

命运的纽带

The Ties That Fate Weaves

Winnie Mo

万事开头难。有了第一次在火车站画肖像的经历后，阿碧与阿洁便常常去。她们靠着墙坐下，不张扬，也不喧嚣：阿碧低头速写；阿洁观察行人、练习粤语、招徕客人。那一方窄小的空间，恰好容得下两颗谨慎却渴望成长的心。

来来往往的旅客，有人匆匆赶路，有人焦躁不安，也有人倚着行李沉沉睡去。众生的姿态成了阿碧笔下的素材。画得越多，她的心越静；说得越多，阿洁的语言越流利，胆子也悄然大了起来。

半天能画好几张的时候有，整日无人问津的时候也有。收入难以估计：有人慷慨，随手给两三百；也有人拿了画便匆匆离去，头也不回。她们不计较，只当是人生的必修课——只要心里有目标，一时得失都不算什么。

阿碧乐在画中，一本本速写带来的满足，是金钱比不上的；阿洁的粤语愈发从容，那份自信成了她最稳的底气。无论赚不赚钱，两人都从这份劳作里得到一种难言的踏实与安宁。

渐渐地，经常往返罗湖的人都认得她们。阿碧沉浸在画里，对外界反应慢；阿洁却不同，她记得熟悉的面孔，也学会了模仿港人的语调，常常一句话便逗笑路人，让寒意里多了一分人气。

一天，一个熟悉的声音从人群中传来：“帮我画一张吧？我还要等一个多小时。”阿碧抬头，是第一次来找她画肖像的那个男人。仍旧背着包，神情疲惫，却带着随遇而安的松弛。

她还没开口，阿洁已经亮起了眼：“你上次来过，我记得你。”

男人笑了，自我介绍：“我叫阿唐，在香港工作，父母在广州，经常来回跑。”对他而言，火车站是奔波的起点；对阿碧和阿洁，却成了她们的驿站。

这一回，他坐得自然，一面让阿碧画着，一面和阿洁随口闲谈。他们聊香港的生活，也聊他如何在忙碌里抽时间回广州看父母——这些恰是阿洁感兴趣的。语言不再是障碍，两人谈得格外投缘。阿碧静静画着，感到两人之间有一团微弱的暖意，像一盏灯，不经意地亮了。

画完后，阿唐留下联系方式，还说了下次到深圳的时间。阿洁看着那串数字，笑意轻轻地浮起来。

从那以后，阿唐每次来深圳都会提前告诉阿洁。他们常在候车区碰面，有时聊天，有时让阿碧给他画张速写。不知从何时起，两人的陌生感悄然退去。阿唐不再只是在等车时顺便见见她，有时甚至特意过来。

阿洁也不再常陪阿碧去火车站，而是寻个理由同阿唐约会。没有阿洁的陪伴，火车站对阿碧也淡了。心底的失落，让画笔一时难以落下。但想到阿洁的理想——找个外国男友，离开这片让她迷惘的土地。阿碧的心又慢慢松了。

那时的香港，对她们来说，已经是半个“国外”。阿洁正在靠近她的愿望。阿碧知道，自己该替她高兴。

不久，他们在蔡屋围租下一间房。阿洁从阿英家搬走，屋子安静了许多。

形影不离一年多，如今阿洁有了自己的方向，要离开她。阿碧心里难免失落，却也清楚阿洁是个有目标、有行动力的人。她想起阿云说过的话：“生活有很多选择，只要坚持，哪条路都会走向光明。”这或许正是阿洁的光明。

我常常想：阿碧和阿洁若不是先认识了阿英，或许不会去香蜜湖；不去香蜜湖，便不会遇见阿云，也可能不会到火车站去画肖像。若不是那一幅幅肖像的开始，阿洁大概也遇不上阿唐。看似散落的一桩桩经历，其实暗中藏着无形的纽带。

阿碧成全了自己的画笔，也无意间成全了阿洁的语言、自信，甚至一段爱情的发生。命运有时安静，安静得像什么都没发生。但回望时才明白，每一步都是下一步的起点。正如佛法所说：“有因有缘，事易成；有因无缘，果不生。”

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Beginnings are always the hardest. After their first attempt sketching portraits at the train station, Abi and Ajei began returning there often. They sat by the wall—quiet, unobtrusive. Abi was often absorbed when sketching; Ajei watched the crowd, practiced her Cantonese, and tried to bring in customers. That small corner held two cautious hearts, both eager for a chance to grow.

Travelers passed by in all states—rushing, restless, or dozing against their luggage. Their fleeting expressions became subjects of Abi’s drawing. The more she drew, the calmer she felt. The more Ajei spoke, the more fluent and confident she became.

Some days they completed several portraits; other days, no one stopped. Their earnings were unpredictable. A few customers were generous, handing over a couple hundred yuan; others took the portrait and walked away without a word. The girls didn’t dwell on it—just another lesson in life. With a goal in mind, small wins and losses didn’t matter much.

Abi found joy in her sketchbooks—page after page more rewarding than money. Ajei’s Cantonese grew smoother, and the confidence it brought became her anchor. Whether they earned anything or not, the work gave them a quiet sense of stability.

Soon, people who travelled regularly through Lo Wu recognized them. Abi stayed focused on her drawings and responded slowly to the world around her, but Ajei was different—she remembered familiar faces and picked up Hong Kong accents well enough to make passersby smile. Her warmth made the cold station feel less harsh.

One day, a familiar voice rose from the crowd: “Can you draw me again? I’ve got more than an hour to wait.”

Abi looked up. It was the man who had come for a portrait on their first day. Still carrying a backpack, still looking a little tired, yet calm and much relaxed.

Before Abi could speak, Ajei's face lit up. "You've been here before! I remember you."

The man smiled and introduced himself. "I'm Atang. I work in Hong Kong. My parents live in Guangzhou, so I travel back and forth."

For him, the station was the start of a commute; for Abi and Ajei, it had become a waypoint on their journey.

This time he sat naturally, chatting with Ajei while Abi sketched. They talked about Hong Kong's pace, his work, and how he still made time to visit his parents—topics that deeply interested Ajei. Language was no longer a barrier; their conversation flowed easily. Abi drew in silence, sensing a gentle warmth forming between them, like a small lamp quietly lighting up.

After the portrait was done, Atang left his number and told them when he would next be in Shenzhen. Ajei looked at those digits, and a sweet smile appeared.

From then on, whenever Atang planned a trip, he told Ajei ahead of time. They often met in the waiting area—sometimes to chat, sometimes for another quick sketch. At some point the awkwardness between them faded. Atang no longer met her just because he had time to kill; sometimes he came purposely to see her.

Ajei also stopped accompanying Abi to the station as often, finding excuses instead to meet Atang. Without Ajei's company, the train station lost its appeal to Abi. A small disappointment sat in her mind and slowed her hand. But when she remembered Ajei's dream—to find a foreign boyfriend and leave the land that confused her—Abi felt her heart loosen again.

Back then, Hong Kong already felt like “half a foreign country” to them. Ajei was getting closer to her wish. Abi knew she ought to be happy for her.

Soon, Atang and Ajei rented a small room in Caiwuwei. Ajei moved out of AYing’s home, and the place suddenly felt quieter.

After more than a year of being inseparable, Ajei had found her new direction and was leaving. Abi felt the loss, but she also knew that Ajei was someone with goals and the courage to pursue them. She remembered what Ayun once said: “Life offers many choices. As long as you keep going, any path can lead to light.” Perhaps this was the light Ajei had found.

I often think: if Abi and Ajei hadn’t met AYing, they wouldn’t have gone to Xiangmi Lake; without Xiangmi Lake, there would have been no encounter with Ayun, no sketching at the train station. Without those portraits, Ajei might never have met Atang. What seem like scattered events are often held together by invisible threads.

Abi fulfilled herself through her pencil, and without meaning to, she also helped Ajei get the opportunities to practice her Cantonese, her confidence, and even her love. Fate can be so quiet—so quiet that it feels like nothing has happened. But looking back, every step was simply leading to the next. As Buddhist teaching says: “With cause and conditions, things come to be; Without them, nothing can arise.”