

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/1

Charles Hayes
Cargo

In the quiet predawn darkness along the Seattle waterfront a cloaked and covered figure scans the harbor like a spy from a bygone day. The fedora is his one capitulation to eccentricity. The trench coat, still a common sight in this town, belonged to his father. Back when he was young and a new immigrant he adopted the hat and took on the coat after he became hooked on old Humphrey Bogart movies. That was nearly thirty years ago and many times since then these things have served well as his umbrella. And, unlike an umbrella, they are not easily forgotten when temporarily laid aside. Never married, Bo Chen spends most of his time and efforts on a small business and apartment in Chinatown but, sadly, it doesn't keep him from being lonely. The melancholy nature of the empty bay seems to match his own mood as forlorn thoughts creep around in his head.

At the nearby wharf, under large spotlights hanging from the overhead cranes, the container ship from Shanghai is secured and readied for unloading. Bo has been tracking it and his container of expensive green jade figurines for the past two weeks. Several purchases at his shop hinge on this delivery, not to mention the investment he has in it.

Mental calculations tell him that the container with his merchandise should reach his warehouse in about two days. Logging this into his smart phone calendar, he turns to leave, then notices that the rising sun over the Cascades is about to set aglow the whole wharf area. Brilliantly painted cranes, reaching out and canted over the ship's length, turn a fiery color, like a row of red mantis ready to feed. The scene lifts Bo Chen's heart. Doing business in Seattle is a pleasure. Once the unloading begins he knows that it will continue around the clock until it is done. It is still early and all is as it should be. Tugging his fedora, Bo Chen heads for the public market along the seawall. He still has time to have some tea and one of Sum Lee's steamed pork buns before opening his shop.



A loud hiss of air brakes makes Bo jump when the diesel rig stops just shy of the warehouse loading platform. This is the big day he has looked forward to. Anticipation, combined with his efforts to make sure that there are no mistakes, have his already high-strung nerves more on edge than usual. After inspecting the bill of lading and checking the container locks and seals Bo approaches the driver.

"Everything seems to be in order, you can unhook and drop it right here."

The driver seems a little surprised.

"Don't you want to open it up and check the contents?"

"I've been doing business with these people for a long time," Bo says. "The locks and seals are good. It's fine. I'll do the inventory later. You can go."

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The driver shrugs his shoulders, hops down from his cab, quickly unhooks and drops the container on its fore pods, then heads back to the port to line up for his next container.

Bo watches him disappear into the commercial So Do traffic before starting to unlock the container and break the seals. Finally he has possession of his wares. In his excitement he fumbles and bangs the first lock several times while removing it. Reaching to remove the second lock, he freezes when he hears tapping inside the container. His heart pounding in his ears, Bo doesn't move for many seconds. The tapping comes again. Bo quickly gathers himself, taps out a simple cadence, and waits. Almost immediately the cadence is repeated. Rattled and scared, Bo uses his sleeve to wipe his sweaty brow before he removes the final lock. Cautiously, he disengages the latch and pulls the doors open. Immediately he is repelled several feet by the stench. But not before he sees a person lying on a thin pad in the space nearest the door. Also there is what appears to be the bottom part of a 55 gallon oil drum that has been cut off and made into a toilet. It is half full. An almost empty plastic container of perhaps 15 gallons has been used to hold water. Food wrappers litter the rest of the vacant space except for one large cardboard box that contains a few unopened wrappers of some kind of jerked meat and a few rotting fruits and vegetables. Boxes of jade figurines occupy all the rest of the shipping container and have been more or less walled off with mesh from the small area near the door. Except for some dried feces that must have splashed up on the boxes near the toilet, all seems to indicate that the cargo shipped undisturbed.

Still scared, Bo stares at the unmoving figure lying near the door. Dressed in filthy clothes with what looks like a large bloodstain on the front of the trousers, it is hard to tell if it is a man or a woman. Not knowing what to do, and unsure about getting involved, he finally decides that he should get closer and try to see if this person is injured. But before he can do this the prone figure suddenly raises an arm over their eyes blocking the light, turns their head toward him, and says in Chinese accented English, "Do you have some extra pants? I forgot to bring tampons."



Hau Ming, in her mid thirties, was born in Shanghai to parents who later died from abuses that they had suffered during the cultural revolution. She was left to be raised and educated in a Catholic orphanage. As she grew and matured Hau showed great promise with her catechism as well as her academic subjects prompting the nuns to send her on to be educated in one of the better Shanghai universities. There, near the end of her studies, and to the dismay of her patrons, she met and married another bright student. They produced one child, a girl, not long after they wed. Tragically, however, one night during the Lunar New Year celebration a large van loaded with fireworks exploded during the traditional New Year's Lion and Dragon Dance. Several in the crowd were severely hurt. Three were killed outright, including Hau's husband and little girl whom had been standing next to the van. Hau Ming was just returning with refreshments and was further away from the blast. She received serious burns to her right arm and a lesser burn to the right side of her face. The intense flash of heat singed and burned most of her clothes, leaving her lying and smoldering in the street like a freshly doused fire log.

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When her wounds healed and the grief for her loved ones became less painful, she decided that life was too short to wait for the auspicious. Now was the time to risk a new life. Her old one was surely gone.



The aroma of the roasted teriyaki chicken from Dong Chang's Barbecue Shop tells Bo how hungry he is. His mouth waters as he climbs the steps to the apartment over his shop via a separate outside entrance. Sniffing the sweet smoky smell of the barbecue, he wonders if he should have bought two. Hau Ming, a few pounds lighter than before, has not failed to clear her plate for the past two days....ever since he brought her home from the container. It was not hard for him to do the right thing for someone in such a helpless position. He was always big hearted despite the face he put on during his business actions. Bo Chen gave over his bedroom and most of his bath and slept on the couch. Falling asleep while watching TV had always been easy for him anyway. That was the easy part. Getting her clothes was a little different. With no experience buying women's clothes, he had to rely on sales help from the people at the little used clothing store down the street. When Hau first appeared in fresh clothes Bo plainly saw what an impressive and feminine person she was. The cloth and cut of the Asian apparel accented the intelligent bone structure of her face and complimented her willowy figure. A little taller than Bo, she looked nothing like the starved figure he had first seen on the floor of the container. Almost immediately he began to feel a little change in his moods as well. Helping her pleased him.

After knocking on the door at the top of the steps, Bo unlocks and enters the apartment. Still preoccupied with his thoughts about the pleasant changes in his moods, he at first doesn't recognize his own place. The scent of a sandalwood joss stick accompanied by the soothing twangs of pipa music stroke his senses. Discarded on a small seat in the bay window that overlooks the street, Bo notices the jacket to one of his old lute albums. Obviously Hua Ming has mastered his ancient turntable stereo. And the apartment looks so much neater and cleaner than he ever keeps it. On the small dining table there is a fresh bowl of steamed rice, a platter of stir fried bitter melon with scrambled egg, and a steaming pot of tea. Smiling broadly, Bo sets the roasted chicken down and admires the laid out table. When he looks up Hua is leaning against the kitchen doorway, watching him.

"I hope you like bitter melon," she says, "I was surprised to find it."

A bit alarmed when he hears this, Bo knows that she must have gone out to get the bitter melon. For her to wander the streets of Chinatown alone, and so soon, was a little unsettling. He remembers when he first set foot here and how nervous he was. He couldn't help but admire her gumption, however. Very quickly he is learning that she is a remarkable woman. And probably would be good at business, he also quickly concludes.

"I do like bitter melon.," Bo Chen replies. "You must have gone out. Where did you get it?"

"At the vegetable market on top of the hill," Hau said, nodding toward the commercial square nearby. "I think the area is called Little Saigon. I

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had only a few Chinese Yuan but when I explained in Mandarin that I was out of dollars they were very nice and eager to change my Yuan. Probably they will use them at their ancestral shrines."

"Yes, I know the market," Bo said, "they are Vietnamese-Chinese, nice people. And prosperous too."

Hau remembers the stories her parents used to tell her when she was very young. About being prosperous, then stripped of their possessions and sent to the countryside for agricultural labor. They had warned her of the dangers of being prosperous. So long ago that was. She rarely recalls such lessons. It surprises her a little that Bo elicits such deep memories, and at the same time, a long dormant kind of curiosity.

"Is it important for you to be prosperous, Bo Chen?" Hau asks.

"I suppose so," Bo replies. "That is why I left China. It's not everything and I know it will not buy happiness but it's something."

They silently exchange looks, and then with their own thoughts, ride the notes of the pipa coming from the stereo. After a few moments Hau suddenly laughs for the first time and says, "And it's good for business, right, Bo Chen? Sit down. We will have our dinner."



Except for a small clump of rice and chicken bones, the dinner dishes are bare. Not much had been said as they ate. Most of that time had been spent eating. And with full mouths, it would have been hard to understand each other anyway. Bo was helping with the cleanup until Hau shooed him away.

"I can do this Bo Chen. Go to your couch and rest. It has been a long day and you must be tired. Did your jade customers follow through on their orders?"

"Some of them did," Bo replies, "all the ones that I notified. I am confident from their reactions that I will do well by the shipment. Are you sure you don't want my help with the cleanup?"

Bo didn't like such chores before but sharing the task with Hau was different. He wonders how long it will last, how long should it last.

"You go on now, relax and watch your news. I can finish here," Hau insists.

She notices the difference in Bo from many of the men in China. He doesn't seem to mind helping in the kitchen. She had heard that Americans, even Chinese Americans, could be like that. Interesting. Before her mind can roam more a field about such things she turns to the task at hand. However, these thoughts about Bo that she puts aside are not new to her.

The TV news is all about the immigration issue. People are complaining about foreigners sneaking into their country. Bo wonders how they would feel if the shoe was on the other foot. Then he smiles and has to admit that, in a smaller and smaller world, and its many issues, many Americans feel that they only have one foot. And, quite naturally, this leaves them crippled. However, this thought is getting too close to politics

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for Bo Chen. Recalling the graffiti he had seen scrawled on a railroad coal car, "I am a free man. I do not vote," he will just stick to his own business. And helping Hau.

After the news passes and the crazy reality shows begin, Bo turns the TV off and begins to make his couch, wondering what is taking Hau so long in the kitchen. Then he notices that the kitchen is dark. Under his bedroom door he sees that the light is on. Hau must of gone to bed while he was watching the news. That didn't seem like her, not saying good-night. But no big deal. It had been a long day. Dressed down to his underwear, he is just about to switch the end light off when his bedroom door opens. In a very pretty Chinese bed dress, framed by the doorway and the shadowy interior of the bedroom, Hau leans against the door jamb, lifts one hand to her hip and boldly stares at Bo for what seems like a very long time. Then with her face still as blank as the Chinese mask of calm, she almost whispers, "Bo, you don't have to sleep on the couch, you know."

Bo Chen admires the dress and the lithe figure of Hau that it reveals. Long gently curved legs end in bare feet with painted toenails. The allure that Bo Chen suddenly feels is not new to him, but the honesty of its pedigree with Hau is unknown. And exciting. Bo stands and slowly joins her, feeling the give of the wooden floorboards with each step.



Intimate talk about their union wanes to a thoughtful silence and the shared pleasure of being spent. So serene is the silence that talk just seems not quite good enough. After a while Hau finds the will to break the silence.

"I enjoy being with you Bo. There are things about you that a woman needs to have in a man. Things that are not all that common."

"Hau, I could say the same thing about you," Bo replies.

For him there is a kind of relief that these words bring to his soul.

"You are still young and I am very happy that you can like me. I want to do what is right. For me. For you. I admire you and what you have risked to get here. I don't want to do anything that would hurt that. It all seems pretty complicated when I think about it. You've never even mentioned what you went through to get here and I promised myself I wouldn't ask."

Hau smiles and looks down to the bed covers for a moment, then looks up at Bo.

"You didn't know it but you were helping me before you ever saw me. I knew who you were and I guessed what kind of person you might be. I would probably not have tried such a dangerous stow-a-way if I hadn't known some things about you."

"You must of met my exporter, Sun Chan," Bo says, "he is the only one I know where you come from."

"Yes, I have known him a long time. He was a good friend of my husband's. He set up the whole thing because he thought I might have a chance with you."

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Bo Chen smiles, "I'd say that you have got me pretty good. I'm weak as a kitten."

"Not that way, you," Hau Ming, says as she slaps him on the shoulder.

"That just happened with a little push from me....sooner rather than later. Sun Chan said that he knew you as a sensible, decent person. Someone who didn't take advantage of people. He didn't tell you about me because if something went wrong he didn't want you to have any knowledge of it. No money was passed or even discussed. He felt that it was something he could do to honor the dead by helping the part of them that lived."

Bo Chen feels humbled in his own uncomplicated way and simply nods as tears flood the eyes of Hau Ming.

"I'll never be able to repay you for what you've done," Hau says. "You have shown me that I can care for someone again. I am more alive because of you. And now I need to find work and carve out my existence in this country. Like you once did."

Bo Chen's stomach does a flip flop when he hears this. Was she now going away? He doesn't like the fear that suddenly possesses him and pushes it aside in ways not unlike the way he pushed aside his loneliness.

"Do you want to leave? I suppose there are better opportunities out there somewhere, but you should plan carefully. Of course I will help you if that is what you want."

"It doesn't matter what I want. It would be nice to stay with you but you must know that I need to get a hold on my life and that can only come with work."

Bo Chen does understand. It's not like something that he's never done. But with him it was all within the system. This is much different. Searching his mind, he takes a deep breath.

"I have a suggestion. My trade in the jade market is really going to take off. And when it does it will require my full attention. There will be no time for the other parts of my business. If I don't hire help I will have to shut them down and I don't want to do that. You could work in my shop and take care of that. There is a small kitchen, bed, and bath in the back of the shop that you could use for your own if you want. And I could pay you for your work as well."

Bo pauses and looks at Hau. Moments pass as Hau thinks about what Bo has said. She sees the utility in the whole set-up at once. And help beyond any she had ever expected. Plus they could see which of the many ways their relationship might go.

"That could work, blessed be you Bo Chen," Hau Ming says, "but we must be very careful. I have a Chinese passport tucked away so I can get back to China if I have to. But my real name and who I am must remain secrete, else I could be detained and deported. That would be very unpleasant."

Bo and Hau discuss their plans far into the night. They create a believable story about Hau's background and determine that, at least to begin

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with, their true relationship will remain secret. But even if it becomes known such things are not that unusual to begin with. They can handle it. Life will be good.



Month after month, with Bo and Hau working hard and providing good customer service, the tourist shop in Chinatown, now newly named The Jade Emporium, brings in good profits. Because they work close together, careful though they are about their relationship, some people eventually begin to see the little signs of a deeper attachment between them. Signs like a fleeting soft look or a little consideration between employee and employer that is just a bit beyond the normal. But like they had both expected, such recognition is no big deal. People have lives to live and they live them. Who has time to make judgments about people that are not directly involved in their own lives? Live and let live.



Dong Chang, American born and still relatively young, rents the shop space directly across the street from Bo Chen's Jade Emporium. Not really a part of any neighborhood in attitude, Dong is arrogant and self-centered in the little interaction he has with others. Consequently, his barbeque business is marginal at best. Bo and a few others shop there occasionally and they have learned to just go in, fill the order, pay for it, and get out. Along with his unpleasant manner, Dong Chang is also nosy and quick to deliver up gossip, seeking opinions on its worth. But despite these business problems Dong owns a nice house in Bellevue, drives a new car, and never has much trouble paying his bills. Even when he falls short with his barbeque business, which is most of the time, he is fine. Ironically, this is due to his past trouble with the law. As a way to get his criminal drug charges dismissed and get started in a lawful business, Dong agreed to become an informant for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement or ICE. Paid monthly for his spying and reporting on Chinatown, Dong brings in a good income as long as he can keep ICE happy and deliver up illegal immigrants. Dong Chang, in simplest terms, is a rat.

On the way back from the Post Office with his mail, Dong Chang stops on the sidewalk and admires his cover. The rows of barbecued chickens hanging from hooks under the bright warming bulbs in his shop window form an eye-catching display. Chickens of teriyaki brown staggered with chickens of soy sauce white, like the dark and light squares of a checkered tablecloth, capture the eye long enough to stir the digestive juices. After unlocking the shop door Dong turns the "Back In A Minute" sign back to "Open" and tosses the mail on the counter beside the register. Immediately his eyes fall on one particular envelope with the United States Seal on it. It must be his monthly check from ICE. Quickly, Dong grabs the envelope, looks to the door to make sure he is alone, and tears open the envelope. Sure enough, there is the check. Dong smiles and considers closing his shop. Who needs to work when they get nice checks like this. That's when he notices that there is also a note in the envelope. This is rare. Usually the nondescript treasury check is all that he receives. As he reads the note a frown comes over his face. It informs him that it has been three months since he has delivered up anyone to ICE. And that this will be his last monthly check if this continues. Dong drops the note on the

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counter then looks past his barbecue display directly into the glass front of The Jade Emporium across the street. He can clearly see that Hau is helping a couple of customers while Bo Chen is absent. Dong has had his suspicions about those two across the street and he has heard the gossip. Only, when he tries to get any further tidbits from his few customers, they are not forthcoming. Dong has been a rat for some time and he has learned the little telltale signs of concealment. He has suspected that there might be something there for him to exploit. And there are no penalties from ICE for being wrong. Having detainees, innocent or guilty, gives both him and ICE relevance. He knows that many of the Chinese immigrants have some things hidden in their closet. A warm body is what he needs now.

The jingle of the front door bell calls Dong away from his schemes as the local vagrant, known simply as Jack, enters his shop for a cheap box lunch of chicken thigh, steamed rice, and a tiny packet of soy sauce. Jack is a peaceable older white American that hangs around Chinatown when he is not at the nearby mission. He gets most of his meals there and a place to sleep when it becomes too cold on the streets. Pretty well known by the shops in Chinatown, he is courteously tolerated, even when he has no real money to spend. Bo Chen and Hau know and treat him with respect when he sometimes comes in to marvel over their jade ware and engage in a little conversation about how it is on the streets. But other than a place to get his box lunch when he can scrap together a little money, Jack has no use for Dong Chang. Dong treats him poorly, always taking his little bit of money as fast as he can, then shooing him out into the street. Today is no different. Dong rudely slaps down the box lunch on the counter, grabs the money and starts shooing him away. However, Jack doesn't move. He wants a small bag to keep his lunch warm until he can eat it. Now fuming, Dong grabs a plastic sack and rakes the box into it, then shoves it over the counter, pushing it into Jack's chest. "Now get moving," Dong says.

"My money not good enough for ya," Jack grumbles as he takes the bag, and leaves the shop.

Walking down the street a short distance to Hing Hay park, Jack takes a seat at one of the tables in the Grand Pavilion, a memorial to those Chinese-American veterans killed in World War Two. People about the park gather to practice Tai Chi, play chess, or just relax, as Jack pulls his box from the sack and begins to eat. While he is eating he sees, stuck to the bottom of the box, a slip of paper with some sort of fancy seal on it. Curiously inspecting it, he discovers that it is the notice to Dong Chang from ICE. It was not signed but simply noted, "Your Agent." Your agent, thought Jack. What the hell does that mean?

Jack had noticed the arrival of Hau to Bo Chen's business and he had wondered the same things as the others around the neighborhood but it had seemed too ordinary to give any thought to. But this slip of paper is something out of the ordinary. Putting the note in his pocket, Jack finishes his lunch and heads back up the street to The Jade Emporium to look at the nice figurines and have a chat with Bo or Hau. He likes them, they are nice to him, maybe they will be interested in his little piece of trash.



When they discover the real business of Chang's Barbeque Shop, Bo Chen and Hau Ming move quickly. Hau can not risk being detained and

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losing her anonymity. So far there is no trace of her existence in America. After quickly moving their valuables to storage they use Hau's secreted Chinese passport to purchase a one way ticket for her to Shanghai. With his US passport, Bo buys a visa and round trip ticket on another airlines for two days later. Sun Chan will assist Hau until Bo arrives. All along Bo and Hau had considered that it might come to this so they are OK when they kiss goodbye at the Seatac International Airport and Hau boards her flight. Two days later Bo temporarily closes The Jade Emporium and follows.



Looking like support for a military infantry platoon involved in an urban attack, the armored personnel carrier and its accompanying jail vans roar to a stop in the street between The Jade Emporium and Dong Chang's Barbeque Shop. Dong watches through his front window, smiling as if he has just won the lottery.....until he sees the armed and helmeted squad that spews from the armored personnel carrier turn toward him instead of The Jade Emporium across the street. Like a fire team rushing an enemy bunker, they break the latch on his door, knock the tiny doorbell to the floor, and burst into his shop. After waving their automatic weapons in his face they rush to the back kitchen and office. There oven doors are torn from their hinges, pots and pans scattered helter-skelter, and files dumped to the floor as they "search" his shop. When he tries to stop them the squad leader pushes him against the wall, shoves a search warrant in his face, and says, "This is 107 South Market Street isn't it?"

In horror, Dong sees his address on the warrant instead of the 106 South Market Street address of The Jade Emporium. So scared he is hardly able to reply, he says, "Yes but that address...."

Dong doesn't get to finish his statement before the squad leader shoves him aside and says, "Just stay out of the way and you will not be harmed. It's a woman we are looking for."

Before Dong can reply the man is gone to the back of the shop with the rest of them. Completely shocked, Dong is planted against the wall near the door until a man dressed in regular clothes walks in, looks him up and down, and says, "Are you Bo Chin, the owner of this shop?"

"No," Dong replies, "I am Dong Chang. This is my shop. You have the wrong address. Bo Chen's shop is across the street."

When this mistake is realized the raid is immediately called off. But not before Dong Chang's shop is wrecked and unfit for business.

An internal review later determines that no evidence exist that any illegal activity has taken place at The Jade Emporium. And other than Bo Chen, a United States citizen, there is no one who lives on that property.

Dong Chang, suspected of providing false information in order to keep his monthly check, is no longer of any use to ICE. He takes his personal stuff from the barbeque shop, gets in his car and drives back across Lake Washington to his home, never to be seen in Chinatown again.



Following a simple signing marriage service at the local Office of the Civil Affairs Bureau in the West Nanjing Road district of Shanghai, Bo

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Chen, Hau Ming Chen, and Sun Chan hail a taxi just off the start of the famous pedestrian street. In the hubbub of Shanghai's premier shopping street the well dressed threesome stand out among the mass of humanity strolling to and from the many stores of the area. Mixing with the crowds is a small electric engine pulling crowded covered booths on its circular route up and down the 3.4 mile long street. Rather than squeeze in aboard this miniature train to the Jing'an Temple Park at the street terminus, Sun Chan wisely chooses to take a taxi the short distance and outflank the crowds. Once they reach Jing'an Park they let the taxi go and enter the green refuge, quickly fading into its quiet interior. Bo and Hau, taking their first married walk, guided by Sun Chan, meander along the various paths and beautiful lotus filled ponds. Smiles, light conversation, and breaths of fresh air are mixed with the more complex talk about their new business arrangement. When Bo Chen returns to the United States and his jade import business Hau will manage the Shanghai end of the business until a spousal visa for her is approved. This will give Hau time to gain experience in the overall business. Meanwhile, Bo Chen, who is already quite prosperous from the jade business, hopes to expand to more emporiums in the Seattle area. It is expected that when Hau arrives in America she will become the general manager of these Seattle operations. Eventually, the hope is that an internationally renowned business, owned and managed by the three, can take a good share of the jade market.

Their light, optimistic mood is partially put on hold by a delightful awe as they emerge into a clearing among willow trees, small waterfalls, and glassy ponds. A beautiful Balinese restaurant is its centerpiece. Here Sun Chan runs ahead, spreading his arms, and laughing.

"You two remain here," he yells back over his shoulder, "and enjoy the view. I know the people here. I will go ahead and set up your first meal together as a married couple. I know just the thing."

When Sun Chan calls them, Bo and Hau join him at a table with a nice view of their natural surroundings. A red color, the symbol for good fortune and joy, is seen throughout the dishes spread over the table. From Peking Duck, with its cooked red hue for fidelity and happiness, to the red lobster of celebration, to the long stranded noodles for longevity, served with vegetables and the sea cucumber of selflessness, it's all there. Followed by red bean soup for its sweetness of life and happiness, the smells, tastes, and sights, all compliment the forward looking threesome on this auspicious occasion. An occasion that Hau had given up on and one that Bo Chen thought would never come. Sun Chan is just happy to be there and have such good friends and business associates. He can feel, with the proven insight of the prosperous, the auspiciousness of this event.

After dinner and a couple of glasses of China's fine Dragon's Hollow wine the mood is languid and light until the final toast by Sun Chan.

"May prosperity and happiness follow you all the days of your life. And may those days be as long as the noodles that we sip between our lucky lips."

Bo and Hau laugh and drink from each other's glass while Sun Chan has a sip of wine then goes into his pocket for a key card. He extends the card across the table to Bo Chen.

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"You Bo Chen and Hau Ming Chen are registered at the Crown Plaza Hotel, the penthouse, Shanghai Harbor City. The address is on the card. Just show it to the taxi driver. At the gate you will find a golf cart waiting to take you to the main road where your taxi is waiting. Now go on and enjoy each other like there is no tomorrow. I will call you in a day or two. For now, I will remain here a while, perhaps have a drink with my friends in the kitchen."

After sincerely thanking Sun Chan and returning all his good wishes, Bo and Hau slowly walk along several small waterfalls to a gate where their cart and driver await. Dusk is falling quickly and the lights of the city grow larger as they motor along the paths back toward the main road. As soon as they arrive a taxi pulls up. Bo follows Hau into the backseat, shows the driver the address, then leans back in the seat with Hau. Contented they are as the brilliant, colored neon lights of Shanghai whiz by, like tracers from a fireworks show.



Having truly enjoyed each other and slept, Bo and Hau stand at the suite's glass wall overlooking the Harbor. In the unusually clear dawn it seems as if all the earth, with its lands and seas, stretches before them.

"I never dreamed that life would give me this path to tread," Hau quietly reflects. "I hope that I fulfill your life, Bo, like you are fulfilling mine."

Amazed at Hau's ability to capture the moment for both of them, Bo replies, "You do....to the brim."

Leaning against each other, sensing the feeling and thoughts that envelope them, there is no need for more words as they gaze down on the many ships anchored below as well as those sailing out to sea. Suddenly Hau becomes rigid, goes to her toes, and points to a container ship about to leave the harbor.

"Look Bo, that ship, that looks like the....."

"I know," Bo says as he puts a finger over her lips, "I saw it. And this is as close as you will get to it or anything like it ever again. Wherever you are will always be the best of all possible worlds."

Both their eyes well up as Hau relaxes and puts her arm around Bo. Turning a little toward him and searching his face, Hau says, "Really, Bo Chen?"

"Really, Hau Ming," Bo replies, "I love you."