



GAIL TSUKIYAMA

THE
SAMURAI'S
GARDEN

A Novel

"An extraordinarily
graceful and moving novel
about goodness and beauty."

—*Booklist*

*THE
SAMURAI'S
GARDEN*



*GAIL
TSUKIYAMA*



*ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN
NEW YORK*



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Also by Author

***IN MEMORY OF
Thomas Yam***

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for their continual grace and support.

And as always, many thanks
to my mother and brother for
their ongoing strength and
encouragement.

No one spoke,
The host, the guest,
The white chrysanthemums.

—Ryōta

AUTUMN



TARUMI, JAPAN SEPTEMBER 15, 1937

I wanted to find my own way, so this morning I persuaded my father to let me travel alone from his apartment in Kobe to my grandfather's beach house in Tarumi. It had taken me nearly two weeks to convince him—you would think I was a child, not a young man of twenty. It seems a small victory, but I've won so few in the past months that it means everything to me—perhaps even the beginning of my recovery. Just before leaving, I bought this book of Japanese parchment paper to record any other prizes I might be lucky enough to capture. It opens before me now, thin sheets of sand-colored paper, empty and quiet as the beach below the village.

Since I became ill last spring in Canton, I've had no time to myself. When I was too weak to continue studying, my instructors at Lingnan University ordered me home. My friend King accompanied me on the train, and hovered over me all the way home to Hong Kong. I'll never forget the frightened look in my mother's eyes the day I returned. It was like an animal's fear for her young. I couldn't stop coughing long enough to catch my breath. When King and a manservant carried me up the concrete steps of our house, my mother stood in her green silk *cheungsam*, lips pressed tightly together in a straight line as if she were holding back a scream. Once home I was constantly under her cautious eyes, and those of our old servant Ching. The two women monitored my every move, as if I might wilt away right before their eyes. That's how they looked at me sometimes, as though I were already a memory.

I can understand their concern. My days were still punctuated by fevers in the late afternoon and a persistent dry cough. All through the thick, sticky summer, the heat made things worse. When my illness was diagnosed as tuberculosis by an English doctor, my mother sent a telegram to my father in Kobe. Her concern turned to dread and she forbade my younger sister Penelope, whom I've called Pie ever since she was born, to enter my room.

Every morning Pie balanced on the threshold and smiled at me, looking smaller than her twelve years. There are four of us children in all. My older sister Anne and my younger brother Henry are now back at school in Macao. My parents gave us all Christian names at birth, since my father believes it an asset in the business world to be addressed with ease by