

No word you have heard.

23 Return from Spain

You look how I look.

Interested in vchuzhe what color, come,

My native hair?

Or is it just speculation [94]...

"Public image Ltd" [95]

Getting hot. Among the old poplars planted in the days of the foreign concessions, incessantly chirping cicadas. In the hidden urban gardens are blackened from the soot of automobile degree. The old mansions and their elegant inhabitants freeze during the day but come alive at night. The mossy alleys, the streets, wedged mass of skyscrapers, trampling on dreams and fantasies, tapping high heels. Their glib sound spreads in all directions, ringing in the ears of the city, a relentless reminder of prosaicness of the world.

One evening, when I had just finished this paragraph, my attention was suddenly attracted by the clatter of high heels on the stairs and persistent knocking at the door. I opened. On the threshold stood a stranger of middle age. Bright outfit, a clear focus and the whole exotic look is unmistakably told me, who was an unexpected guest.

- Tian-Tian home? - a few moments she looked anxiously at me and then smiled: - You must be Coco.

I automatically smoothed down his disheveled hair and noticed that his fingers stained with ink. Even worse, I was stale and badly wrinkled negligee, and under it using white cotton it was obvious from the first glance - nothing at all. I folded my arms on my stomach, trying to pretend everything is fine and invited her in. Meanwhile, she slipped into the bathroom and quickly pulled the panties that even the night before put it in the washing machine. Had to hold on to. I combed the hair up, casually glanced at his reflection in the mirror. I would never never have occurred that the mother of Tian-Tian will come to our house without warning.

From the very beginning everything went wrong. Mentally, I was still immersed in the work. I think any in my place probably would be embarrassed, said to her apartment her mother's boyfriend, who also became an addict and now you were locked up in a dark medical center. Well, how to tell her what happened to her son? And suddenly she would become hysterical or faint? Maybe you can yell at me and blame the fact that I didn't care about her son? And why am I being so irresponsible and carefree live as if nothing had happened and write a ridiculous novel? No, I definitely will tear off your head!

I looked at the kitchens and were forever trying to find something edible. But the fridge was completely empty, and only at the bottom of the pot remained half-finished and already dried coffee. All alone I got a Cup and scraped dried brown powder with a knife, poured in a Cup and added boiling water and sugar. The surface has a nasty white foam, as the glop that is usually served in cheap cafes. I took a SIP. Well, at least not bitter.

The guest sat on the sofa, still appraising ogodiva room. Finally, her eyes rested on the portrait of

Tian-Tian, one of the most interesting of his works. He was able to capture and correctly convey that his usual cold expression, from which his eyes seemed covered with thin ice. It was impossible to understand what emotions he wanted to show in this portrait. Involuntarily it seemed that, looking at yourself in the mirror and transferring the image onto the canvas, he simply reveled in his solitude.

I gave her coffee. It thanked. Carefully looked at me from head to toe:

- And you're cuter than I thought. Did not expect you so thin.

I laughed in his temples pounded.

Oh, sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. I am a mother of Tian-Tian. You can call me Connie.

She pulled from her purse a pack of expensive Cuban cigars. I handed her the lighter, and she carefully lit a cigar. The room was filled with a grayish-blue smoke, slightly tart, but with a distinctive exotic flavor. We both relaxed a bit.

- I purposely came without warning, as the son wrote me not to come back.

Her face lit up with a sad smile. She didn't have wrinkles, black and shiny permed hair was close-cropped in the "children's" style, like Yue-SAI Kan [96]. Looks like all Chinese women, long time lived abroad, the same tastes: they all like such hairstyles, brown shades, lipstick Burgundy and elegant, tailored clothing. Perhaps the way of life that they have to abroad, encourages them to care about their appearance if they tend not to stand out against other successful members of Western society, in which the Chinese have always been contemptuously treated as outcasts.

For some time she kept her eyes on the portrait of Tian-Tian, where he was like sad, just emerging from the water man. Then I glanced at our bed, which we never made. I sat there in complete confusion and look forward to biased maternal interrogation. Indeed, she was the first to break the silence.

- When Tian-Tian back? I guess I should've pre-write or call, ' said Connie. Her eyes were full of hope and alarm that the girl on the eve of important events.

I got ready to answer, but language did not obey, and dry mouth:

- He...

- Oh Yes, - she woke up and she took from her purse the photograph. - I have a photo of him ten years ago. Then he was almost a child, small in stature. I'm afraid at the meeting, I can not find it.

She handed me the picture. She looked at me skinny teen with a calm gaze, dressed in a brown jacket, corduroy pants and white athletic shoes. It was filmed in front of a huge plant - fire-red, and in sunlight his hair seemed soft and fluffy, like a dandelion, so soft, like the wind could carry them away at any moment. Tian-Tian in the fall of 1989. From this old color photos of breath of something almost forgotten. Again I had the feeling of *déjà vu*.

- Actually, Tian-Tian now doesn't live here... and even though it was unspeakably hard, I told her the truth. In memory one after another floated vague picture of the past, sentimental and passionate.

The Cup had the Connie out of hand. It is not broke, but a dark red skirt was soaked through. Connie grew pale and was silent for some time.

I felt a strange sense of relief because another woman, who played an important role in the fate of Tian-Tian, to share my pain. It was evident that she had difficulty taking it in stride. I wanted was to run for a towel so she could blot the stains on the skirt, but she motioned that it does not matter in the least and that she doesn't have.

- I have a clean skirt. You can choose something appropriate and change.

- I would like to visit him. You can? - She looked at me in the eyes froze a helpless expression.

- It's against the rules. But after a few days he may return home, ' I said, choosing her words carefully. Then again asked her to change clothes and dry the skirt.

- No, thank you, ' murmured Connie. - This is all my fault. I had to leave him. I hate myself. For years I've had nothing to give him. We had to take him to Spain. Even if he didn't want to go. I had to force him... she wept, blowing her nose into a handkerchief.

- Why you never came back to see him? - I asked directly.

And although I was touched by her tears, and the lump stood in his throat, and I still don't think she's a good mother. Intellectually, I knew that no matter what terrible secrets were hidden, neither in the past this came from Spain, women, I can't judge her. However, I always felt alone and besplatnosti Tian-Tian, his confusion and obsession grim Ghost was a tragic way connected with the mother figure. Their relationship was similar to the rotting umbilical cord, forever connected with the baby and the womb. It was worth it to leave family childhood her son was tiresome, and when the ashes of her husband were taken to Shanghai by plane, in the life of Tian-Tian came the fateful turning point, and it turned into chaos. It was then that he lost faith in the talent, happiness and plunged into hopelessness, as being, every cell of which has suddenly lost the ability to resist disease and destruction. Mother, son, darkness, death, fear, indifference, grief, cause and effect - all mixed together like a Buddhist endless cycle of reincarnation.

- He must hate me, I disgust him... ' she sobbed, talking to yourself. - If I move here and stay, perhaps, his hatred will grow even stronger. He always suspected that his father died because of me...

Suddenly her eyes took on a hard, cold expression, as if the streams of icy winter rain lashed the windowpane.

- This is all because the old woman to slander me, and the son believes she communicates with me only when absolutely necessary. We barely keep in touch. My only consolation is the opportunity to send him money. I was so busy running the restaurant. I dreamed that someday all the money will go to the son, and that he understands that the mother loves him like no one in the whole world.

Tears rain drops flowed down her cheeks.

I gave her handkerchiefs. It was unbearable to see her cry, unable to hide their feelings. A woman crying is like the beating of raindrops on the surface of the silver drum. Its rhythm is fascinating, the special affects, the most sensitive chord in the soul of anyone who will be next, bringing to tears.

I stood up, walked to the wardrobe came a narrow, knee-length, black skirt that was never worn since I bought a year ago. I put her in front of Connie, wanting to somehow stop the tears and sad memories.

Even now, when I came back, he may not want to see me, ' she said quietly.

- Can be wash? The bathroom has hot water. This skirt looks set to be fit well. Please put it on, I looked anxiously at her. Powdered cheeks were divorced from tears, and the red skirt you're disgusting coffee stains.

Thank you, you dear, good girl, she noisily blew his nose and straightened his bangs. The movement regained its graceful femininity. - If possible, give me another Cup of coffee.

- Oh, sorry - I smiled sheepishly, it was the latter. No more drops.

Before leaving, she put on my skirt, which she fit perfectly. Connie hugged me and said he would look forward to meeting your son. Now she and her husband are negotiating with the agents for the sale of real estate, looking for a downtown building into a restaurant. On a piece of paper she wrote her phone and a room in the hotel "Mir" on the Waterfront, where they stopped.

- We'll see you all again soon. I have a gift for you, I didn't bring it with you. Next time will definitely give. And there's a gift for Tian-Tian, she looked at me with gratitude.

We had sympathy and understanding. Behind both remained voluntary or involuntary transgressions, regrets, and pain. I could feel them with every cell of the body, every nerve. But even if this woman named Connie, who appeared out of nowhere, caused the death of her husband, even if once her heart was subject to the forces of evil, even if it last until the end of time will be hidden thousands and thousands of terrible secrets, even if she was now the living embodiment of all that can not produce rejection, contempt and condemnation in my soul... even then we are inevitably a moment would unite a sense of compassion... Like my heart is covered by the impulse of sincere tenderness, touched the gracious hand of the Lord, outstretched in a vain hope to give the world salvation.

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