

18 Two sides of love

We lovers.

And unable to stop loving each other.

Marguerite Duras [73]

Two years ago I was sent to Hong Kong on a business trip, take some interviews on reunification with the Motherland. And every night after work I had a late night sitting on the stone steps of the Victoria harbour, and watched the stars so hard with his head that he almost snapped his neck. Sometimes I deeply thought and forgot not only about the world but about myself. At such moments it seemed to me that the head was only a thin thin layer of brain cells, serenely dozing in the shifting blue haze.

From time to time when working on a book, I sometimes fell into such a state, but not on the Bay, and behind the Desk, and looked out the stars somewhere at the bottom, his head bowed. The stars shone between the pop-up from unknown depths of the words. I gradually reached Nirvana and is no longer afraid of illness, accidents, loneliness, and even death. Became immune to them. However, the reality is not always as we want

I talked Jusu to go to the match with me. We met the whole family Mark on the campus of the American school in Pudong. That day mark was especially beautiful, perhaps because of the bright sun and beautiful surroundings. The territory of the elite schools for children of expatriate is like a different, transcendental world, nothing to do with the dust and dirt outside. The campus smelled fresh and clean and shiny, it seemed that even the air was sterilized. Unimaginable foppish atmosphere.

Mark was chewing gum. After welcoming us with a cool mind, he introduced Jose me and my wife.

- Meet eve.

Eva was holding his hand. In life she was even more attractive and slimmer than it looked in the pictures. Blond hair carelessly gathered into a ponytail at the nape, several ear silver earrings with screw clasp, black sweater set off the pale skin. In the sunlight her white acquired a honey color and looked almost unreal.

Before the white-skinned beauty of European women is hard to resist. Beauty Asian woman in the mysterious curve of the eyebrow and a look of alluring eyes from last, full of sensuality, of the era, like the singer sandy Lam [74] or a movie star Gong Li [75].

Is a colleague from the firm, Judy. And this is her cousin Coco, the great writer, said mark. Eva reached out, smiling and squinting from the sun.

- That my son is bi-Bi, - mark took out the baby from the stroller and kissed her. He slightly held his arms, and then put around wife.

Perhaps it's time on the field, he smiled, glanced at me, took the gym bag and went to the locker room.

While Jose chatted with eve, I sat nearby on the grass and thought about the fact that contrary to my

expectations when meeting with his wife, Mark has not experienced any jealousy. On the contrary, I liked it. What was so attractive about her? People always like beautiful things. Really, I'm so good that when someone else's happiness can sincerely be happy for other people? That's all I need!

The match was about to begin. My gaze was riveted to the Brand. He ran around the pitch, Golden hair waving in the wind like a dream of an exotic love – the embodiment of energy and good physical shape. His rapid and powerful movements admired by hundreds of spectators. In my opinion, many sporting events strongly resemble the crowded Orgy. And the fans in the stadium, and the players are excited to such an extent that no longer able to cope with the release of hormones, which just saturated the air.

Several school students were drinking coke and loudly rooting for their own. Eve continued to Twitter with Josei (which seemed to make her much more interesting than watching my own husband on the field). And my arousal already soaked panties. I've never wanted to Brand as much as at that moment. We wanted to fall into his arms, like Apple, shot down from the tree by a strong gust of wind.

Coco, your storybook... Zhushi voice brought me out of trance.

What? absently asked I saw turned to me a smile of eve.

- It's very interesting, ' she said in English, - do you think it is still possible somewhere to buy a copy?

- I'm afraid it's not. I have one, but, unfortunately, in Chinese, ' I replied.

- Oh, thank you. I'm going to learn Chinese. I am very interested in Chinese culture. And Shanghai is one of the most intriguing cities I've ever been to. She had light pink seductive face white woman. - If you are free this weekend, next week, join us for dinner, invited her.

I tried to hide the excitement and looked at Jushou. That trap is disguised as a Banquet?

Judy, too, will come, and more will be some of our German friends. I work in the Department for environmental protection under the government, we do not have long vacations. The Germans are so concerned about the environmental issues that relate to them too zealously, she said with a smile. - In our country no one drives a three-wheeled vehicles with heavy exhaust and not hanging Laundry on the sidewalks.

- Oh! - I exclaimed, sarcastically thinking that Germany seems to be a kind of Paradise, more than any other country on earth. - OK, I will come, perhaps Eva does not possess the mind, but must be generous and good-natured.

Bi-bi started to shout:

- Dad, dad!

I turned around and saw mark triumphantly raised his fist up and jumped up in the air - he just scored a goal. From afar he sent us a kiss. Eva and I looked at each other and laughed.

When we went to the school building in search of a toilet, Jose asked if I thought eve was beautiful.

Perhaps that only reinforces my pessimism about marriage.

- Really? From the side it seems that mark loves her.

- According to marriage counselors, it is love and gives no guarantee of lasting fidelity.

On the wall in the dressing room, we were struck by the amusing caricature. It was a picture of a strip of green forest, and over it a huge question mark and the inscription: "Who of the inhabitants of the Earth are all terrible?" We Josei, not saying a word, one word blurted out:

- .

In the half-time break were all drinking soft drinks and telling jokes. I had the opportunity to chat with mark.

- You have a lovely family.

"Yes," he agreed listlessly.

- You love your wife? - I asked quietly. I'm not going to beat around the bush and sudden Frank question could clarify the situation. I looked at Mark a little hostile.

- Are you going to be jealous? sharply he said.

I don't think so. I'm not an idiot.

- Of course I love her, ' he said, shrugging his shoulders. He noticed a friend, greeted him and looked back at me with a smile: - You're beautiful and sexy woman singing in the night like a siren of the Rhine from the German epic. According to legend, she sat on a rock by the river and lured sailors to the deep and dangerous place, beckoning to imminent death.

- Well, it's not too fair. To be honest to the end, that you seduced me.

Eve walked over, hugged her husband's shoulders, leaned over and kissed him.

- What are you talking about here? she asked, a bewildered smile.

Oh, Coco talks about his new story, working - calmly replied mark.

Ay dick went for Josei before the end of the match. He was dressed simply, and at the same time elegant and fashionable, the hair is smoothed with gel, and only the bangs slightly hanging over the forehead. The left cheek had been cut in a strange scar, like the face recently slashed by something sharp. He politely chatted with me a bit, and he was smart enough not to ask any questions about how work is progressing on the novel. I was already fed up with the fact that someone or meeting, try to find out all about it. It was starting to get on my nerves.

- What's with the face? - I was curious, pointing to the scar.

- Ah, disassembly, - he answered simply. My jaw dropped in surprise. Who could be angry at him? I looked at Jushou, but she made a barely perceptible gesture, showing that all in the past and not worth talking about.

And then it hit me. Is this a psycho Madonna? She mumbled incessantly, that will never accept their breakup. Really it went so far that he decided to teach his former class? If so, then she's definitely a natural inclination to violence!

But just at that time Madonna was not in Shanghai. She took a credit card and went shopping in Hong Kong, intending to stay there for a while. A few days ago she called in the night and suffered some mystical nonsense about his visit to a Buddhist temple the Wong tai [76], famous in Hong Kong. There she supposedly predicted that it expects a string of bad luck that things are not in her favor and that she needs to take a trip to the South or to the East. Well, at least go to Hong Kong, Madonna chose the right direction.

Jose and ay dick was going to the hardware store for paint. Ay dick helped decorate the apartment, which she bought near Ruixin gardens. They wanted to paint the walls in exquisite colors, and they chose the paint under the red tree. Doing such only in France, and its smooth, rich texture reminiscent of the unique spirit of artistic and literary salons of the thirties, peculiar only to the Bohemian shores of the river. It was hard to get, but according to rumors, one of the shops in Pudong it was. They left together before the end of the match. I left before the end of the game. Mark's team won.

Mark with wet hair came out from the locker room. Eva and I at that time discussed the similarities and differences between feminism in the East and in the West. It is believed that in the West women are aware of their rights, unable to gain respect from men.

- Really? - I said sarcastically.

Our conversation ended with the advent of Mark, which eve kissed.

- Let's go shopping she said.

In the Department store "Yaohan" in Pudong district Eva went to the souvenir Department, to the counter with ceramics and products made of silk, and mark and I were sitting in the corner café located on the first floor, drinking coffee and entertaining bi-Bi.

- You really love her? However, I'm sorry, tactless question. It's not my business. - I spit in the hands of a sugar cube, staring at a column of decorative graphics painted on a beige background. The column was blocking us from the crowds of shoppers entering the store and coming out of it.

- She's good, ' said mark, holding the little hand of the son. However, this was not an answer to my question.

Yeah, it seems that everything around is extraordinarily good, including you and me - I said with barely concealed irony. Mastered me envy a few did not meet the unwritten rules that both of us should observe to preserve the existing equilibrium. Our relationship was not a place of envy and sentimentality. In this respect there is a very good proverb: "If you dare, go for it, regardless of the consequences".

- What are you thinking? he asked.

- About what I'm doing with my life. And yet... how can you hurt me. Do you think this can happen?

He said nothing, and suddenly I felt unutterably sad.

- Kiss me softly I said, drew up to the table. He hesitated, then leaned over and kissed me on the lips a warm, wet kiss.

And in that moment, when we moved away from each other, from behind a pillar appeared eve, quite smiling and Laden with packages. On the face of the Brand immediately changed expression. He

took the wife shopping and started speaking German to tell her a joke (I thought that it was a joke or a joke because she laughed). I listened to the cooing of a happy married couple this with the indifference of an outside observer, and then bade them farewell.

- I'll see you for dinner next week - reminded eve.

When I got on plying across the harbour to the ferry, the sky turned a disgusting gray. Leadен clouds hung overhead, like a huge dirty pieces of wool. The surface of the yellowish river water was completely littered with garbage everywhere floated plastic bottles, rotten fruit, cigarette butts. On the surface of the river, like the foam on the hot chocolate, was the ripples, the reflections of light in the muddy water hurt his eyes. Behind the crowded skyscrapers of Lujiazui financial district, glued to each other like fish scales, and ahead loomed haughtily-majestic, overwhelming with its huge size of the building on the Waterfront. Past on the starboard side swam a quaint old black soot from a cargo boat with red flag on the stern.

Breathing in the crisp air, I watched the inexorable approach of the pier in Puxi and felt a strange feeling, akin to *deja vu*: yellow water, the sky in gray and purple bruises, barely perceptible swaying of the ship, rusty nose diving in waves, like *raskladyvaetsya* in front of the pier. It reminded me of a rapprochement with the man or the entry into an unknown world. A step forward, another, and another... but at the end of the road not meant no heat, no understanding. Maybe the convergence is only a prelude to the inevitable breakup?

I'm wearing sunglasses, she went down the stairs and merged with the crowd in the street Zhongshan East. I suddenly wanted to cry. Each of us sometimes need to cry. Even God.

Suddenly it began to rain. At first the sun still shone through its veil, dimly lighting the dense rows of houses, but then hid behind clouds, and blowing a strong sharp wind. I slipped into the nearest post office, but there were lots of people, like me, who had taken refuge from the rain. From their soaking wet hair and clothes smelled of faded tropical foliage. I was comforted with the thought that at least the smell and is not pleasant, it is still many times better than the stench in the tents of the refugees on the border between Kosovo and Albania. To cheer up and not so gloomy looking at the world, it was enough to recall the innumerable disasters occurring on this earth. And what a prosperous and happy just seems my life: I'm young, attractive, and besides, more and writing a novel.

I sighed. Briefly looking through the newspaper at the counter with periodicals, I suddenly saw a note on the events on Hainan. The police exposed the Scam with smuggling luxury cars of prestigious brands, the largest since the founding of the Republic of China. In it were involved senior officials from the authorities of the Peninsula of Leizhou.

I quickly pulled a notebook out of her purse. It was urgent to call Tian-Tian. I suddenly realized that I didn't speak with him for a week. The time just flew by. To him it was time to go.

I made an advance fee, took a plastic token for intercity calls within the country and headed to the fourth cabin. Dialed the phone, but for a long time no one answered. And when I was about to hang up, the phone came a vague voice of Tian-Tian.

Hey, it's Coco... How are you doing?

It was like he was still not quite awake, so some time was silent.

Hey, Coco.

- Are you healthy?

I was anxious at heart. His voice was a strange. His speech sounded from somewhere far away, like from the Jurassic period, there was no warmth or meaning. To me heard a strange muffled grunt.

- Can you hear me? I want to know what's going on with you! - I said, excitement breaking into a scream. He was silent. In the tube was heard only slow, barely discernible breathing.

- Tian-Tian, please say something! Don't scare me!

Hung long pause, which lasted almost half a century. I tried unsuccessfully to cope with them.

And as if from a nightmare he heard his cotton voice:

- I love you.

- I love you too. You're not sick?

- No, I'm... fine.

I bit my lip in utter confusion, staring at the dirty plastic wall of the booth. The people gradually dispersed. So the rain stopped.

- When are you coming back? - I tried to speak as loudly as possible to attract his attention. Judging by his voice, he could fall into oblivion at any moment or disconnect.

Do me a favor. Send me some money - he asked quietly.

What? You have no money on a credit card? - I could not believe my ears. Before the trip he was about thirty thousand yuan. Even with the most expensive resort in Hainan - although he told me that everything is very cheap - he couldn't have spent so much money on a purchase or on women. By nature he was timid as a baby from an Indian tribe, fearfully hiding behind her mother's skirt. Probably, something happened. This time my intuition didn't work, I guessed.

In the right drawer of the chest is a savings book. It is easy to find, he reminded me.

Suddenly I was angry.

You'll have to explain that you spent a lot of money. No need to hide anything from me. Trust me and all tell.

Silence...

- If you do not explain, I will not send money, my tone was deliberately threatening.

Coco, I really missed you, ' he whispered. I became unbearably sad.

"Me too," I said softly.

- You will not leave me?

- No.

- If you have another, still, don't leave me! - he pleaded. His voice was completely exhausted and terribly confused.

- What happened, Tian-Tian?

Making an effort, in a trembling and weak voice, he told me a terrible thing. The news was so monstrous that there was no doubt about its veracity: Tian-Tian was addicted to morphine.

It happened like this: one evening, Tian-Tian was sitting in a roadside restaurant and by chance came across Do-Le from the Shanghai Center for reproductive health. He also came to Hainan, stayed with relatives and worked in their dental clinic.

They noted the meeting, and because of Tian-Tian for quite a long time spent alone, he was glad that he has someone to talk to. Li-Lo had taken him places that he didn't even know existed and if I knew about their existence, hardly dared to go there alone. Illegal gambling houses, of dubious beauty salons, abandoned warehouses, where he arranged a mob hit. Tian-Tian all that was foreign, but he liked the society of Li-Le, his sophistication, looseness and wit.

Li-Lo was very friendly, but under the cover of kindness lurked alienation. It is this quality most of all impressed by Tian-Tian in others. They were very similar. In the eyes of every expression of warmth and participation in a blink of an eye alternated with coldness and detachment. Whatever they were doing - speaking, listening, or laughing, - their eyes remained aloof, and on her face lay the seal of indifference and melancholy.

Also known as the quiet southern breeze, they wandered along the banks shoulder to shoulder, endlessly talking about Henry Miller, about the generation of "beatniks," or admiring the sunset from tiny balcony, idly sipping pure white juice from a fresh coconut. Once on the road they met a heavily painted young women. This whore went in search of customers, before the hunt closed his tired, forgetting the love of the heart of the castle. They were pathetic - glued smile, migaldi nose and chest, seemingly prehistoric fossils. They were surrounded by the atmosphere of a southern resort full of noise, the glitz and illusions.

For the first time Tian-Tian has injected himself with morphine at the clinic, owned by relatives of Li-Le. He showed him how it's done, and offered to try. In addition, the clinic was empty. It was night: outside, the rare passers-by talking in an incomprehensible dialect, past with a roar swept up from a distance was heard the horns of the ferries.

Tian-Tian was plunged into a completely unknown world. Bizarre chimerical mountains and valleys swayed and oscillated, swinging incredibly huge, three-dimensional shadows. Extremely sweet breeze was playing with the strings of the branches and softly rustled in the foliage. In the hollows, one after another blossomed pink flowers, forming a vast ocean of subtle colors. It's a heady feeling unusually light and enveloping warmth of the womb, this sweet oblivion enveloped all around, permeated through and penetrated into the heart.

A wax disc of the moon that appeared, then disappeared, the mind floats away and came back.

Things got out of control. Every night Tian-Tian reveled in pink dreams. Deadly pink liquid spread through his veins, enveloping his weak and helpless body, circling in a poisonous killer flow and taking in the emptiness. Nerves jangled from the effort.

Still I can not without horror and disgust to imagine this picture. Since then, our life rapidly went

downhill. Maybe it was predetermined from the very beginning, from the day when the airport is small Tian-Tian gave the urn with the ashes of his father, when he left school due to a sudden silence, when we first met in the cafe "Green stem" when its wet with sweat and limp powerless body goes limp on my first night when I allowed another man to touch me. Since he could not get rid of the painful memories, to escape from the clutches of despair. He was not able to leave them, to distinguish between past and present fears. Over his life and death hung in the inexorable shadow of his own sexual weakness.

When I thought about it, I wanted to scream from the pain. This merciless self-torture, this obsession was beyond my intellect and physical strength. And even then, when before my eyes appeared an angelic face Tiana-Tiana, I just wanted to collapse to the ground, dead, cut off from the world. When the heart is bleeding, along with her dropwise to go and life.

Li-Lo was running errands, exchanging money Tian-Tian on countless packets of white powder. They had sat in the hotel room, and the cat was sleeping, perched in the warm from the constant work of a TV. He worked all day and night, incessantly reporting about the robbery and various engineering projects for municipal authorities. Lee-Lai and Tian-Tian almost stopped eating, the metabolism is slowed down. The room door was not locked, and the boy from the restaurant would bring the food; they themselves were too lazy to even move. The room was a strange heady smell of decay, sugary flavor fruit jelly in combination with the putrid stench.

Gradually to save or where it was not possible to find a reliable dealer, they started to walk to the drugstore for cough syrup, from which Li-Le was prepared for some disgusting potion the substitute drug. The taste was disgusting, but for them it was better than nothing.

Once the Feather broke down and ran away. Haven't fed her in a few days, the owner completely abandoned it. And she dared to escape, completely starved, with matted, dull coat and stood outside edges. Most likely, she's wild nights wandering through the garbage dumps in search of food and heart-rending cries calling male.

I was shocked and could not gather my thoughts. Insomnia dried up body. Around swam shapeless shadows, taking the most unexpected shapes, the imagination painted a hopeless picture. All that night I tossed about from fever and despair, endlessly losing on a dusty screen memory all the events of our lives with Tian-Tian, starting from the first meeting. We were the doomed pair of lovers living on earth.

But our love was so selfless that no one could leave the other, especially now. Fear that Tian-Tian can disappear, sink in the universal chaos, weightless as a speck of dust, my heart was broken. I loved him like never before. And begged not to go crazy before sunrise and see the sunrise.

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