

The brotherhood of war by tae guk gi

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The Brotherhood of War " The Brotherhood of War" tells the story of two brothers who fought together during the Korean War and describes the tragedies faced by Koreans during the war. After their father passed away, Jin-tae shines shoes to earn money for his brother, Jin-seok, to be able to go to school (Je-gyu 2004). When war suddenly breaks out between North Korea and South Korea, Jin-seok is drafted into the military and Jin-tae Lee also joins the military in hopes of protecting his brother. Jin-taes overprotective tendencies lead him to constantly place himself in danger in hopes of distinguishing himself so that his brother can be sent home and survive the war. Jin-seok learns of his brothers plans and hopes to stop him from getting himself killed (Je-gyu 2004). He is horrified to see Jin-tae transformed by the war from a caring brother into a cruel soldier that seems to be pursuing glory rather than sacrificing himself to save his brother. The growing division between Jin-seok and Jin-tae reflects the growing division between the people of North Korea and South Korea following the communist revolution while reflecting on the many tragedies of the war.

Although Jin-tae succeeds in earning the Medal of Honor for all the risks he takes, he is not successful in sheltering Jin-seok from the war. Jin-seok comes to resent his brother for what he is doing and refuses to go home. However, when the opportunity arises, he seeks out their family to let them know that both of them are okay (Je-gyu 2004). He returns home to find Young-shin being taken away for helping the communists, which she did for food and not for ideological reasons (Je-gyu 2004). When Jin-seok tries to prevent anti-communist partisans from executing Young-shin, he is imprisoned and treated as a communist traitor. Jin-tae attempts to intervene to help his brother and Young-shin and gets himself into trouble as well. Despite his

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efforts to protect his brother, Jin-tae is unable to stop his commander from ordering the prisoners, which include his brother, from being burned alive when the North Koreans are advancing on their encampment. Somehow, Jin-seok manages to escape the fire. In the end, the two brothers are reunited after Jin-tae is captured by the North Koreans and joins their ranks as fanatic leading their "Flag Unit", thinking his brother is dead (Je-gyu 2004). Jin-seok loses his hatred for what his brother had become and risks his life to try to bring Jin-tae home safely. Although Jin-seok has to wait 50 years later to discover the fate of his brother, Jin-tae stayed behind to slow the advancing North Korean army so that his brother could escape.

In parallel to the growing division and final reconciliation between Jin-seok and Jin-tae, "The Brotherhood of War" also depicts the divisions between the Koreans that sided with North Korea and those that sided with South Korea. The South Korean soldiers come to vilify the communists and forget that they are all Koreans. This artificial division is made apparent first when Jin-tae's unit captures a North Korean soldier that grew up with Jin-tae and Jin-seok. Although Jin-tae treats this prisoner of war inhumanely and ultimately kills him, he is forced to face the cognitive dissonance when his fiancé, Young-shin, is to be executed as a communist.

Despite the division of Korea at the 38th parallel between communism and democracy, there is still a single Korean people that share much in common through heritage in spite of the ideological differences. Friends and even brothers became enemies following the outbreak of war and the division of Korean into North and South. Although serious atrocities were committed on both sides, this film seems to embody the hope that there will one day be reconciliation and a unified Korea. While it may seem difficult to imagine a <https://assignbuster.com/the-brotherhood-of-war-by-tae-guk-gi/>

unified Korea, some steps have been taken towards this end (Ebrey et al., 499). After watching this film, I wonder if most Koreans from both North and South hold this view or if 50 years has been long enough for most Koreans to view the division as permanent.

Bibliography

The Brotherhood of War. DVD. Directed by Kang Je-gyu. United States: Samuel Goldwyn Films, 2004.

Ebrey, Patricia B., Walthall, Anne, and Palais, James. East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History, 2nd Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.