your legs if you looked at him wrong. But others said he and his guys protected the streets and took care of old ladies. He had always been good to Danny and Finn. He paid them a dollar a day to run errands. He even taught them how to drive one of his cars.

Sometimes it was scary, being on the streets so much, just Danny and Finn. But no matter what they were up to, they always looked out for each other.

Because who else was going to look after them?

Danny's father had been gone since before Danny was born. Ma did her best, but how could she watch over Danny when she was working all the time? She was so tired when she got home from her nursing shifts at the hospital. After kissing Danny hello, she would close her

eyes for ten minutes, make their dinner, and then head out to clean offices until midnight.

And Finn's parents had five other kids crammed into a dark two-room apartment. So Danny and Finn stuck together, more than best friends, closer even than brothers. As long as they had each other, they felt like nothing bad could ever happen to them. And nothing ever did.

Until one night two months ago.

Even standing here, looking out on the palm trees, it all came back to Danny. It was like a horror movie playing in his mind. He could hear the screech of the metal on the fire escape breaking away from the building. He heard Finn's shout, and the thud of Finn's body hitting the sidewalk fifteen feet below. He could see Finn lying there on the sidewalk, the blood seeping out of his head, the flashing lights of the ambulance.

And then later, seeing him in that hospital bed, groaning in pain.



It was that night that Ma said they had to leave the city.

“It’s time for us to go,” Ma said. “Before something terrible happens to you.”

When she first told him they were moving to Hawaii, Danny thought she was kidding. Wasn’t Hawaii a made-up place, like Shangri-La?

But no.

It turned out it was a bunch of islands owned by America. There was a huge U.S. military base there called Pearl Harbor. They needed nurses at a hospital on an air base called Hickam. They wanted Ma right away.

A week later, the Cranes were on a train heading to San Francisco. From there, they took a ship halfway across the Pacific Ocean, to Oahu, one of the Hawaiian Islands.

Ma kept telling Danny how they needed to put New York behind them.

“We’re starting out fresh,” she said.

But how could Danny turn his back on Finn?

He couldn't, not when Finn needed him most. Besides, it was Danny's fault Finn got hurt. He was the one who wanted to climb up that fire escape, to explore that abandoned building on 23rd Street. Finn said it was a bad idea, but Danny told him to stop being a sissy. And then, as they were climbing up past the second floor, there was a terrible screech as the rusted metal of the fire escape gave way. Danny managed to climb onto the landing. But not Finn. He fell, crashing onto the cement sidewalk below.

And now Danny was an ocean—and a continent—away. But he had to go back to New York.

A ship called *Carmella* was steaming out of Honolulu Harbor tomorrow morning, heading back to the mainland.

Ma had no idea, but Danny was going to be on that ship.