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Turning Point: Nguyen Qui Duc

In the opening section of part four, "Tet," the story from a South Vietnamese person named Nguyen Qui Duc had what I would consider a major turning point in his life. Duc's story begins when he was a boy. He was living with his family and other families inside government housing in the town of Hue. The story recounts the moments that passed as Communist soldiers invaded the house Duc and his family were living in. During the invasion, the soldiers took Duc's father and other men, and put the women and children in the basement of the house. That night, Duc and his mother watched through a small window his father being tied up and led away, never knowing if they will see his father again. I feel that in this moment, while Duc and his mother held each other in the dark, they shared a major turning point in their life. Duc called the moment between him and his mother a private grief, something that couldn't be shared with anyone else. The war had finally affected Duc in a very personal way. The war had taken a loved one. This would be hard for anyone to forget easily.

As Duc's story continues, he begins to see Hue and the world around him in a different light. The city was in ruins. Mass graves lay around. He and his mother had to give up looking for his father's body because the stench was so bad. It seems that Duc was starting to show that he had been affected by the loss of his father. Duc was lucky enough to leave Vietnam several years later and came to the United States. Because Duc was brought up with Western ideas, when he traveled back to Vietnam as an adult, he was not seen as Vietnamese anymore. All because of a single night many years ago, the turning point of losing his father caused him go down a path of losing his national identity.

Ending: John McCain

Arizona Senator John McCain shared his experience when he was captured by the Vietnamese in 1967 in the section titled "Prisoners of War" in part five. Obviously, prisoners of war were treated poorly, and so while imprisoned, McCain and the other inmates had to cope with the treatment. The prisoners tried their best to keep some spiritual faith, keep believing that the United States was

trying to bring them all home, and, as McCain says, trying to keep a sense of humor. McCain was declared the entertainment officer by the rest of the prisoners and he would recall the stories of movies he had seen with the rest of the prisoners. The prisoners would also make fun of their captors in effort to bring them down to their own level. They all tried their best to pass the time, trying to put off what ever ending maybe in for them as prisoners.

At one point of him imprisonment, McCain was offered a release, but refused. That refusal led to a long period of harsh treatment by the Vietnamese, eventually breaking his arm again. It seems like this abuse was the straw that broke the camel's back, and spelled the ending point for John McCain's strength of soldier. He was finally broken and gave a confession about the war crimes he had committed. He felt like a failure, unable to live up to the standards of the other prisoners. However, considering the treatment, it was probably inevitable that an ending of his resolve as a soldier to not cooperate with the Vietnamese was coming soon. I doubt there was little that McCain could do. Years later, after being released, McCain still receives criticism from the people for cooperating with the Vietnamese. It would be interesting to see if those people would have a different view of McCain if they were put into the same situation he was in. Situations like that are the ending of anyone, even the strongest, more hardened soldiers we have.

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