

## Night at an Inn

MY (Xiao Song)

A train stops at the very small H station, and a beautiful young woman steps down from second class. At the train's door stands a young man, slightly nodding his head. The train moves again, it wriggles. The silk scarf in the young woman's hand sways unceasingly to the young man in the train. Black smoke flies, winding, as the man's figure and farewell words all disappear in the creaking sounds of the train. The train's wheels bite the double track as it passes through the distant tree line and turns into a little dark shadow. In the end, it vanishes from her line of vision.

So, she lifts the valise in her hand, and walks to a small city some 500 meters away from H station, to find a relatively clean inn, and asks for a small single room. As a kind of lonely depression harasses her, she is too restless to sit. The innkeeper sends a black quilt, which even more disturbs her as the ashen-black color appears before her eyes again. There really is no way to vent her lovesickness. She can only lie prostrate on the bed and, sniveling, weep in silence.

After the innkeeper refills the tea, she is lost in thought in this small narrow room, slowly pacing. She chants a depressing tune in her mouth, raises her head to look at the many handwritings on the wall. She searches all the handwritings in the entire room but cannot find any good verses. Her depression is utterly impossible to stop. She takes out writing paper from her valise, lays prostrate on the plank, and writes of her own wretched loneliness. Sure enough, she is very satisfied with what she writes. She reads it twice and then sticks it on the wall.

The sun sinks to the west. Thousands of crimson golden lights all shine obliquely on the back window. The little birds outside the window still call out without care for others. She lies reclining on the bed with incessant fantasies, thinking about her past happiness, present sorrow, and future horror.

“... is there no other single room?”

“They are dirty.”

From the courtyard outside the window comes in a kind of very familiar voice along with the clamor of the office. She suddenly scrambles up from the bed. She thinks this is very similar to Ms. K's voice. She hurriedly walks out to see and, sure enough, it is Ms. K arguing with the innkeeper about a room.

“Yo! Why did you come back today too, K?”

“Yo! Miss Y, you're here too!”<sup>1</sup>

Ms. K is led into the room by her. The innkeeper also follows into the room to ask if they want to order some food. Ms. K casually orders some food. The innkeeper turns on the light. Ms. K finishes washing her face under the lamplight and takes makeup one by one out of her valise. On one hand she keeps talking with Ms. Y about the summer vacation.

Ms. Y and Ms. K in childhood were classmates. Since admitted together to X girls' school, the two became very intimate friends. The two people's homework, conduct, reputation, morality, ... in everything, they are better than others. In all respects, they are on good terms.

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. K calls Miss Y by a transliteration of the English Miss - 蜜斯.

Among their classmates, who doesn't admire this pair of school flowers?<sup>2</sup> Today in this lonely inn, the meeting of intimate friends, what a joy it is! While eating, the material for the two of them to talk about is just Ms. Lin's secret history of love. About Ms. Lin's love history, Ms. Y knows some, but does not know much detail, and she requests Ms. K to tell her in detail.

“Wasn't Ms. Lin's homework in our class very good? In the last semester of the second grade, I was very close with her. She often told me time and again in our evening walks about her sexual depression...<sup>3</sup> Later, through somebody's introduction, she communicated by letter with T. It was getting better, but it wasn't long before she discovered that T was the husband of a wife.<sup>4</sup> From then, they broke off their relationship... In the next semester, she became an exceedingly pessimistic person. I gradually became estranged from her. Her reputation got much worse. In fact, the school authorities were too cruel to her. For no reason, it wasn't her fault, they actually expelled her.”

After Ms. K finished speaking, she couldn't help but sigh. And Ms. Y is not in the mood to eat anymore. These very plain facts stir her sorrow again.

Ms. K sees her in this kind of sentimental situation and has to entice her to be happy, so she urges her to tell her love history. How is it possible Y is willing to say it! She lies back on the bed. Already, two lines of hot tears flow to her ears.

Ms. K's heart is sour, she does not eat anymore, and just picks up the mouthwash. Suddenly she sees the strip of paper stuck on the wall. She knows at a glance that it was written

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<sup>2</sup> School flowers 校花, literally school beauties.

<sup>3</sup> Sexual depression – *xing de kumen* - 性的苦闷.

<sup>4</sup> Husband of a wife - *you fu zhi fu* 有妇之夫。

by Y. Ah, it is a well-written poem, really a good poem of blood and tears! In her heart, she cannot help but cry out in admiration.

"Ah! Mr. S is really fortunate in his life to get such a talented sensitive beautiful young woman as his friend." In her heart, on one side she muses and on the other side she cannot help but from the depth of her soul send out a kind of jealous thought. "Ah! A good friend like me is about to be robbed by him." Ms. K just now blankly thinks, feels hate. From behind, Ms. Y quietly snatches the paper strip and swallows it...

"Who do you think I admire and envy the most?" K says to Y gleefully.

"Who?" Y asks in surprise, spitting the paper out of her mouth.

"I admire Mr. S the most."

"Mr. S is my fellow villager, if you really adore him, I can introduce you."

"No! I don't admire him for anything else. What I admire him for is: the very beautiful school flower in our school is possessed by him."

"Who is the school flower? Aren't you the school flower? "

"The school flower is Ms. Y."

"The school flower is Ms. K."

"..."

"..."

The god of the night scatters a dark net of secret sweetness that shrouds the sounds of laughing at each other in the room. Everything sinks into the middle of the night. After Ms. Y extinguishes the light, she asks the young woman to tell her history of love. To whom can Ms. Y tell the secret anguish in her heart? She has to very quietly pretend to sleep. Ms. K squeezes next to her, and she must listen to her love history but, unmoving, she still pretends to sleep. K leans gently on top of her body. Unexpectedly, she hugs Ms. K tightly with sudden force and chokes out: "Hey! Younger sister K! This is my first same-sex love history in 19 years." This then is K's unimaginable panic and pity. Two lips involuntarily touch her peach-colored cheeks, and K now has a kind of unspeakable pitiful feeling for her.

"Elder sister Y! Isn't Mr. S your good friend?"

"Whatever! He's already the father of two kids, is he still qualified to be in romantic relationships with others? He is my fellow villager, so we are close friends. Today, he went to M city and sat with me on the same train, younger sister K. Do you still doubt me?"

"It's not just me who doubts and learns about you, among them are many people who doubt you like this."

"I know that, but they don't have any solid evidence."

The four fiery lips of the two of them match each other and, in this night, as much as they like, they pour out virgins' bottled-up bitterness.

"Elder sister Y, a young girl, is there no sexual awakening? Sexual depression, I think it is unavoidable in human life history, but if someone can hold back this depression, they will be

able to pass peacefully. If this kind of depression erupts for a while, for the reputation of a lifetime, there is unpredictable danger.”

“Younger sister K! Ah! I didn’t expect you to have this kind of ingenious view. I really admire you!”

Everything around them sinks into silence, the sweat produced from the two’s embrace wets their clothes through. The two get up, change their wet clothes and, tightly embracing, go to sleep.

Early morning birds wake up the soundly sleeping couple. Sunlight already illuminates the whole room. The two people slightly open sleepy eyes. Smiling at each other, with heads lowly hanging down, the contours of milky faces are already concealed behind beautiful hair.

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