

萬縷情緣

From Russia with Love



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- <這是一位金髮碧眼的俄羅斯女孩，從三個月永晝、三個月永夜的舊俄首都—聖彼得堡，隻身到中國大陸沿海各地尋求工作，所經歷的辛酸苦楚到逃離恐怖情人的故事。場景從聖彼得堡、青島、上海，廣東到台灣……>

第一章 青島初識情懷

2018 年春天，強烈颱風襲擊中國山東省青島市，我很幸運，是在當年六月才回到青島的。可是在我記憶中，那時的青島仍然一次又一次，浸泡在陣陣來襲的大雨中。樹木被強烈陣風吹折，街道陸陸續續有洪水氾濫，中國網路上也充斥著現場拍攝的詭異災難畫面與視頻，青島是沿海城市，有人竟然目睹豪雨大浪把海中生物沖到岸上來，我仍記得一個倒霉駕駛，他拍攝到的一張照片：一隻大章魚登陸，趴在他汽車的擋風玻璃上。

但無論如何，在我記憶中的青島氣候，大都是讓人很愉悅的。我將永遠記得那些無盡陽光和無憂無慮的日子。回到俄羅斯待了一年之後，我很高興，又能再回來這個讓我初識中國的城市，這種初識的情懷一直在我心中迴盪著。

在此之前，我在青島城陽地區的一個學院，上了一年的普通話課程，城陽是一距離市中心很遠很遠的地區，所以當時我對青島的記憶，主要是局限於城陽區，但是要從那裏到青島市中心，大概要花上兩個鐘頭的巴士時間，地鐵在那時候還沒有建造，這樣對要到市區去的人，路程真是漫長辛苦。因此住在郊區的每個人，大多是偶爾在週末時，才到青島市區去的，而且也不是每個禮拜都去。基本上，我們大多是在校園的某個地方的酒吧喝啤酒，或聚集在某人宿舍裏，看一些幼稚無聊的俄羅斯電視秀，然後我們就去「雞鳴島」——一個已開發的小島，在那裡我們可以發現我們最喜歡的BBQ餐館，還有，再強調一遍——啤酒。

我們這些從城陽來的人，好像距離青島享有盛名事物的地方，都有點遠，同時我們之中也沒人知道，有任何其他的外國人住在青島市區，雖然這些人是曾打造了青島俄羅斯社區的人。在二〇一八年夏天，我再去青島，

成了中國大都會的女孩，我到青島開始工作，用了將近一年的時間，一直在籌備一個很難處理的業務。當然，籌備就表示要花經費，而我沒有辦法存下很足夠的錢，雖然至少可供第一階段使用。我有流利普通話的考試及格證書，也有一張中譯的大學畢業證書，還有六個月的商業簽證—請注意，是「商務簽證」，還有到中國的單程票，一個住宿三天的廉價旅館訂位，一件與房屋仲介的簽訂的後續公寓租屋合同，此外還有一個裝了我所有物品的手提箱，這些是 2018 年 6 月 4 日，我回到中國的所有物件。當年我剛滿二十三歲。

經過一個禮拜的尋尋覓覓。我到處找居住的房子，終於在「嶗山」地區找到了。我以前在中國唸一年書的時期，曾去過那裏一次，去逛「石老人海灘」，據稱那是大青島區最乾淨的海灘，之後我幾乎每天去那個海灘，而這次，我的新租屋就在離海灘十分鐘車程之內。

順便一提，我的新租屋到底是什麼樣子的呢？從我上次在青島時期的九個月算起，到現在已搬了三次住所。而這次再來青島，到目前的為止，住屋環境最好的一處，就是這個小而溫馨的三房公寓房子，但我必須與一位中國白男合住，他自我介紹他名叫 Sam，我不知道他的中文名字怎麼唸，就像他也不會唸我全名一樣。

以前我們一房仲，我朋友 Vincent(文森)和我，第一次來這裏看房子的時候，文森用完美的英語輕聲對我說，看看這個可憐家伙(指的是房東 Sam)，他好像快昏倒了。事實上，當我們三人在這間我想租的房子外面盤桓的時候，Sam 就站在走廊，靠著牆，他沒有把雙手環抱在胸，相反地，他把雙手反背在後。我可以確定他並不準備讓一個白人女孩出現在他的生活領域。

「你要去勾搭(seduce)他啊，」文森繼續說(他有時會用很毒舌的方式，亂開玩笑)，勾搭之後，妳就不用付房租了啊。」

我輕笑一聲，十分確定我未來可能的房東兼室友，大概連一句英文也不會說，但是幾分鐘後，當我試著用中文和他講話時，令人意外的，Sam 竟然用英語回答說：

「我在微軟工作，我在美國住過，也在歐洲住過。」

你可以看到他講話時害羞的樣子，雖經過這種自我介紹，我和文森兩人都覺得，他的英語程度只是普通而已，以上那些措辭明顯的是背誦下來的，我們得到一個結論：

「seduce」這個字，應該沒在他的英文字彙裏。所以不必擔心他會瞭解文森所說的話。

我只能住在那個公寓住一個月的時間，那是 Sam 的主張，不是我的。在簽租約的時候，他提出這樣一個奇怪的條件，著實讓我驚訝，而不只是警覺而已。我與文森覺得好笑的地方還有，Sam 恐懼我可能在中國從事非法工作，所以合約只簽一個月，如果我找到一個穩定、付得起房租的工作的話，是可以展期的。我聽到 Sam 和我的房仲在討論，雖然之後 Sam 讓我相信，他的家人將在一個月內到青島來，而且有意住在他的這個公寓裏。當我告訴任何人我與男人同住一屋時，所有人都勸我提高警覺，注意自身安全。但是 Sam 之懼怕我，好像有過於我懼怕他的程度。有這種感覺經驗的人，把這種心態，說成是「蜘蛛恐懼症」，就好像會在浴室裏看到蜘蛛一樣。

這個月，我在靠近海灘的公寓中度過，感覺如何呢？我「親愛」的「寓友」(flat-mate)並沒有像我所期待的那樣；會跑在我前面，對我說「我要告訴你今天的情況。」Sam 在公寓裏，仍然排斥我，事實上他有理由擔心我的付款能力，因為六月份一整個月，我都找不到工作，這並不是我的運氣不好，其實我並沒有認真地在找工作，我只是在過一個快節奏的生活而已。

我的故事從這個嶗山的公寓開始，在靠近苗嶺路(有地鐵站)，在陽光不

斷地流瀉下來的舒適日子裏，去酒吧與朋友見面，其中有一些人還在城陽學院上課，2018年6月23日，所有故事就從那一天開始。

我最好的朋友 Dan(丹)也是俄國人，他完成了在我們母校的第二學年的學業，他對未來是有規劃的，之後，他想攻讀上海一所大學的學士學位，這意味著經過短期的相遇相知，我們又要再度分離，如果不是永遠的分離，至少也是一段很長時間的分離。我嘗試以最好的方式和丹在一起，而且在他離開之前，儘量多安排出時間與他相聚。雖然我們分別居住一個半鐘頭的行程之外，但我經常到校園裏流連一整天，晚上與丹在一起，早上起床時，我們也一起用早餐，我還坐在他房間的窗台上，喝幾杯咖啡。因為某種理由，丹的房間不希望其他室友同住，所以這房間就完全由我們自主使用。因此，我們就能夠安穩地在窗外抽煙、大聲說笑，談任何幼稚的話題，也不必忌諱別人是否會討厭我們的愚昧無知。我喜歡他的幽默感，還有喜歡他下判斷的偏好。現在我要鄭重坦承，我也是喜歡閒聊八卦的人，我相信大部分的人也喜歡這樣，只是很多人就是不願意承認而已。

由於我在花了很多時間待在校園(已是前校園了)，我沒有辦法在我畢業後，不再回來這裏與某些後期敘舊或認識。其中有一女孩就是 Lisa(麗莎)，我離開原來學校之後，她就扮演另一個角色，就是成為丹的最好朋友。說來好笑，丹是無論在什麼地方，總會遇到一個他「最好的朋友」。我們在中國認識的第一年，我有幸成為其中的一個。而且我可能是他的第一個「最好的朋友」，所以我們到現在，還一直保持著友誼。

麗莎比我年輕，但仍然比丹還大一點，這就表示在那時候她大概是二十歲出頭，也許是二十一吧。這個我說不定。但她的年齡並不是很重要的，正如同這次原訂六月二十號，麗莎要慶祝她的生日。從那個夏天，我認識她之後，也被邀請參加麗莎的生日聚會，可是後來並不是在她生日那天舉行，同學們打算延到禮拜五晚上才舉行，地點是在一家名字叫「櫻桃」(Cherry)的酒吧，可能到現在還開著吧。那一年我以學生身分住在青島時，櫻桃酒吧還沒開店。

它是一個與一般在中國酒吧很不一樣的酒吧，氣氛上大不相同，它的特色就是有品味的音樂，所有外國人都稱讚不已，我也很喜歡。他們播放的曲目，都是在西洋排行榜上最熱門的，而且是人們所熟悉的音樂，無論你是哪一國來的，都會喜歡。酒吧還有一個小舞池，但通常是被我們外國人佔用的。

當我閉上眼睛回憶那個晚上時，對我而言，那晚的整個世界只有兩種顏色：紅與黑。黑的顏色就我對這個街道的感覺，這個我們常出去呼吸新鮮空氣的街道，黑色也是那晚我穿的夏天短洋裝，直到隔天早晨還留有香煙味道，而櫻桃的招牌閃爍在紅色霓虹燈中，我們的臉在酒吧裏面也醺紅了，我們內心也亮成紅色的，到隔天早晨，我們眼睛也變紅了(那是當然的)。而深紅色是那天我們遇見 Jason(傑森)時，他所穿的格子襯衫顏色。兩個主要人物，就是我小說中的要角—傑森和我。

譯者加編:

2018年6月青島颱風圖片與「櫻花酒吧」故事的起源





國際化的美麗青島

2018年6月，青島確實遭遇罕見的強烈對流天氣，巨浪滔天，下起「海鮮雨」。
；中國地區「海鮮雨」記錄不多，但在美國、英國、澳洲，及中美洲許多國家都有過，
多是海岸線長，而天氣變化多端的國家。以下為青島相關連結：

<https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw/%E9%9D%92%E5%B2%9B%E5%B8%82>

Chapter 1 Unforgettable City

In the spring of 2018, a severe typhoon hit Qingdao City, Shandong Province, China. I was lucky because I came back there only in June, but nevertheless, in my memory, back then Qingdao was still bathed by showers time after time. The trees broke under the gusts of wind, the streets were periodically flooded and Chinese internet was flooded with eerie photos and videos from the

scene. Qingdao is a coastal city and one day the people there even witnessed rain of sea creatures. I still remember a photo taken by one unfortunate Chinese driver – an octopus landed on his windshield.

y and carefree days. After a year in Russia, I was happy to be back to the city where my acquaintance with China began, and this thought just infatuated me at first.

Before that, I took a Mandarin one-year-course at a college located in Chengyang district. It was a place very and very remote from the city center, and therefore my memories of Qingdao by that time were limited mainly to Chengyang. To get to the downtown, we had to spent about two hours in a bus. The metro still haven't been built, and this made it hard for everyone who lived on the outskirts. We got out to town from time to time on weekends, but it didn't happen every week. Basically, we drank beer somewhere on campus, gathered in someone's dorm room in order to watch some idiotic Russian TV shows, or went to Xifuzhen - a small island of civilization where we could find our favorite barbecue eateries and, once again, beer.

We, the guys from Chengyang, seemed to always stay away from all those things that Qingdao was so famous for, and also almost none of us knew any other foreigners living in the downtown, although it were those people who originally created the entire Russian-Qingdao community.

So, in the summer of 2018, I turned into a big city girl - I came back to Qingdao to start working there. I have been preparing for this crooked business for one year. Of course, preparation meant savings. I didn't manage to save a very impressive amount, but nevertheless, the money should have been enough at least for the first time. I possessed the results for Mandarin proficiency test, a

university diploma translated into Chinese, a six-month business visa (pay attention to this phrase - a business visa), one way tickets to China, a reservation in a hostel for three days, a realtor's contact for the subsequent renting of an apartment and one suitcase with my stuff. That was all I had when I returned to China on June 4th, 2018. In March of that year, I turned 23.

After a week of throwing around and looking for housing, I settled in an area called Laoshan. During a year of study in China, I've been to Laoshan only once - to wander along the Shi Laoren beach, which was considered the best and cleanest in the city. So it happened that later I came to that beach almost every day - my new house was only ten minutes away.

By the way, what was my house like? Looking ahead, I will say that in the nine months that I lived in Qingdao already in the status of a working person, I changed three places of residence. Place number one turned out to be a small but cozy room in a three-room apartment, which I had to share with a Chinese IT guy who introduced himself to me as Sam. I had no idea what his Chinese name sounded like, just as he probably didn't fully understand what my full name was.

When we (consisting of a real estate agent, my friend Vincent and myself) first came to that place, just for viewing the apartment, Vincent said to me in an undertone in his perfect English:

- Look at this poor creature, he is about to faint.

In fact, while the three of us were hanging out in the room that was intended for me, Sam stood in the corridor, leaning against the wall, not even crossing his arms over his chest, but putting them behind his back. I'm sure he wasn't ready for a white girl to appear on his territory.

- You must seduce him, - continued Vincent, who could sometimes be too venomous and joke in a rude way, - so then you will not have to pay for accommodation.

I chuckled, being absolutely sure that my potential flatmate did not understand a word of English. But just a few minutes later, Sam demonstrated the opposite when I tried to have a conversation with him in Chinese. "I work for Microsoft," he answered me in English. "I lived in America and also in Europe".

You could see how shy he was. But despite this self-presentation, it became clear to both me and Vincent that Sam's English was so-so - this phrase was obviously learned by heart. We came to the conclusion that the word "seduce" most likely was missing in Sam's vocabulary, and therefore there was no need to worry that he could understand what Vincent was talking about.

I spent a month in that apartment - it was Sam's will, not mine. On the day of signing the contract, he voiced a strange condition that actually surprised me rather than alerted. Sam (to Vincent's and my amusement) expressed his fears that here in China I could possibly plan to do something illegal. In this regard, the contract was signed for only a month, but at the same time with the prospect of extension - in case if I can find a job and be stable and solvent. I heard Sam discussed this with my real estate agent, although later he tried to convince me that in a month his family would be arriving in Qingdao with the intention to stay in his apartment. When I told anyone that I live together with a man, everyone advised me to be aware and take care of myself. But Sam was even more afraid of me than I was afraid of him - it seems to me that such feelings can be experienced by a person with arachnophobia noticing a spider in his bathroom.

How was the month spent in an apartment near the beach? It didn't go as my dear flatmate would like to - running ahead, I'll tell you that at the end of the

day Sam still kicked me out of the apartment. Actually he had reasons to worry about my ability to pay - for the entire month of June, I never found a job. And it was not about my bad luck - frankly, I simply never searched for it, simply being engaged in leading a fast life.

My story begins with that apartment in Laoshan, near Miao Ling road. Among the seemingly endless stream of sunny and carefree days, going to bars and meeting friends some of whom still stayed in my Chengyang College, one date stood out. June 23rd, 2018. It all started that day.

My best friend Dan, also Russian, was finishing his second year of study at our alma mater. His future was determined - after our college, he entered a bachelor's degree at one of the universities in Shanghai. This meant that after our short reunion in Qingdao, we were to part again, if not forever than at least for a long time. I tried my best to spend with Dan as much time as possible before he left, even though we lived an hour and a half away from each other. I often came to our campus for the whole day, stayed with Dan for the night, and in the morning we had breakfast together and drank liters of coffee, sitting on the windowsill in his room. For some reason, Dan did not have a roommate and the room was completely at our disposal, so we could safely smoke out the window, laugh out loud and discuss any idiotic nonsense, being not afraid that someone would condemn us for our stupidity. I loved his sense of humor and penchant for judgment. Now I am ready to take on a great responsibility and confess my love for gossiping. I love gossips. I am convinced that almost everyone adores them. But not everyone is able to admit it.

Due to the fact that I spent a lot of time on my (already former) campus, I could not help getting to know a couple of people who arrived there after my graduation. One of these people was the girl called Lisa, who played the role of Dan's best friend after my departure. It's funny, but wherever Dan was, he always had some kind of "one best friend." In our first year in China, I was

honored to become one. Perhaps due to the fact that I was his first bff in China, we managed to maintain our friendship to this day.

Lisa was younger than me, but a little older than Dan – which means at that time she was about 20 years old, maybe 21, I can't say for sure. But her age is not so much important as the fact that on the twentieth of June Lisa celebrated her birthday. And since that summer I got to know her, I was invited too. Lisa's birthday was not planned to be celebrated exactly that day - the students decided to wait for the Friday night. The venue was a bar called Cherry - perhaps it still exists to this day. The year I lived in Qingdao as a student, it was not even opened.

Cherry was a place almost indistinguishable from ordinary Chinese bars when it came to atmosphere. However, its distinctive feature was the music - all foreigners praised it. I also liked it - in Cherry they played tracks that were in the first positions in the Western charts, as well as hits that are familiar to absolutely everyone who came from any country. In addition, there was a small dance floor - usually occupied by foreigners.

When I close my eyes and recall that night, it seems to me that absolutely the whole world was painted in two colors - red and black. Dark was the street where we got out from time to time to get some air. Black was my short summer dress, which smelled of cigarette smoke by morning. The Cherry sign shimmered in red neon in the night, our faces in the bar glowed red, red was the lighting inside, red turned out to be my eyes the next morning (obviously). And dark red was Jason's plaid shirt the day we met. There will be two main characters in this story - Jason and me...