

**FOREIGN
LANGUAGES
AND
APPLIED
LINGUISTICS**

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NTPU FLAL Creative Writing

E-publication (Issue I-I)

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Chulin and Me

| 林欣儀 Cindy

- A fluffy silken little girl
- With two round eyes,
- Purring, snuggling beside,
- With one paw on her nose,
- Curling, snoozing aside,
- Like a little baby nestling by my side,
-
- Stretching her back,
- Gracefully walks around.
- Blimey!
- A butterfly~
- Chasing friskily behind,
- Climbing quickly down and up,
- Rattling vase, tea, plate, and cup,
- Like naughty kids play and hop.
-
- My laid-back sweet baby,
- Let's watch sunshine in the sky,
- Spacing out sitting on the bike.
- We cuddle together sharing secret.
- Meow! You and Me~
- Like a pair of buddies happy and glee.

Beautiful Weekend with My Honey

| 黃湘琪 Tracy

A mother leads her boy to the paternity center park,
Like an eagle with a chick.
Today we are going to build a boat with blocks,
Which can burden a family.
The mothers listen to the teacher's instructions seriously.
Their babies are too little to know that burdens should be
supported by love.

In the corner are the silent eagle and chick.

Mom, Mom, look at my boat.
Phubbing, phubbing, be quiet.
Mom, Mom, look at my boat.
Clap, Clap, but it's time to clean.

"Wait..."
"Mom?"
Click, click, one two three.

An eagle doesn't need a boat because they can flutter and soar
high
And look so proud and delight.
But a chick needs the burden to learn to fly.

Run
From the highland to the desert

Run
From nothing to everything
Swords and bloods
Changed the shining sand to golden
glory.

Run
From a little tribe
Till a country that turned the tide
Won the prophecy that was told in the
dream

Run
Through the spinning of time
I saw nothing but falls and splits
Chaos ran over my homeland

RUN



Run
I saw a gleam of hope
A red crest led us to a New Era

Run
For my country, my friend, my
family, and myself

Run
Into fires and angers for being free

Run
I have nothing
But me

Run, Run, Run
In dreams and dreams




The New Year Feast

When the cool air stepped inside through windows, the calendar on the wall was getting thinner. As a child, it was the best time of the year. But to my grandma, it was the busiest time of the year.

If you had to ask me about my grandma, I would definitely tell you that she is the most “diligent” woman I knew in the world. Every time before the New Year, she would grab me with her to the market, and she would always say, “Wei-wei, you have to recognize all vegetables and meat to be a woman.” This year was no exception.

It was early morning, as Grandma always said, the only time to get fresh ingredients. We sat in my dad’s car, heading to the grand traditional market. Although I was only ten years old, Grandma thought that I am old enough to learn how to be a “woman”.

The traditional market was lively and busy at seven in the morning. There were three main aisles. One was for meat and seafood, another was for vegetables, and the other was for processing food products. The meat aisle was scarlet red; every stand has those whirling plastic strings above pork, beef, but never above fish. I always wanted to ask Grandma why; however, I was afraid that she might think it is stupid for a “woman” to ask. The vegetables aisle was my favorite. It was colorful. I liked to observe various shapes of fruits, and sometimes I thought they are just like tiny animals that they might possibly talk one day. Yet, I never told Grandma my fantasy. I was not really familiar with the processing food products aisle since Grandma seldom showed me there.



“Wei-wei, take this chicken!” Though Grandma was petite, her voice was loud and clear. She always walked in the front, and I behind her. Stand owners would hand me what Grandma ordered them to take. Most of the time, I would not complain about carrying stuffs for her. However, as New Year always was an exception compared to the normal days, I was annoyed by Grandma’s irrational consumption.

“Grandma!” Both of my hands were holding several plastic bags with vegetables, pork, beef, and seafood. Now, Grandma was even telling me to take the chicken! “It is enough! We can’t eat that much!” I was groaning and wondering in mind whether Grandma remembered I was only ten.

“Children should never complain! You should have known how important New Year is to we Chinese!” Grandma was yelling at me, and at the meantime picking some chicken legs from the stand. She did not even look at me, but I could still clearly hear her sound although the market was quite loud in noise.

I didn’t know why New Year is so important to Grandma. However, I did know that Grandma is an extremely traditional woman. She worshipped every tradition in Chinese culture, including what we should eat during each festival, what we should not say while using the incense sticks to worship gods or to reminisce our ancestors, and even the twelve essential cuisines of New Year feast. I kept thinking of how conventional Grandma is, and how ridiculous her deeds are. Suddenly, I decided not to go after Grandma, so I sat in the middle of the aisle steadily.

Everyone in the market was looking at me astonishingly. I knew that I was making Grandma embarrassed; yet, I just did not care at all! I could not imagine one day, when I became a “real” woman, I should be just like Grandma. “Wei-wei! What are you doing? Don’t waste my time due to your bad temper! You are not being a ‘woman’! Look at you!” Grandma was so mad at my stubborn temper that neither did she reach out her hand to hold me, nor did she try to comfort me. She just went beside me, picking up all the food she had bought from the ground, and kept walking in the market.

This was not what I expected. Still sitting motionlessly on the ground, I watched how Grandma managed to carry all those heavy bags of food. I was shocked. What actually was she insisting? What actually was the importance of cooking the same set of cuisines every year? Grandma walked slowly and in a stumble way. Was this the true picture of being a “woman”? I started to stand up. I noticed that I could not let Grandma go alone through the market with that much stuff carrying on her both hands.

After the conflict I had with Grandma in the market when I was ten, I never complained again about her over-shopping every year. I knew that she would never change. Every year, we still had the same set of twelve cuisines, and Grandma never considered changing. Through my whole childhood, I was always pondering about Grandma's saying of being a "woman". What actually was being a "woman"? Was it following the traditions that Grandma believes in? Was it being as tough as Grandma that she could always carry all the stuffs like she was when I was ten? Through my whole childhood, I could not come up with an answer of being a "woman". It was when Grandma started to age and not strong enough during my teenage years that I suddenly realized why she insisted in this tradition so much.

That year, Grandma had an eye operation. It was near the New Year. Like every year, Grandma started to worry about how the family could have an appropriate New Year feast with twelve cuisines. However, Dad would not let Grandma do the complicated preparations of the New Year. "Let Wei-wei do it. She knows how to do it properly." After several arguments between Dad and Grandma on the New Year feast issue, I was the one being chosen by Grandma to take responsibility on this major task.



I went to the familiar market that I spent every year at this time with Grandma, pondering why I was the chosen one. I was only sixteen, and I had other cousins who were much older than I was. Why me? Walking through every stands, I did not even spend time thinking about what ingredients should be on the list. Instead, I just stopped by Grandma's favorite stands, ordering what I needed. On my way home, I was still wondering why it was I.

In the early morning of the New Year's Eve, I started the preparation, alone. Entering Grandma's kitchen, it was not strange to me since I was always beside Grandma every year to be her helping hand. I took out the vegetables, the meat, the fish, and I had no second thought what to do step by step. It just came through my mind naturally which cuisines should be made first, what spices should be put in the next. In the evening, the New Year feast was done by me, alone.

Every family member, including Grandma, was sitting at the round table with twelve cuisines on it. I was totally exhausted but not yet to relax because I was afraid that Grandma would not acknowledge my skills of cooking. I could see Grandma browsing through the whole dining table. Sweats were dropping from my forehead, and my hands were both wet. I was still standing in front of my seat, waiting for Grandma to comment on the New Year feast. Everyone was eating, except me. I could see Grandma tasting the food slowly and carefully. Mom and Dad were waving their hands asking me to sit down, but I just keep standing still. Grandma's mouth was grinding extremely slow as if the time was almost stopped.

Everyone was eating happily, but I was still standing, waiting for Grandma's comments. Several thoughts just went across my mind. I did it alone. She should not blame me since no one was hungry during New Year's Eve, or was there anything wrong? Was it the flavor? I counted again, and yes, there were twelve cuisines! Why was Grandma not expressing any emotions? Just when my anxiety was almost exploded, Grandma talked. "Wei-wei, you are really a woman, now." Grandma smiled. Looking at how satisfied the family was, I smiled, and what I saw blurred.

A Letter to My Father

(Melody adapted from Eason Chan' s Bicycle.)

I seldom see your smiley face.
You are solemn like a waxwork behind me.
Living in the same place,
How speechless we can be.
Day by day you rarely speak to us.
We could hardly realize what you think.
I hope deeply and I trust
Our heart can get a link.

You would not give me an embrace
When I got hurt while I was growing up.
If there are teardrops on my face,
You won' t cheer me up.
You are the snow in the winter,
Making me feel cold in the summer.
I wonder whether you are a good father,
But I still love you whatever.

There is a river between us.
I have been unable to build a bridge.
It seems ridiculous;
We' re just like in a fridge.
You' re not tender in my memory,
So I hardly dare disobey you.
You are not ordinary.
I don' t know what to do.

| 吳芷盈 Crystal

Can you offer me an embrace
When I get hurt while I' m growing up?
If there are teardrops on my face,
Can you hold me tight, warm me up?
The snow melts if it wants.
The cold leaves me and I see the sun.
Though your face is gaunt,
Please smile at me once.

You offer me a warm embrace
When I get hurt and I am sad.
If there are teardrops on my face,
You' ll make me glad.
That' s all my imagination.
Will it be true in the future?
Someday you laugh at me with your affection;
It will be my best treasure.

Stella And Her Caterpillars

| 林欣儀 Cindy

Characters

Narrator Speaking behind the curtain

Five to ten students and a class leader: Ten-year-old.

Stella: A ten-year-old girl. Imaginative and naïve

Teacher: A thirty-five-year old women. Professional in biology.

Mother: A forty-year old woman. Patient and considerate.

Six caterpillars: Cabbage butterfly's larva. They are personified, wearing in light green with small black dots on the back and speaking lazily in slow speed.

The cleaning crew: Two people with some disinfectors and cleaning equipment.

Two Cabbage butterflies: Wearing pure white wings with some circle dots on it.

Settings

Scene 1 – School garden: In a corner of the campus. With trees, grass, flowers, butterflies, and insects.

Scene 2 – Stella's house: With a sofa, a table and a curtain

Scene 3 – The left of the stage is Stella's caterpillar area in school garden; the right of stage is School garden where Stella can observe her area: The left part of the stage is with a large lawn, fragment of vegetable and large branches. The right is with a big tree, some small branches and small grass.

Scene 4 – Stella's caterpillar area in school garden: With trees, grass, and many flowers.

Scene 1 –School garden

(Curtain up with the sounds of the ringing bell.)

Narrator: It is a science class. The teacher arranges an activity outdoors, today. Every student is excitedly gathering in front of the gate of the school garden.

(Students are on the left of the stage in front a gate.)

Class leader: *(Angrily stands in the front of the lines.)* Hey! Everyone, be quiet! Please line up, quickly! Teacher is coming.

(All the classmates see their teacher coming, so everyone quickly follows the order.)

Teacher: *(Energetically)* Good morning, everyone! What a wonderful sunny day today, right!

Students: *(All response together)* Good morning, Teacher!

Student A: *(Confused and raises a hand)* Teacher, teacher! Why should we gather outdoors today?

Stella: *(Raises hands with excitement)* What will we do today, Teacher? Will we visit the garden today? *(Evokes other classmates' excitement and they all start to make some discussion.)*

Teacher: *(Smiles and puts her finger on her lips to tell students to be quiet)* Okay, guys! Stella, you're right. Today, we are going to visit the school garden. *(All students are cheering happily with bright eyes.)* BUT we need to be quiet first or all the insects will be SO scared that we cannot observe them closely. Okay~~?

(Students all nod heads, follow teacher's order, and enter into the school garden.)

(After everyone enters the garden, the teacher starts to introduce the lesson today.)

Teacher: Okay! Everyone, Listen! The reason why, today, we need to visit the school garden is that we are going to learn about the growing process of a caterpillar to a butterfly. So first, everyone, get close to me. Let us take a look of these tiny eggs. *(Picks a leaf cautiously, turns it upside down, and points at the area where caterpillars' eggs sit.)* These eggs are cabbage butterflies' larva.

(All students observe with interest and concentrate on the eggs on the leaf.)

Stella: *(Blinks her eyes with surprise.)* Wow! They seem like pearls. Although they are too tiny to be touched, inside the pearls are precious lives. That is so special.

Teacher: That's right, Stella. *(Points at one of the cabbage butterflies flying above the students' head.)* Look, everyone! That is a cabbage butterfly.

(Students all look up)

Teacher: Okay! Now, every one of you needs to find an area where the leaves are with eggs on the back, and come to me for checking. *(Raise some mini-sized fences and a name card for getting students' attention.)* Later, I will give you some mini-sized fences and a name card; what you should do is to use these fences to circle the area you “adopt” and paste your name card on it. MOREOVER, every day you need to spare time to come to the school garden to look after the caterpillars and record the processes of their growth in this semester. Any question?

Students: *(All response together.)* No!

Teacher: Okay, great! Now you can get started!

(Stella crouches beside her area.)

Stella: *(Tightly pastes her name card on the fences, closely looks at them, and whispers.)* Hello! Guys! Wish you grow healthily.

(Curtain down.)

Scene 2 – Stella's house

(Curtain up.)

Narrator: When arriving home, Stella cheerfully greets her mother, and then tells her about the science class cautiously.

Stella: *(Speaks with her loud and sonorous voice.)* Mommy! I got several precious pearls today.

Mother: *(Feels confused and shocked.)* What? Pearls? Who gave you such expensive things?

Stella: *(Complacent)* I found them by myself. I found five different leaves and each of the eggs has its own bed in a peaceful area in the school garden. I name my area “jewelry box.” I will take GOOD care of them in order to see them become beautiful butterflies.

Mother: *(It suddenly dawns on her.)* Ha ha ha! Okay! Okay! I believe you can do well on feeding them.

(Curtain down.)

Scene 3 –Left of the stage is Stella's caterpillar area; right of stage is school garden where Stella can observe her area

(Curtain up.)

Narrator: After one week. Other classmate's caterpillars are all out, but only Stella is still waiting.

(Stella holds her chin with her hands and observes the six eggs on the leaves in her area.)

(On the other side of stage are six big egg-like stage property of caterpillars' egg.)



Stella: *(Frowns.)* When will you guys get out of the eggs? Other classmates are all sharing the baby caterpillars with each other; only I am still waiting. Hurry, I want to play with you.

Caterpillar1: *(Speaks in a whisper with other caterpillars.)* Friends! Are you ready to get out of this narrow room?

Other Caterpillars: *(Respond together.)* I think so. *(The eggs are moving tightly. Firstly, there is a tiny hole on the surface of the egg, and then it uses its head to break through the hole. Slowly, each caterpillar one by one steps out of the egg.)*

Stella: *(Notices the holes and the tiny part of the heads on the eggs)* WOO! Are you coming out right now? *(Excitedly with her big bright round eyes, she runs out of the stage to her classmates.)* THEY ARE BORN NOW. *(Jumps and dances.)*

Caterpillar1: *(Yawns and stretches its body.)* Oh! Finally, I can move my body freely.

Other caterpillar: *(One after another, stretch their bodies and respond together.)* Agreed! *(Sounds of stomachs growling from the caterpillars' bellies. All caterpillar look at one another and laugh.)*

Caterpillar1: Oh! I am so hungry. Let us look for some food.

Other caterpillar: *(Respond together.)* Agreed! *(All caterpillars creep slowly and quietly.)*
(Stella goes back to the stage still excitedly and looks closely toward the area.)

Stella: Hello! Little guys. My name is Stella. How are you?
(All caterpillars stop creeping and look at Stella.)

Caterpillar1: *(Confused)* Hi... I am not well; we are starving.
(All caterpillars keep moving.)
(Stella takes out some fragments of vegetable.)

Stella: I think you are all hungry, right. *(Puts some vegetable inside the area.)*

Caterpillars: *(Chew the vegetable.)* Oh! She is so nice.

Stella: *(Smiles with great satisfaction.)* Woo! You are so tiny and cute. I cannot wait to see you grow bigger.
(Black out for 10 seconds.)

Narrator: Every day, at noon, after finishing lunch, Stella would like to go to the school garden to water or clean the grass and to feed the caterpillars some vegetable.
(Light in.)



(Some caterpillars are lying on the leaves, and the others are crawling around.)

Caterpillar 1: *(Stretches body.)* What a wonderful sunny day, today. It's nice to have a sunbath after lunch, friends.

Other caterpillars: Yeah! That's right. *(Roll back and forth on the leaves.)*

Caterpillar 1: Oh! Where is our best friend, Stella? Has she finished her lunch yet?

(Stella runs onto the right stage.)

Stella: *(Energetically)* Good afternoon, my lovely friends. *(Waters the grass and picks up the vegetable that loses freshness.)* It is warm today.

Caterpillars: Yeah! *(Nod heads slowly but firmly.)* Let's sunbathing together, Stella. Hee~Hee~

Stella: *(Takes a ruler and measures the caterpillars.)* 3, 5, 4, 3, and 5 centimeters.

(Recording the measures down on the note) Woo! You six grow so fast.

Each of you grows 2 centimeters in average.

Caterpillar1: *(Rolls abound happily.)* Thanks to you, Stella, you take GOOD~ ~ care of us. We all love you so much.

Other caterpillars: That's right! We all love you.

(Bell rings.)

Stella: Opps! My math quiz! You know, math is so difficult. I need to leave to prepare it. See you next Monday, guys. Hope you have a wonderful weekend. I'll miss you. *(Touches all the caterpillars slightly.)*

Caterpillars: Good luck, Stella. We'll miss you, too~~~~~

(Some caterpillars are lying on the leaves, and the others are crawling around.)

(Black out for 10 seconds.)

Narrator: On the weekend, the school's cleaning crew temporarily sterilizes the environment; however, they do avoid the area of the school garden.

(With the sound of disinfectant machine for a while.)

(Light in.)

Caterpillar1: *(Looks around.)* What's that noisy sound?

Caterpillars2: *(Confused and smells)* What's that terrible smell?

Caterpillar3: *(Seems to vomit.)* I feel uncomfortable, friends... *(Feels painful)* I cannot breath.... Help!! *(Faints.)*

(Other caterpillars seem to vomit and faint down one by one.)

Caterpillar1: *(Worried)* What happened to you guys? (Shouts and cries) Stop the noisy sound! Stop the terrible smell!

(Three of the caterpillars are in curl, turn black, and do not move anymore. The other two caterpillars, which are alive, cry sorrowfully.)

(Black out for 10 seconds.)

(Set the stage properties: the brown or black grass and leaves.)

(Light in.)

(All the grass and leaves in the garden turn brown without vitality.)

Stella: *(With her recording note, she walks toward the school garden.)* It is finally Monday; I cannot wait to see my caterpillars. Hope they have grown bigger and healthier. *(Steps into the garden and crouches beside her caterpillar area, and screams.)* What happen to you guys? Why most of you DO NOT move? *(Cries)* Don't you play trick on me? Why don't you eat the vegetable I have specially prepared for you?

Caterpillar1: *(Cries but being brave.)* Stella, don't cry. I am alive. I can play with you.

(The voice of other classmates' crying.)

Teacher: *(Walks toward Stella.)* I so sorry to hear that. Some mistakes happened when the cleaning crew protected our environment.

Stella: *(Keeps crying and sobbing.)* How could they kill my caterpillars?

Teacher: *(Pats Stella's head.)* Life is always uncertainty. Look! There are two alive. You really do well on taking care of them. Just cherish the time you spend with them; that is precious. Just keep going on, everything will be fine, girl.

Stella: *(Sobs.)* Hmm...okay.... Thank you, teacher.

(Curtain down.)

(All the grass and leaves in the garden turn green again; butterflies are hanging on the ceiling.)

(The remaining two caterpillars are crawling around and biting the vegetable with energy.)

Narrator: A few weeks later, things are as usual. Everything in the school garden returns to its vitality.

Stella: *(Walks to the garden and crouches beside her area.) (Speaks without energy.)*

How are you today? Are you hungry?

Caterpillar1: *(Looks at Stella with worry.)* We are fine, Stella. Everything is all right.

How about you, Stella?

Stella: *(Feeling upset)* I still miss them. I am so sorry that I did not rescue all of you.

Caterpillars 1: *(Waves hands actively meaning “no.”)* We won’t mind that accident. That is not your mistake. *(Rolls around energetically.)* Stella, look! We are all fine now. Don’t be sad or we will not be happy, either. *(Keeps rolling energetically.)*

Stella: *(Sees the caterpillars rolling energetically, and smiles)* Woo! You guys are full of energy. Are you telling me to be brave? Oh! Thank you for your being alive and for giving me encouragement. I’ll be stronger and take BETTER care of you.

(Black out.)

Narrator: A few days later, Stella’s caterpillars are ready to become chrysalises. They stop eating and moving, and they spit out silk around their own bodies to become chrysalises.

(Light in.)

Caterpillar1: *(Talks to another caterpillar.)* Friend! I think it’s time to “sleep,” right?

Caterpillar2: *(Nods head.)* I think so! Hope Stella will not be too worried when she sees us stop moving.

Caterpillar1: *(Smiles.)* She will be delighted if she realizes we are “sleeping” for giving her a wonderful gift. *(Crawls near a branch and lies on it.)*

Narrator: The caterpillars stop moving, lie on a branch, and spit out the string as silk to wrap themselves slowly.

Stella: *(Excited crouches down to observe the caterpillars.)* Hello, guys, today is also a sunny day! *(Stunned and frightened by noticing that the caterpillars are not moving.)* What happen to you? Is there any disinfectant again? No!!! *(Runs to the teacher.)*

Teacher: *(Walks to the school garden with her hands patting on Stella’s shoulder.)* Calm down, my sweet baby. Let me see. *(Crouches beside Stella’s area, and observes for a while.)*

Stella: *(Worried.)* What happen to them, teacher? *(Cries.)* Are they dead?

Teacher: *(Smiles.)* Congratulations, Stella! They are healthy enough to be ready to become butterflies. Note it down.

Stella: *(Surprised.)* REALLY?! *(Jumps around.)* Woo, I cannot wait to see how beautiful they are.

(The caterpillars keep spitting out the strings.)

(Curtain down.)

Scene 4 – Stella's caterpillar area in school garden

(Curtain up.)

(Joyful music fades in.)

(Two butterflies and Stella dance around hands in hands and laugh happily together.)

(Music fades out.)

Stella: *(With a splendid smile.)* Ha~ha~ How beautiful you are, guys! I am thankful a lot for meeting you guys.

Butterfly1: Thank you, Stella. We are fortunate to meet you, Stella. Thank you so much. You are really a good girl. *(Two butterflies hug Stella tightly.)*

Butterfly2: Though we are gonna go, we will miss you a lot wherever you are.

Stella: *(Sobs and hugs them again.)* Don't leave. I want to take care of you and play with you forever.

Butterfly1: *(Speaks in a gentle tone and pats Stella's head.)* Oh~ Cute girl. Not everything in your life could keep accompanying you forever but the time we spent with you can be SO unforgettable and SO precious, right!

Butterfly2: *(Nods head and holds Stella's hands.)* That's right! Stella, there are abundant new things in life waiting for you to explore. You will gain a lot of beautiful memory. Keep us in your memory, and we will keep you in our mind, too.

Stella: *(Sobs and nods head.)* Okay... I will keep you guys tightly in my memory.

(The three of them hug together tightly again.)

(Joyful music fades in and every character dances together happily.)

(Curtain down.)

The end.

NTPU FLAL E-PUBLICATION

CREATIVE WRITING

Advisor: Professor Sue-Han Ueng

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2018 ISSUE I-2

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I



Poetry

How Can I Get You Back?

Gladys Chen 陳煒妮

The sky is getting bright with warm sunshine again.
Your eyes tightly closed up.
Your body rigidly lay down.
And your soul silently drifted away.
I know you have no chance to appreciate.

The sky is getting dark with the cold moon again.
My sight is lost.
My mind wandered.
My body shivered.
I understand you've been so far away
To the everlasting border without taking a rest.

How could you just fade away?
I've been chasing after you all the way,
As if stars follow the bright moon in a winter day
But in vain

Will a thousand calls bring you back?
My dear Grandpa,
Please tell me.
How can I get you back?

Morning Joe

Alex Hsieh 謝雅米

It is a brisk autumn morning.
I wake and feel a longing
For a cup of Joe.

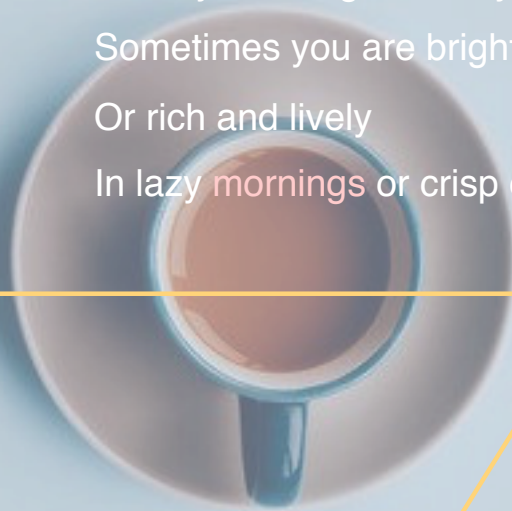
When you flow down my throat,
Burning a lot, but I can't conceal
This boundless joy
You make me feel.

Charming are your dimples,
Like the swirling pool in your smile.
And there's no one like you
Who can make me feel
So warm and comfortable.

Oh, Joe, Mr. Joe,
The scents of your body
Are oh so wonderful
Like the powerful drug
that I can't get enough of.

Sometimes you are wild and exciting
Or mellow and soft
In busy mornings or rainy evenings.
Sometimes you are bright and tangy
Or rich and lively
In lazy mornings or crisp evenings.

But no matter today
What flavor you would like to be,
I feel so good and easy
When you're with me.



Seasons

Sean Yen 顏芸湘

When people feel the caress of breeze,
See the bustling of bees,
Hear the birds' sweet chirping sound,
And smell the perfume blooming flowers spread on the ground,
We know the Spring is coming softly.

When people feel the heat of sun,
See the sweat on the run,
Hear the hoarse of air-conditioner,
And smell their favorite ice-cream flavor,
We know the Summer is approaching passionately.

When people feel the cool weather,
See the trees and leaves changing color,
Hear the typhoon roar in the night,
And smell the light brown wheat in delight,
We know the Autumn is upcoming sensationally.

When people feel the silence of nature,
See the freezing temperature,
Hear the howling sound in windy day,
And smell the turkey on Thanksgiving holiday,
We know the Winter is forthcoming dramatically.





Short Story

The Ugly Girl in the Beauty Kingdom

Alice Chen 陳佩瑩

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom named “Beauty” which was located on the top of Hermosa Mountain. People who lived in this kingdom were beautiful. In the kingdom, King Adonis and Queen Bella were the lovely couple, and all the people of the realm liked them. However, for a long time, Queen Bella did not have a child. As a result, Queen Bella became very sullen and smiled less. To make his wife happy, King Adonis sought the Great Witch Belinda’s help. The Great Witch Belinda was the best witch in the world, and she could solve any problem by her magic. Nevertheless, because Belinda had lived for a long long time, she was too old that she could not straighten her back, and had many wrinkles and age-spots on her face; her hair was long, messy, white and curly, and her eyes were cloudy and dull dark. As soon as kids saw her, every one of them would scream, cry and run away with fear.

At first, Belinda wanted to reject to meet the King because she knew that if it had not been for the desire of having a baby, King Adonis would never have visited her since she had a terrible appearance. Being visited by the King for many times, Belinda was moved by the King’s perseverance, and gave the King a magic herb. At the same time, she requested that she wanted to be the godmother of the little prince or princess. King Adonis promised her and went back to the kingdom happily.

Finally, after a year, Queen Bella gave birth to a girl baby, and the little princess was so beautiful and sweet that King Adonis could not contain himself for joy. He prepared a great feast to celebrate the coming of the little princess, and invited all his friends, family and neighbors. Also, he invited the young and beautiful fairies from Elven Kingdom in order that they might be kind to the little princess, and would give her the best magic blessings.

However, the king did not invite Belinda because he did not want an old ugly weird woman to become the little princess's godmother.

A wonderful and luxurious feast was held and when it came to an end, each fairy came to the cradle where the little princess lay and gave her magic blessings or presents. After that, Belinda suddenly appeared on the feast. She stared at King Adonis with rage, and said in a hoarse and loud voice, "Adonis, you will regret what you have done. Now, I curse that the little princess will be the ugliest person in your kingdom." Hearing the curse, Queen Bella ran to the cradle, held up the little princess, and saw her face. The little princess's face changed, her skin became dark, and spots and pimples scattered on her face. This situation shocked Queen Bella, and she passed out. King Adonis held his wife and pleaded with Belinda to remove the curse. Belinda said in a cold tone, "Only the magic diamond, 'the Pure Mind' can break the curse." Then without another word, she turned and left the hall.

Feeling afraid of the curse and having no idea what and where the diamond was, the King gave an order that if anyone could find the Pure Mind, he would marry the little princess, and get half of the treasure from the king. However, because no one knew where the diamond was, and no one could guarantee that if the little princess would regain beauty after getting the diamond, nobody was willing to take the task. The King was disappointed that no one wanted to help the little princess. At that moment, one of his chancellors told the King, "Your majesty, I had an idea. The little princess will be the best person to break the curse for herself. We can teach her about every kind of knowledge, and the generals can teach her how to survive in the wild until the princess is equipped with sufficient abilities to take adventure by herself." King Adonis thought that was a good idea. To be honest, even if the little princess was his daughter, he could not bear an ugly girl to call him father, even to live in his kingdom. Ironically, no one opposed this decision, including the little princess's mother, Queen Bella.

In fact, King Adonis had not named the little princess because he did not want to admit that the ugly girl was his daughter. Nevertheless, thinking that the little princess would leave the kingdom and adventure on the unknown world, the King decided to name the little princess “Caroline,” which means brave and strong. He hoped that the little princess could be strong and brave enough to face the difficulties during the adventure. When Caroline turned fifteen, she had to take on the trip in searching of the Pure Mind, and the King held a gathering to see Caroline off. On the gathering, Caroline’s parents gave her some stuff for adventure, and wished her well during the trip. After the gathering, Caroline took her bags and stepped on her trip to searching for the Pure Mind. Seeing the little princess leave their sight, all of the people in the gathering started to celebrate. They felt happy that they might never see that ugly girl in their kingdom.

Actually, Caroline knew that no one liked her, even her parents. As a result, she really wanted to find the Pure Mind so that her parents could accept her. When Caroline left her kingdom, she passed the Noir Forest. Walking through the Noir Forest was the only way leading to the outside; however, the Noir Forest was so wide that people needed to take almost three days to walk out. Daylight was ebbing away. Caroline decided to find a tree hole to get through the first night in the Noir Forest. Also, to prevent from consuming too much food she got from home, Caroline grabbed the fruit and took the eatable vegetable on her way. Finally, she found the tree hole in the giant tree. After simply cleaning the tree hole and putting the blanket on the ground, Caroline was going to sleep. Suddenly, she heard someone’s voice. “Excuse me...Can I come in? It is dark and cold outside....” Caroline looked out of the tree hole, but she saw nothing. “I am here! Under your feet!” Finally, Caroline saw a little mouse who was trembling. “Oh...poor little thing! Just come in!” Caroline held the little mouse and covered him with her blanket. “Girl, thank you! You are so kind! Every time I appear, no one welcomes me. What is your name? I am Alvis, nice to meet you.”

“I am Caroline, nice to meet you, too!” Then Caroline asked Alvis if he had heard the magic diamond, “the Pure Mind.” Disappointedly, Alvis never heard about the Pure Diamond. Feeling helpless, Caroline could not help but cry, and thought that she might not regain beauty forever. Alvis comforted her and said, “Do not cry, Caroline, I know a dwarf named Maxwell. He is the best miner in the world, and he knows every kind of stone. Maybe he knows where the Pure Mind is.” After hearing that, Caroline finally got some relief, and fell asleep quickly.

The next morning, Caroline and Alvis continued to go on their trip. On their walk, Caroline and Alvis happily chatted a lot. Unconsciously, they arrived at the Una Lake which was located in the middle of the Noir forest. “Alvis, it is hot now. Maybe we should take a rest, and get some drink.” Caroline said, “You are right. I am so tired and thirsty.” They stepped to the bank of the lake, and held water to drink. Afterward they walked into the shade of the big tree which was at the lakeside, and leaned against the tree trunk for a rest. Suddenly, Caroline’s and Alvis’s heads were hit by something. They found that those were pine nuts. And a sound came above, “Hey, who allow you to approach my house!” They looked up and saw a squirrel staring at them with anger. “Oh, we are sorry. We do not know that this tree is your house,” Alvis said. “We apologize for our impoliteness; however, it is really hot outside, and we are so tired because we have walked for a long time. Could you please let us take a rest here?” “That is not my business! Just go away!” the squirrel replied with rage, and resumed to throw pine nuts at Caroline and Alvis. The squirrel was so outrageous that he ran back and forth to take his pine nuts from his nest and attacked Caroline and Alvis. Poor Caroline and Alvis dodged the attack with difficulty because they were too tired to move their bodies. Accidentally, the squirrel missed his step and fell down from the tree. “Ouch! My leg....” the squirrel cried painfully. Caroline and Alvis stopped dodging and walked to the squirrel, “Are you alright? Mr. Squirrel?” Caroline asked and examined his wound. Then,

Caroline asked Alvis to bring some water from the lake for cleaning the squirrel's wound. After that, the squirrel felt grateful and gave them a gourd as a gift. Also, the squirrel allowed them to rest under his house. Getting enough rest, Caroline and Alvis kept on their trip. "Please let us take a rest here?" "That is not my business! Just go away!" the squirrel replied with rage, and resumed to throw pine nuts at Caroline and Alvis. The squirrel was so outrageous that he ran back and forth to take his pine nuts from his nest and attacked Caroline and Alvis. Poor Caroline and Alvis dodged the attack with difficulty because they were too tired to move their bodies. Accidentally, the squirrel missed his step and fell down from the tree. "Ouch! My leg..." the squirrel cried painfully. Caroline and Alvis stopped dodging and walked to the squirrel, "Are you alright? Mr. Squirrel?" Caroline asked and examined his wound. Then, Caroline asked Alvis to bring some water from the lake for cleaning the squirrel's wound. After that, the squirrel felt grateful and gave them a gourd as a gift. Also, the squirrel allowed them to rest under his house. Getting enough rest, Caroline and Alvis kept on their trip.

Finally, at the third afternoon, Caroline and Alvis arrived at the Celeste Swamp. As long as they passed the marsh, they would go out of the Noir Forest. "Alvis. Where does Maxwell live? Does he live far away from here?" Caroline asked, "It is very far because Maxwell lives in the Rose Diamond Hill which is about three kilometers from the side of the Noir Forest." Then Alvis suggested that they could grab Maxwell's favorite food—Joy Nuts which only grew around the Celeste Marsh. While Caroline and Alvis were grabbing the nuts, they heard the bubbling sound. Looking at the Celeste Swamp, they found a strange creature stuck in the swamp. "Help! Help! Is anyone here?" Caroline tore her blanket into strips and tied them up as a rope, and Alvis threw the one end of the rope to that creature. Caroline and Alvis pull the rope hard, and finally that creature was pulled up from the swamp. "Thank you..." that creature said weakly. Then, Caroline poured water from the gourd to wash that creature who had smears of blue mud all over his body.

That creature was a unicorn with wings, and she was the protector of the forest, named Xylia. Xylia thank Caroline and Alvis for saving her. To show her gratitude, Xylia decided to carry them to the Rose Diamond Hill.

Arriving at the hill, Caroline and Alvis visited Maxwell and asked him about the Pure Mind. However, Maxwell had no idea about the Pure Mind. "I have never heard about that magic diamond but we can go to the pit and see if we can find that diamond." The next morning, three of them went to the pit, and mined all the day. Nevertheless, they find nothing at all. As a result, Caroline felt very upset, and Alvis and Maxwell tried to comfort her, "Do not be sad, Caroline. Let's have a drink and forget your worries. Even if you do not have a beautiful face, that is not a big deal. You can still have a wonderful life as long as you accept and believe in yourself." At that night, three of them chatted and drank. Slowly, the sense of emptiness died away from Caroline's mind. Waking up in the morning, Caroline saw an old woman who stood by her and stared at her, and that was Belinda. "Where is the Pure Mind?" Caroline asked, "Does it matter?" Belinda said. "What do you feel during this adventure? Does anyone hate you due to your face?" Belinda replied. "They like you because of your kindness, not because of your appearance. And that is the lesson I want you to know." Belinda smiled kindly and patted Caroline's head slightly. "In fact, as long as your parents really love you, the curse will be broken." Caroline realized that appearance was not the most important thing in the world. Even if she did not look pretty, she still had good friends. The most important thing was having a good heart, rather than having a beautiful face. As a result, Caroline decided to travel around the world, and to help people who were in need. And she no longer felt upset for her appearance, but felt proud of herself.

Murder on the Oriental Express

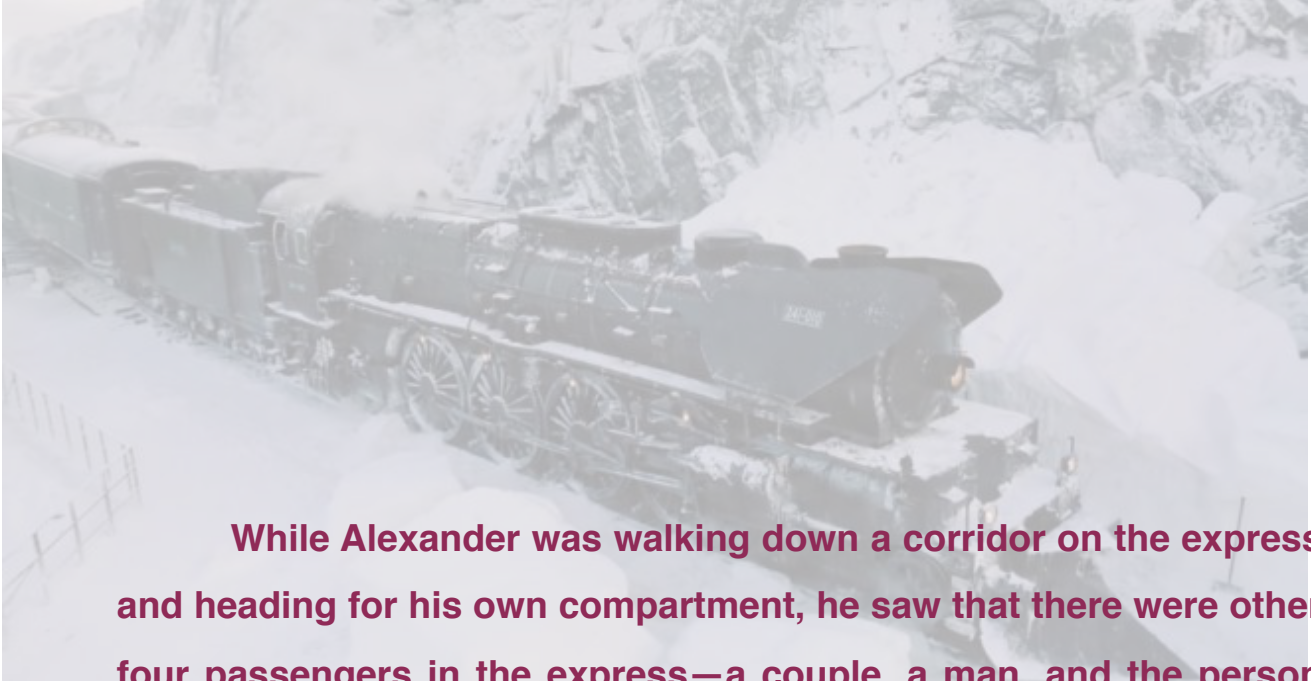
Kevin Wang 王毓凱

(Inspired by the story *Murder on the Orient Express*.)

At a bracing winter afternoon, Alexander was packing his luggage to catch up a long-distance express. He was an arm-dealer who was going from Vladivostok to Moscow to meet his buyers. With a curly blonde hair and kind outward appearance, Alexander walked on the street with his luggage. From another street, we could see that there was a little boy running toward Alexander, trying to selling him some gadget. "Get the hell out of my way! Don't you see that I'm in a hurry? And I have no interest in buying that shit," Alexander said angrily and mockingly. The boy then suddenly stopped his peddling after knowing that he found the wrong person. And he seemed to be very disappointed and left.

It was 16:00. When Alexander was on half of his way to the station, he nearly got into a car accident. While he was trying to cross the intersection, a truck somehow ran two red lights all the way to Alexander and almost hit him. Luckily, Alexander jumped swiftly aside and was fortunate just got bruised in his right leg. He was shocked and very mad and said, "What the * are you doing? Do you get a driver's license?" Given that he was almost late for the train, he just cursed the truck driver for a while and left. When Alexander was leaving, all we can see was that the truck driver was not thrilled, but smiling....

Alexander now was at the station, waiting for the delayed express. While he was walking through the platform, he came across an old man, who had a heavy whisker and gray hair. At first sight, Alexander did not recognize this person. When he was ready to step on the express, he then realized that the old man was the most prestigious detective in Russia, Merlin Slekovitch.



While Alexander was walking down a corridor on the express and heading for his own compartment, he saw that there were other four passengers in the express—a couple, a man, and the person surprised him the most, detective Merlin.

It was a dark and chilly night; the express was heading to Moscow. The light sleeper Alexander was then sleeping. While the clock struck 4 times, there was a sound that Alexander could hear from his sleep: there was a folded paper thrown in through the gap of the locked door. With his sleepy eyes and tired body, Alexander still woke up and tried to get the paper by the door. While he was reading the paper, he felt no more sleepy, but nervous and scared. There were three words written by an anonymous person: DOOMED TO DIE.

After reading the paper, Alexander was scared to death, and couldn't sleep anymore. He was then held his Revolver, and paid extreme attention to the door. Before that, He had checked the door several times to ensure it was locked. However, nothing happened and there was deathly stillness outside the door.

The next morning, Alexander rushed to the restaurant in the express, and found the detective there. He told him everything happened last night, and of course, the threatening paper. There were only two of them who were sitting face to face in the restaurant. Alexander now was negotiating with Merlin.

"I will give you 2 million Roubles if you could ensure I will be safe when I get to Moscow."

"I'm not doing this. I have been retired for 3 years," Merlin said.

"5 million Roubles."

"NO."

Alexander then showed his Revolver hidden in his sleeve, and pointed it to Merlin.

"For real?" Merlin said.

"Just give me your word, Yes or No?" asked Alexander.

"No."

Alexander then angrily thumped on the table and then left for his compartment. He didn't dare to fire, because he knew that if he killed Merlin, he would obviously be the only criminal and would be arrested soon as he arrived at Moscow. Also he knew that he couldn't change the detective's mind even if he tried to threaten him.

That night, after making sure the door was locked very firmly, Alexander then went to sleep and tried to forget any damn thing all he had come across. At 4 o'clock, there was a loud gunshot that sleeping passengers in the express could hear. People all ran to a wide open compartment, including the detective Merlin. All we could see was a curly blonde hair man lying on the floor, bleeding in his head. And it was Alexander.

During the midnight, Merlin knew that he had to step up again and find the cold-blooded murderer. Since he was afraid that the killer would jump off the express when all the people got back to their sleep, Merlin then walked back and forth at every exit.

It was 8 o'clock in the morning.

Nothing happened again. There seemed to be no sign of the murderer.

At that day, every passenger including a couple named Ron and Luna and a Professor Brian had to provide their alibis for last night. Merlin questioned every single one of them in a room.

The first-round interrogation began with Luna.

Merlin asked, "what's your name?"

"Luna Wesley."

"What do you do?" Merlin asked.

"Housewife."

"So, where were you last night and what were you doing?"

"Of course, I was in my room, sleeping. For god sake, it was 4 o'clock."

"Alright, and what were your husband doing?" asked Merlin.

"Come on. Don't ask me such a dumb question. He was sleeping of course."

Merlin continued.

"So did you go out when hearing the gunshot?"

"I did hear something loud, but I just thought that maybe it's someone who broke that vase on the table. Who knows it was a gunshot...."

Then it was Ron's turn.

"What's your name?"

"Ron Wesley."

"Ron, what do you do?"

"Um.... I am driving trucks in my town."

"Can you tell me what you were doing last night?" asked Merlin.

"I was sleeping deeply with my wife."

"So did you hear the gunshot?"

"Nah, I didn't hear anything," Ron said.

Merlin then talked to Professor Brian.

Merlin asked, "What is your name? What do you do?"

"Brian Yung. I am a professor."

"Professor Brian, please tell me what you were doing last night."

“Oh, I was working on my project that will be published next month.”

“So did you go out when hearing the gunshot?”

“Yeah, of course, the sound was so loud that I almost fell down from my chair. I was out checking what happened. And I just saw Mr. Wesley walking into his room from the lavatory.”

After the interrogation to the three people, Merlin rushed to the lavatory and started his search work. When he was upset and was going to leave, he just accidentally saw that there were something stuck in the toilet.

It was a latex glove with a very light red stain on it. Merlin almost screamed in the lavatory because he knew that this was definitely the crucial material evidence.

However, he said to himself, “Weird. How come it was a woman-size glove? According to the three passenger’s testimony, it was very obvious that Ron Wesley was now the most suspicious. He said he was sleeping deeply, but Professor Brian said he saw Ron walking into his room when the murder happened. If the murderer was Ron Wesley, why would the glove be so small and tight? It’s definitely not for a man to wear....”

Merlin was now confused, very confused.

After wrecking his brain for all night, Merlin still couldn’t find out what was really going and tell who was lying.

The next day, Merlin decided to interrogate the passengers once again. But this time, just the couple would be questioned.

After interrogating Mr. Wesley, Merlin knew that Mr. Wesley was probably sleepwalking. Therefore, that was the reason why he was seen by the professor on the corridor. But how? If the killer wasn’t him, according to other two passengers, they claimed that they were all in their room. Merlin still couldn’t figure it out.... However, he didn’t want to give up and so he interrogated the wife, Luna, to see if he could find out some small clues, even the smallest would do.

"So...Mrs. Wesley, according to your previous testimony, you said your husband was sleeping when the murder took place. However, he was witnessed walking back to the room," Merlin asked.

"Yeah, he was sleeping but what I didn't tell you was that he tends to sleepwalk."

"Oh, I know. That's his testimony. But according to other passengers, no one was seen out of the compartments except your husband. Therefore, he was the very possible murderer, and I will tell the police once we arrive."

Luna was speechless.

"Hey! Did you hear what I just say?"

"He killed my family...." Luna replied.

"Huh? Who?"

"Alexander Rodriguez. He killed my sister, my sister-in-law and my niece.... Just because

they didn't want to do business with him...."

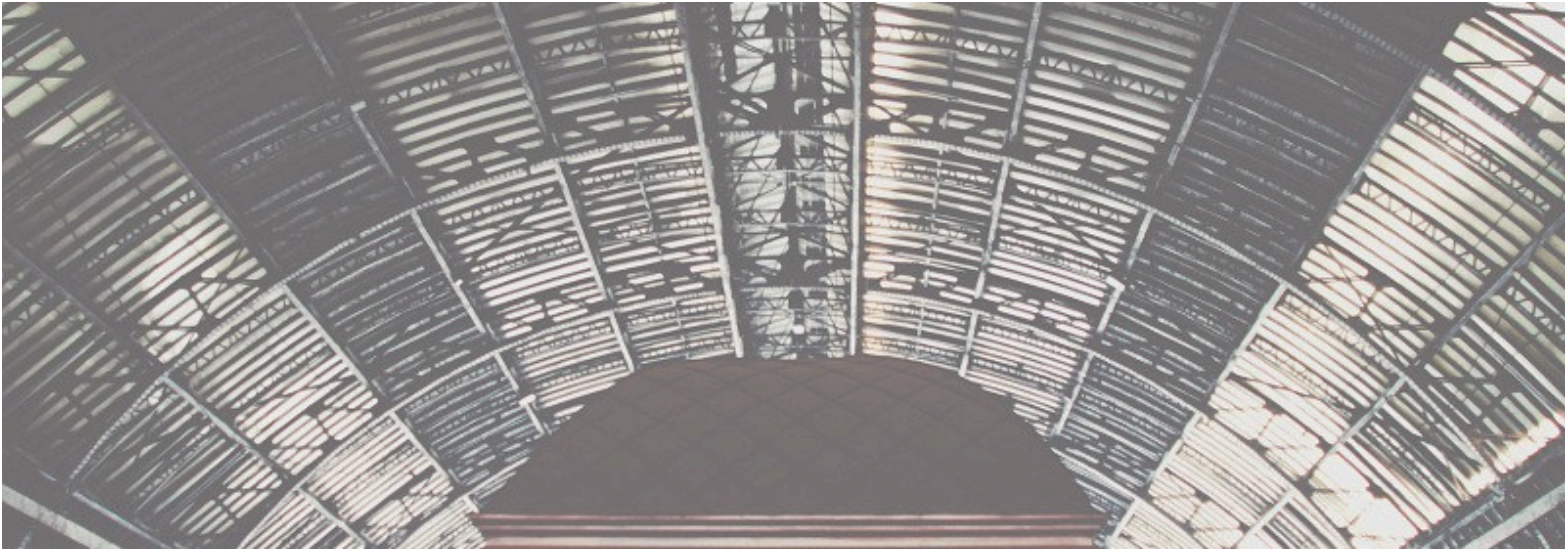
There was silence.

"Now then, you know all the things... then you have to die," Luna threatened.

Luna slipped her hidden dagger out of her sleeves with a grin on her face.

"Goodbye, intelligent detective. Splendid inference."

Luna approached Merlin slowly in frenzy.... At this very moment, two people suddenly broke in. It was Ron and Professor Brian who had been eavesdropping on the interrogation for almost 20 minutes.



Ron tried to stop Luna.

“Luna, Luna, stop. You don’t have to kill him. Let him go.”

“Yeah, Luna, Don’t. He is a good man. Let him go,” said Brian.

Luna was speechless.

We could see that Luna seemed to calm down from her fury a bit.

“What the heck is going on? So you know each other? Uh...no... I mean Professor Brian you know them, Ron and Luna,” asked Merlin.

“I am their uncle.... This murder was what we had planned... just to kill that goddamn killer...,” Professor Brian said.

Ron added, “Yeah, we didn’t expect that he could walk into the express alive, because I planned to crush him by my truck. Who knew he could survive by his shit luck....”

At the end, when the express train reached the destination, Merlin took his luggage and stepped out of the express. He said farewell to the three passengers and said, “Let go of the hatred. Let go yourself.”

The Waiting Box

Jay Chen 陳奕潔

The light is red.

The girl riding on the **red Kymco** is flipping her long black hair from side to side, trying to wipe the sweat and cool the air under her helmet.

The rain has just stopped.

We'd think the rain would have cool things off. All it did was making the heat wet.

She frowns, rolls those hazel eyes on her pale face, and anxiously taps her right foot on the white line imprinted on the road. Filthy water from the puddles splashes a little on her white Superga sneaker.

She's waiting for the light to turn green in the waiting box.

Wait in the waiting box.

She starts to wonder if she's been waiting in the waiting box for too long throughout her entire life. Her face suddenly blushes.

The girl looks down at the blister on her right **pointer** finger, which is the only thing she got from her last job. And there's another one, grape-sized, on the back of the **ring** finger.

They look like stunning gems on my hand under the dazzling sun...

However, what good did these two fair fellows ever do to her? They only made her a lost girl with pretty face, holding on a disillusionment of a wedding that is never going to happen.

Their names? **Andrew** and **Miguel**. Don't bother expecting our presumed victim here to ever forget the afternoon when she was swept out of her own cubicle without further notice, or perhaps there was already one when she patted away Andrew's hand under her skirt? No wonder no one's making a sound. She swears to God that besides her personal effects crashing on the floor, the only sound she heard that day in the office was nothing but her colleagues' breath.

*Oh, so everyone **noticed** but me.*

And just when she thought the situation couldn't be worse, she only returned to her small apartment to find out that the lock's changed and her belongings piled up on the doorsteps. It was not until the moment when she saw Miguel and his new girl did she realized that she's never really existed in his life. She's not the first, and definitely won't be the last as she used to imagine. She was merely a friend as he declared -- with benefits.

*And think about how I thought he was going to propose any time. **How cliché.***

The furious red-scooter-rider now looks almost as if **she's a burning flame.**

Indulging in her own business, the girl on fire doesn't sense that less than one foot away across the street, a guy is gazing at her.

*What a **coincidence!***

The guy on the **silver Yamaha** is running his finger through his short black hair, trying to wipe the raindrop and cool the air in the rain suit.

The rain starts again.

We'd think the rain would have cooled things off. All it did was making the heat wet.

He sighs, blinking those brown eyes on his bright face, nervously tapping his left foot on the white line imprinted on the road. Filthy water from the puddles splashes all over his yellow Timberland boot.

He's waiting for her to notice him in the waiting box.

*I'm **waiting** in the **waiting box**.*

As the guy keeps his eyes fixed on the long-haired beauty, he starts to wonder if he's been waiting in the waiting box for too long throughout their relationship. His face suddenly blushes.

The man looks down at the handmade bracelet on his wrist, which he got from her when he was nine.

She's just in front of me now...

However, what difference does it make? She's been in his reach for more than ten years, yet never did he take the chances and tell her how he feels about her.

Why? Pros and cons. Let's say the squeamish high school boy just couldn't forget the afternoon when those three magic words were just about to come out of his trembling mouth, and she suddenly hugged him and said: "Nick, you're my best friend forever. Promise me that I'll never lose you, ok?" Our tragic hero surrendered without battle. And since then, his dream was buried and all the possibilities became hopelessly wishful thinking.

Everyone noticed but Vicky.

Or maybe she did? No wonder every time they're relationship are to become more intimate, she flees away. **So** what happened the afternoon might not so much be a total **coincidence**. She might just uttered those words deliberately. And the situation has gone worse. Vicky met this Paraguayan douchebag who never knew how to appreciate her. That man, named Miguel as he remembered, hurt her again and again, and every time she was wounded, she ran to her "**best friend**" to cry on his shoulder. However, once recovered, she always returned to Miguel. Always.

*And think about how I thought eventually we'd come together. **How cliché.***

The desperate motorcyclist now looks almost as if **he's a knight in the shining silver armor**.

The last conversation Nick and Vicky had was not very pleasant. He asked her, for the last time, to leave and start over, and she rudely interrupted him by claiming that it was none of his business in a sharp tone that cut him deep. They have never seen each other since then. Until now, three months later, Vicky is just there on the other side of this intersection and yet doesn't even feel his existence.

Not fair.

What will happen if I stop waiting?

A car is going to whizz past and hit her very precisely, Vicky imagines.

“All or nothing.” Nick muttered.

We’ve been waiting in the waiting box for too long!

Accelerator operated.

The red spot and the silver spot shot forward.

WHAM.

The two bounce off each other and create two curves that happen to shape a perfect heart when they touch the ground at the same time.

Now the two, literally, have a crush on each other.



Rebirth

Carol Chen 陳芊羽

"It's my turn!" The youngest prisoner, Adam, complained. In the room 2064 of San Quentin, the prisoners were gathering in front of the small table, waiting for their turn to modify their items. Of course, it could not be busted by the guards because it involved using a blade which was stolen from the guard.

"Mike, it's Adam's turn." The "room chief" Barry said to Mike, who was good at mechanic.

"Dad, I know you love me the most! Mike, I want Ariana's picture inlaid in my watch!" said Adam.

Don't command me, bastard. And it's not that your 'dad' loves you the most, it's just because you're too noisy." Mike said with rolled eyes.

"Room 2064, what are you thief guys doing? It's exercising time! Come out!" said a guard. They quickly concealed the "crime" and followed the order to go out for "exercise", in other words, for "relieving themselves".

Hundreds of prisoners gathered on a small sports field. Some of them were jogging, and some just crouched in the corner. Among them, Barry and Adam were walking on the track and chatting.

"Adam, you're going to be discharged, huh?" said Barry.

"Yup, dad, it's next week."

"What will you do first when you go out?"

"Umm...well...I am planning to go to New York to find a job. Oh! Before that, I will definitely go to the waffle store in front of the jail to eat to my heart's content! It has tempted me for a long time!" Adam said with excitement.

They restarted a new lap on the ground.

"Dad, after I go out, I will come to visit you." Adam broke the silence with a smile. The smile was somehow awkward and serious.

"Huh, dumb, are you brainless? Why come back again after getting out of this damn place? It's not needed. Not to mention I'm not your birth dad, either. "

"Hah, dad, don't lie to yourself! You're gonna miss me very much, so I have no choice but to come and show my face for you!"

"Punk, watch your back! Did you forget I am a gangster?"

"Come on, dad, you're not frightening anymore!"

They laughed out loud and went back to the room.

The "bedtime alarm" started to ring. It meant that every prisoner had passed another tedious day. Everyone in Room 2064 was ready to sleep. "Dad, I heard an old song today! It's called....How do I live! It hung in my head all day though I just heard it once." Adam said to Barry when he almost fell asleep. "Really? You're gonna sing it to me?" Barry's drowsiness was all gone. "How do I live without you? I want to

know. How do I breathe without you? If you ever go. How do I ever, ever survive? How do I, how do I, oh how do I live?.....” “How come you and that punk are so alike?” Barry gazed at the non-stop rain outside and murmured. He closed his eyes, seeing the days rewind.....

On a rainy day in 1997, Barry was sitting in his car, ready to set off to deal with a fight between two gangsters in a mall. Suddenly, his car door was opened and a young man sneaked into the car. “Alden, I told you several times not to come with me. Why are you here? You’ve promised me to withdraw from the gang and never let your mom worry.” Barry said to the young man with a sigh. “Bro, it’s the very last time. I promise you. After this, I’ll go back to my hometown and take a decent job.” Alden hurried Barry to set off. When they arrived at the mall, two gangsters were fighting with knives and bats. Barry grabbed a bat and grappled with a brawny. However, out of his expectation, he could hardly contend against the man. As the knife was nearly stabbed into Barry, the brawny suddenly paralyzed on him without any strength. Behind the man, Barry saw Alden holding a knife with a pale face and shaking hands.

“Today’s headline. The man in death row who engaged in the mall fighting was executed today. Alden Tribbiani, 22 years old, who committed the crime, was sentenced to death. And his accomplice Barry Bing, 33 years old, was sentenced to life imprisonment.....” The radio program echoed in the hall of the prison. “The rain seems to be non-stop. Please be careful and don’t get a cold! And now, it’s our last song to say goodbye! How do I live.” Barry sat in the cell and read the last letter from Alden: Bro, I really regarded you as my older brother, I am glad to meet you. So, don’t blame on yourself. It’s my decision. You have to live as fully as you can, as my life supposed to be..... Barry read the letter again and again, crying and shouting with huge grief. It kept raining outside, seeming that it won’t stop within a short time. “How do I live without you? I want to know. How do I breathe without you? If you ever go. How do I ever, ever survive? How do I, how do I, oh how do I live?.....”

“Room 2064, come out! Someone reported that you have contraband.” The prisoners stood in a row in the hall. “Mike, we won’t be caught, right?” nervously whispered Adam. “Don’t worry! Even Sherlock Holmes cannot find it!” Mike replied with confidence and calm. “Sir, we didn’t find anything!” said the guards. The chief sized the prisoners up. Suddenly, the chief’s eyes stopped on Adam and grabbed his wrist. “Well, how come you guys modify this watch with bare hands?” He rose up Adam’s arm and showed the watch.

“I told you many times! It’s not mine!” Adam’s voice hummed in the whole interrogation chamber. “How can I believe a thief guy?” The chief doubted with a frivolous look. “Trust me, it’s Barry’s!” “You liar, don’t tell me Barry is Ariana Grande’s stan and even wants to inlay her pic in his watch!” “I never lie! How come I have money to buy a watch? Did you forget I was sent here because I didn’t have mere money to buy bread?” Adam almost cried.

After a while, Adam exited the interrogation chamber, Barry entered it instead. “You damn bastard! How come you call him ‘dad’ every day but set him up? Get out

from my eyesight! I don't want to see your disgusting face!" Mike harshly scolded Adam as soon as he stepped into the room. Adam didn't say any word; he just curled himself up in the corner and sobbed.

One day after, Barry was released from the punishment cell and went back to room 2064. "Wipe that bastard's arse, Barry! Let him know who the boss is!" Mike said to Barry when he came into the room. Barry walked to Adam in the corner. However, Barry didn't follow what Mike had said. Instead of beating Adam, Barry sat down next to him. "Punk, it's ok. I know you did that because you're gonna go out, but there's only one but important thing you have to keep in mind. Always be a good guy and live as fully as you can after going out. Never come back again." Adam looked at Barry with non-stop tears, with sorrow, regret, and guilt.

At the night of Adam's discharge, Barry and a senior guard, John, were chatting in the balcony outside the room.

"Your 'son' leaves you" John said to Barry.

It was some kind of Barry's "privilege" to go outside for a breath.

"Are you expecting Adam to come back to visit you?" John asked.

"I don't know." Barry gazed at the back view of Adam's going away. "In these 20 years, I've heard a lot of guys saying that they would come to visit me after going out, but no one, there's never a guy, kept his words."

"You shouldn't have treated those guys that well, especially Adam. No matter how much he looks like Alden, they are totally different. Adam is just a slick thief guy who never has that so-called "loyalty" as you gangsters," said John with seriousness.

"It's all out of my own will. It's all that I am willing to treat them well. I just don't want to see them follow the tracks of Alden. Maybe it's somehow a way to reduce my guilt for that punk."

Barry stared at the sky. It started to drizzle.

At dawn, Adam went out the gate and took a deep breath. He went straightly toward the waffle shop, kicking small rocks and whistling. Then, he stopped in front of the shop. Raising up his arm without any hesitation, Adam got a taxi. "Sir, to Detroit."

Loner

Brian Yung 雍伯康

(Adapted from the video game “*Loner.*”)

First impression

Daddy invited Lonny to this year’s Christmas party, and told me to look after him. Lonny lost his parents years ago, and now he lives alone in a large house out on the hillside. Even though we grew up in the same town, we never really got to talk to each other. Most people in our town call him a “freak,” because he always lived alone and didn’t bother to make friends with people. But I just feel that he is just so lonely, like a “loner,” or he didn’t even know how to make friend with others. I suppose that now I’d better think of something to talk with him or else the silence would be so awkward. He’s such a quiet person.

You are my angel

Mr. Robert invited me to this year’s Christmas ball. He is one of my father’s best friends and he has been looking after me since my parents passed away. Honestly, I am very anxious about attending this ball. The people here still consider me as a “freak.” This was the reason why I’ve been living alone since my parents were gone. Anyway, what’s the meaning of a “freak” going to a ball? Fortunately, Mr. Robert’s daughter, Sarah, kept me accompanied at the ball. The “Princess” of the town truly deserves the high regards. She carried herself confidently, but without that typical arrogance of those of her stature. She was so beautiful. As we danced along, I could feel the hostility from other guys in the room. Jesus, look what I’ve done! I do not belong here, remember that? I probably shouldn’t have come to this ball.....

I want to heal you

Lonny is completely different from what people say. Sure, he was a little nervous at the ball, but talking to him is actually quite comfortable. However, when I leave him to greet the others and left him alone, he just looked so lost and lonely again. I don’t think he was used to this kind of social gathering. I feel so guilty that I had to leave him alone to perform my duty as the host’s daughter. I have to find a way to make it up for him.

She is so beautiful

Sarah has invited me to go ice skating with her. What a pleasant surprise! This kind of activity is not common among the young ladies. However, to be honest, she is a very experienced ice skater, even better than I. She even taught me some tips about ice skating. This made me think of my father. We used to ice skate together when I was a little boy. My father is a skilled ice skater, too. He used to teach me how to skate on the ice. Sarah and I skated for several hours until it was sunset. This may be the happiest times since my parents passed away. Sarah looked so beautiful when she was skating with me. She was like a white swan lifting off from a still lake.

The sky turns dark

Today's newspaper reported that the Empire has completed its development of machine gun: a weapon that can fire over six hundred rounds in a minute. That is terrifying! My father told me that someday a war will begin between the Empire and our country. He also warned me not to join the army, saying that no one in the war would be "clean" after they return. It has made me wonder. Is it not our duty to defend our country from the invaders? Besides, there's someone I need to protect now, no matter what it takes. Should I follow my father's words? Or maybe I should follow my heart? Oh, god. I wish my mother were here with me. She would definitely know what to do.

He cries

After Lonny and I went ice skating together, we've been hanging out together a lot. I feel that I am much closer to Lonny's world after spending so much time with him. I can tell that there is something special growing between us. I want to heal Lonny's wounds. Today, he seemed to be upset after he read the newspaper. So I made some potato soup for Lonny. I am confident that this is going to make him happy. However, out of my expectation, he cried when he had a taste of the soup. Lonny said it was very much like the potato soup made by his mother, only a bit saltier. But still, Lonny didn't tell me what made him so upset. He just smiled at me and told me not to worry for him. I know there is something wrong, I am sure about that.

Our country is at war

The Empire declared war to our country. What father worried about is finally here. According to the newspaper, the Department of Defense will soon start a nationwide recruitment. Father, I have made up my mind. I am very sorry that I have to go against your words. I am joining the army because I have someone to protect. I will still value the lives of those around me, even the lives of the enemy.

You are my hero

Lonny told me he would join the army. He said that he would like to defend our country. He also told me what was worrying him lately. It was the choice between his father and his own heart. My feelings were complex. I feel so happy for Lonny that he could finally break through the boundaries of his heart. But I am also afraid that I might not have the chance to see Lonny again. Of course, Lonny promised me to come back to my side. But still, I can't stop thinking about losing Lonny to the war. I can only wish that Lonny would keep his words and return home in one piece. I must be strong when Lonny is not here.

I really miss you

I am on a military transport, moving far away from our town. We are heading to the training camp that will prepare us for the battle. The train is filled with the young men who have been recruited as soldiers. They are chatting with each other to get past the long commute to the camp. The air is full of excited chatter. Everyone is hoping to join the battle against the Empire. I do not care to join this. Instead, I find myself starting to think of Sarah. The morning I was about to leave, Sarah made me

a delicious breakfast, including my favorite potato soup. Before I left, Sarah encouraged me a lot. Mr. Robert also came to see me. He told me not to worry too much about Sarah and just focus on what I am about to do. As the train left the station, I could see Sarah standing by it, waving goodbye to me. She looked so small and alone in the crowd, just like a leaf that is caught in a storm. My heart broke, as the train rode away from our town.

You are always with me

I have just received a letter from Lonny today! It has been a long while since he left the town. I was so excited that I even forgot to say goodbye to the mailman. He has been chosen as a pilot! I'm so happy for him. Flying in the sky must be such a joy, only if there weren't a war going on. Though Lonny didn't mention this in the letter, Father told me that a fighter pilot would be in danger and even close to death. I was worried by the fact that Lonny was in such a risky role. Well, the war itself was dangerous. Oh god, when will this war end?

Skies of deception

We finally completed our flight training and were ready for deployment. The captain said that we would be sent to less dangerous zones before we become experienced pilots. In this day and age, fighter pilot is a relatively new role in the war since airplanes were just invented 13 years ago. The Department of Defense thought that pilots can turn the tide of the battle and put heavy emphasis on the Air Force. This was the same in the Empire. Rumor has it that the Empire also has developed new models of fighter planes and their pilots were far more experienced than ours. However, none of our squad members are worried about that. After the tough training, we are all in a high morale, thinking nothing can beat us down. Except the captain, he seemed to be worried about the capacity of the Imperial Air Force.

Surprise attack

After we finished our fighter pilot training, command ordered our squadron to perform a patrol over the western border, where the Empire was most likely to launch an attack. Most of us thought this could be an easy mission since they consider the Imperial Air Force not very strong. Captain angrily warned us not to underestimate our enemy or it may cost our life for it. He was right; the Imperial Air force was much stronger and even smarter than we thought. We did confront some Imperial fighters in the air, but they were less than the intelligence agencies had expected. As we were curious about where the Imperial main force could be, we received a report that the Imperial forces had launched massive invasion on our eastern border and already taken some of our cities, including my home town. My mind went blank as I heard the news.

Part of the plan

Our Department of Defense categorized our town as "The safest town" after the Empire had declared war. That did sound reasonable since our town was the most far away town from the border next to the Empire. I was very relieved by this fact. However, the Imperial forces launched a massive invasion out of our expectationliterally. The truth was, our military were already aware of the Empire's recent

movement thanks to our efficient spy network. We have successfully deceived the Imperial forces that we were unprepared for their attack. But they still managed to take out our first line of defense with their new tanks. Our squadron is now heading east to engage with the Imperial forces. All I can think of now is Sarah. I haven't heard from her ever since our town was taken by the Imperial forces.

We win the war

After two weeks of battling, our forces finally defeated the Empire's invasion. As the war had ended, I could finally go home and get a permission to keep my plane because of my outstanding performance during the war. I flew back to our town and started looking for Sarah and Mr. Robert. I stood in front of their house. There was nothing left but a pile of ruins. I asked the villagers for their whereabouts, but no one had ever seen them after the house went down. My mind went blank. Sarah was gone. The one that I loved was no longer here. I walked around our house with my mind completely in dark. Suddenly, I saw something buried under the ruins.

I wish you were here

Father and I have lived in the basement for several weeks since the Imperial forces launched an attack near our town. At that day, we just heard a huge explosion and then the Imperial forces moved in our town and started to take people as hostage. Father grabbed my hands and rushed into our basement as soon as the enemies started to search every house in our town. Father had prepared this basement as a shelter and stored lots of food and water in it. I was curious why Father would know that the Imperial forces would invade our town. He said an old friend of his sent him a message telling him about the invasion just three days before it happened. At that time, it was already too late to leave the town. Father tried to warn everyone in town, but they just thought Father was talking nonsense. Then the enemies moved into our house. However, they couldn't find us since we're already in the basement. Then we just felt a huge explosion above. It looked like our house was gone, so as the exit out of the basement. Now, we are sitting in the basement, with our supplies running low and trapped. I was hoping someone would find us and get us out of the basement. I'm also worried about Lonny. I haven't heard from him for a very long time. I don't even know whether he is still alive.....or not..... While I'm still thinking about him, a cracking sound from the hatch of the basement breaks the silence.

The end

I spent three hours removing the rubbles on the secret entry with the help of the villagers and my friends in our fighter squadron. We opened the hatch and found a hidden basement. Sarah had never told me that there was a basement hidden under their house, or maybe she didn't even know it as well. We climbed down the ladder and saw something. Obviously, Sarah and Mr. Robert had lived in here for quite a long time. We searched the basement, but still didn't find them. Then I saw a bird fly in from top. We followed it and found a hidden tunnel. Crawling through the tunnel, we saw a chamber. "Sarah!" I shouted out so loud that I could feel the ground shaking. Sarah and Mr. Robert told me that they thought it was the enemy instead of us entering the basement. So they hid in the deep chamber to avoid detection. Now,

movement thanks to our efficient spy network. We have successfully deceived the Imperial forces that we were unprepared for their attack. But they still managed to take out our first line of defense with their new tanks. Our squadron is now heading east to engage with the Imperial forces. All I can think of now is Sarah. I haven't heard from her ever since our town was taken by the Imperial forces.

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III

Short Script

I 'm Okay

by

Jay Chen

Abstract:

The girl with a crooked smile buried deep in her heart keeps being asked by people around with questions such as “Are you okay?” and “Is there anything I can do for you?” and every time those acts are performed a dagger is stabbed onto herself as the vehicle for the metaphor of the damage caused by other’s negligence and ignorance.

(reference for the use of shot sizes <https://learnaboutfilm.com/film-language/picture/shotsize/>)

SCENE 1

FADE IN:

INT. EMPTY ROOM – (DARK) – LONG SHOT

The screen is filled with the sitting profile of a short-hair girl in the spotlight of an empty room.

THE CAMERA MOVES FORWARD until the profile is too large for us to see any features, but merely a stream of tears running down.

The face of the girl is emotionless. She sits still on the silver iron chair, and speaks as the camera moves:

RILEY HOPE

(wryly)

I’m okay.

SCENE 2

INT. DINNING ROOM - (DAY) - LONG SHOT

The breakfast's set, with fine china lying on the table. Mr. Hope is sitting by the table, holding the newspaper close over his face. A cup of coffee is placed next to his elbow.

INT. DINNING ROOM - (DAY) - MEDIUM LONG SHOT

Riley walks in the dining room. She wears a plain white T-shirt and khaki trousers. She sits on the cross of the man's position and starts to eat. When she reaches across the table for another bagel, Mrs. Hope's voice comes from the kitchen:

MRS. HOPE

(loud)

Hands off the second bagel.
You're gaining too much weight,
young lady.

Riley's action stops. She moves back slowly to her seat. She runs her fingers through her hair and shrugs.

MR. HOPE

(looks up to the kitchen)

How on earth do you manage to
raise a pretty little princess
to this disturbed tomboy? See
how the families looked at her
and whispered at nephew Matt's
party? It's embarrassing! I
don't even know how to explain
to others if I have a daughter
or a son!

INT. DINNING ROOM - (DAY) - LONG SHOT

Mrs. Hope walks out of the kitchen to the dining room, sighs, and gently puts her hand on Riley's shoulder
(MEDIUM CLOSEUP):

MRS. HOPE
(eagerly)

Your father has a point though, sweetie. At least, stop cutting your hair short. You know how your grandma always acts out on me whenever she saw your hair. Please, honey, do it for me, okay? And remember to try on the dress I bought when you're back from school. I think you're gonna love it!

Riley replies with a long silence.

INT. PORCH - (DAY) - MEDIUM SHOT

Riley's tomboy-looking figure enters the picture, kneels down and ties her black Palladium neatly and tight.

MRS. HOPE
(worried)

Are you okay, honey? Did you stay up all night for the reports again? Please answer me.

RILEY HOPE
I'm okay.

INT. PORCH - (DAY) - CLOSEUP

A dagger is stabbed on Riley's back.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 3

INT. CLASSROOM - (DAY) - CLOSEUP

THE CAMERA SHOTS OVER RILEY'S SHOULDER, with a side of her face filling the right half of the screen. Riley is scrolling the surface of her smartphone, and we can see on that displays a tweet that says:

"I've never been raped. Know why? Because I don't dress like a prostitute or act overly sexual like most young women. Take responsibility!"

And under the tweet there's a reply reads as follow:

"I was raped when I was 7, when I had no idea what sex was and while wearing overalls and a long sleeve shirt. Fucking delete this."

First there is a spasm of the corner of Riley's mouth, then she presses her lips, but in second her face returns back to the state of expressionless.

A voice-over from the teacher comes in:

MR. CHEN

Riley? Riley? Are you alright?
You seem a bit absent minded.

THE CAMERA MOVES UP and a middle-aged man in suits emerge into scene. In the blurred background is a whiteboard with some sketches and bullet points, but the words in biggest font is still recognizable — THE VALUE OF SPEECH TRAINING.

RILEY HOPE

I'm okay.

THE CAMERA LOWERS DOWN to the blank note-sheets on Riley's table, and then pulls back until we can see the back of Riley's from the waist up, while Mr. Chen's voice gradually fades out:

MR. CHEN

Jolly good. Do keep up will you?
Now where was I? Oh, the Orlando
nightclub shooting. Poor people.
However, they wouldn't lose
their precious lives if they
weren't so open about their
sexuality and living such high
key...

Riley's body shivered. Two daggers are now stabbed on
her back.

SCENE 4

INT. BATHROOM - (DIM) - MEDIUM SHOT

Riley sitting on the bathroom floor with the door
locked. Her back is against the wall and she's
cradling her smartphone on the shoulder while she's
playing with the utility cutter with her hands. A
young girl's voice comes from the other end of the
phone:

MADELINE

(lively)

Ça Va!

RILEY HOPE

Comme ci comme ça. And how are
you? (with a slight sense of
warmth)

Riley smiles a little.

MADELINE

Oh, today sucks! You know that
cute senior guy I mentioned a
few days ago...(volume gradually
lowers until it sounds like
humming)

Riley stops the movement of her hands and concentrates on listening.

MADELINE

(fades in)...enough about me.
What happened to you? You should
really try and say what's on
your mind sometimes, you know?

Riley takes a deep breath, hesitates for a while (reception of the sound off/no white noise at the meantime), and starts to describe the plot of scene 1-3. Her utterance is only clear enough for us to recognize a few keywords. About a minute after, while Riley is taking a short pause, Madeline abruptly speaks:

MADELINE

DO YOU KNOW THERE IS GOING TO
HAVE THE THIRD SEASON OF
LUCIFER! OMG I'M SO EXCITED!

RILEY HOPE

...were you watching Netflix
again while I was talking?
(indifferently)

MADELINE

Ah, I'm sorry, bad habits. What
were you saying?

RILEY HOPE

Nothing important. I should go
and get some sleep.

MADELINE

Are you okay? You sound a little
weird today.

RILEY HOPE

I'm okay. (lump in the throat)

MADELINE

Bye then. Love you in case I
die!

Riley laughs wryly. A crooked smile appears on Riley's
face. The third dagger emerges on Riley's back.

THE SCREEN SUDDENLY BLACK OUT.

SCENE 5

INT. BATHROOM - (FLICKERING) - MEDIUM SHOT

Riley is lying on the floor. The blood that keeps
coming out of the wounds on her back and her wrist
flows together into a puddle.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK until we can see the shape of
the puddle reads: IM OKAY.

THE END.

THE END.