

## 英语俱乐部 English Club

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认识 Annie 以后，阿碧发现，自己的世界慢慢向未知打开了一道门。

起初只是些零散的变化。吃饭、聚会时，偶尔会有外国人加入，她多半坐在一旁听，听他们的语速，也听那些未必全能明白的句子。慢慢地，她开始敢回应一两句，虽然简单断续，却不再像从前那样局促。语言不再只是书本上的句型，而成了一种交流的工具。

阿碧意识到，仅靠偶尔遇见，并不足以提升语言。她想寻找更多这样的机会。于是有个周末，Annie 带她去了华强北路的一间英语俱乐部。

那里并不特别，借用一家员工餐厅，设施齐全：饮料柜台、卡座、圆桌，还有一块可作表演的空地。人不算多，却始终热闹。有人站着，有人围坐，说话间夹杂着笑声和不太流畅的英语。空气里带着一丝紧张的兴奋，仿佛每个人都在尝试跨过一道看不见的界限。

Annie 在那里显然很活跃。她一进去就被人拉住，很快在场内走动，介绍彼此，提议小游戏，还不时上台主持。她的英语流利而自然，带着美式口音，光听声音，很难分辨是中国人。气氛在她的带动下变得轻松，她也帮助许多想提升英语的人逐渐建立起信心。

来这里的，多是从各地到深圳寻梦的年轻人。有人练英语，有人交朋友，也有人隐约怀着别的期待——或是工作，或是出国，或只是想靠近更宽广的世界。未必人人流利，但都有一股热情，这一点，比什么都重要。

有时也会有人带外国朋友来。一旦出现，场面便立刻变化。人们自然围过去，一圈又一圈，尽量在短短几分钟里说上几句话，像是在检验自己这段时间的努力。那些结结巴巴的话语里，有紧张，也藏着期待。

来多了，阿碧渐渐明白，这里不只是练英语的地方，也像一个被放大的舞台——语言、外表、背景，都容易成为被注视的焦点。

有个周末，她和阿洁一同去了俱乐部。那天她们没有挤进最热闹的人群，而是在一旁遇到两位从加拿大回来的香港人。他们看起来与旁人并无差别，却说着西方口音的英语，听不懂普通话。没有人特意围着他们，他们也只是安静坐着，偶尔与人简单交谈。

阿碧和阿洁与他们聊了起来。一开始并不容易。她们试着用零星的粤语，对方也努力回应；转到英语，句子又变得断断续续。有时说不清，就用手比划，或直接写在纸上，但对方不认识中文字，只能笑着再解释。误会难免，但没人介意。来这里的人，本就不太在意内容是否真实，更像是在练习表达。大家仿佛回到孩童时代，在交流中获得乐趣，也不再拘泥于对错。

错误常有，停顿也难免，但没有人因此退缩。聊得久了，话题渐渐自然起来——谈他们在加拿大的生活，对香港与深圳的印象。阿碧发现，当注意力不再放在“说得对不对”上，反而更容易理解对方，也更容易表达自己。

接下来的几个周末，他们几乎都会在那里见面。没有约定，只是时间到了，自然相遇。谈话渐渐顺畅，偶尔还能开几句简单的玩笑。那种熟悉感，并非一瞬生成，而是在一次次略显笨拙的交流中慢慢积累。

阿碧渐渐觉得，语言本身变得没那么重要了。重要的是，对方是否愿意停下来听你说完，你是否愿意多花一点时间去理解。

后来有一天，他们提起，很快就要回加拿大了。语气很平静，像顺带一说。阿碧点了点头，也没有太多反应。在这座城市里，离别并不罕见，人们来来去去，聚散显得自然。

再过一个周末，他们果然没有再来。

俱乐部依旧热闹，新面孔不断出现，也有熟人不再出现。Annie仍在场中忙碌，笑着与不同的人交谈。围着外国人的的人群，依旧聚了又散。

阿碧站在人群中，沉默着。忽然之间，她明白了——那段时间里，她学到的，也许并不只是几句表达。更多的是：从不敢开口，到愿意尝试；从拘泥于准确，到相信交流本身。那些短暂的相遇，也让

她渐渐学会，不再计较时间长短，只去问自己，是否珍惜过那一段同行的时光。

### **Weekend English Club**

After meeting Annie, Abi found that her world had slowly begun to open a door to the unknown.

At first, the changes were subtle. At meals or small gatherings, foreigners would sometimes join, and Abi usually sat off to the side, listening—to the rhythm of their speech, to sentences she didn't always fully understand. Gradually, she began to respond with a word or two. Simple, halting, but no longer tense. Language was no longer just something from a textbook; it had begun to feel like a way of connecting.

Abi realized that occasional encounters were not enough to improve. She wanted more opportunities to practice her English. So, one weekend, Annie took her to an English club on Huaqiangbei Road.

The place was nothing special—it borrowed a staff cafeteria. There were drinks, booths, round tables, and an open area that could serve as a stage. The crowd was not large, yet always lively. Some stood, some sat in groups, speaking in a mix of laughter and imperfect English. There was a faint tension in the air, mixed with excitement, as if everyone were trying to cross an invisible line.

Annie was clearly at home there. The moment she arrived, people pulled her in. She moved easily through the room—introducing people, suggesting games, sometimes hosting on stage. Her English was fluent, with an American accent; by sound alone, one could hardly tell she was Chinese. Under her lead, the atmosphere relaxed, and many people seemed to gain confidence.

Most who came were young people from different places, drawn to Shenzhen in search of something. Some came to practice English, some to make friends, others for less defined hopes—work, going abroad, or simply moving closer to a wider world. Not everyone spoke well, but they all had a kind of energy. That mattered more than anything.

Sometimes people brought foreign friends. As soon as they appeared, the room shifted. Circles would form around them, layer upon layer, as everyone tried to say a few sentences within a few minutes—almost as if testing their own progress. In those hesitant words, there was nervousness, but also expectation.

After coming a few times, Abi understood that this was not just a place to practice English. It was also a kind of amplified stage—where language, appearance, and background could all draw attention.

One weekend, she went with Ajie. Instead of joining the busiest group, they met two Hong Kong returnees who had been living in Canada. They looked no different from anyone else, but spoke English with Western accents and did not understand Mandarin. No one paid them special attention. They sat quietly, speaking with others only now and then.

Abi and Ajie started talking with them. It wasn't easy at first. They tried bits of Cantonese; the others responded as best they could. Switching to English, the sentences became broken again. When words failed, they gestured, or wrote things down—but the others couldn't read Chinese, so they laughed and tried again. Misunderstandings were common, but no one minded. People didn't come here for perfect content—they came to practice expression. It felt a little like childhood, finding simple joy in trying to communicate, without worrying too much about correctness.

Mistakes were constant, and pauses unavoidable, but no one backed away. As they talked longer, conversation grew more natural—about life in Canada, impressions of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Abi noticed that when she stopped focusing on whether she was “right,” she understood more, and spoke more easily.

Over the next few weekends, they met almost every time. There was no plan—they simply showed up and found each other. Conversation flowed more smoothly, and sometimes they even made small jokes. The sense of familiarity did not appear all at once; it built gradually, through those slightly awkward exchanges.

Abi began to feel that language itself mattered less. What mattered was whether the other person was willing to listen to the end, and whether you were willing to take the time to understand.

Then one day, they mentioned they would soon return to Canada. They said it lightly, almost in passing. Abi nodded, without much reaction. In this city, partings were common. People came and went; meetings and separations felt natural.

The next weekend, they did not come. The club remained lively. New faces appeared; familiar ones disappeared. Annie was still busy, moving through the room, talking and laughing. Crowds still gathered and dispersed around foreigners.

Abi stood quietly among the crowd. In that moment, she understood that what she had gained was more than a few smoother phrases. It was the shift from silence to trying, from chasing accuracy to trusting connection. In those brief encounters, she had also learned not to measure time by its length, but by whether it was truly treasured.