

## 无形的手 Invisible Hands

Winnie Mo

阿洁从阿英家搬出去后，原本三人之间那种略显杂乱，却有自己节奏的日子，忽然变得安静了。少了她的勇气与任性，少了那些突来的想像与干脆的决定。房间静得有些空落。

阿英倒是自在了许多，可以放心睡大觉，也能整天对着电视，不再有人催促她出门。

阿碧则像被迫在两个家之间来回奔走的孩子——有时住在阿英家，有时又去阿洁那里待上一两天。两地相隔近一小时车程，每一次移动，都像是在确认自己短暂的归属。

她的绘画热情也悄悄退去，色彩在笔下变得迟疑。日子重复，偶尔的失落便带她走到街上，观察那些行色匆匆的面孔；或在公园深处坐下，看暮色一点点压低的树影。她常翻报纸杂志，一边寻找可能性，一边等待某种难以言明的好运出现。

那时通讯不便，只能靠座机。若想联络，得先找到一部座机，输入对方的号码，再守着电话等待回拨。若对方没感到震动，或一时找不到电话，便只能干等。有时一等就是半小时，像把心丢进井里，只剩回音。

一天夜里，阿英家来了客人。阿碧不便久留，看看时间已过十点，只好去阿洁那里借住，也来不及通知。她急匆匆赶到车站，正遇上一辆公交车驶来。车厢昏黄，乘客稀少：有人打着哈欠，有人已经睡着。阿碧背着包坐在窗边，看着这些陌生人的疲态，忽然觉得自己也是其中的一员——在城市里漂着，不知下一站会把她带往哪里。

下车后，她穿过一条潮气四散的昏暗街道。到了楼下，大铁门紧闭，她等了几分钟，趁住客返家才跟着进入。

阿洁住在最顶层，两户人家之间隔着一片露台。阿碧爬到楼顶，看见阿洁房里亮着灯。正要敲门，却听见阿唐的声音。她的手顿时停住，心里闪过一个念头：今晚要睡在哪里？

她站在露台上，看着脚下密密麻麻的屋顶，却没有一处属于她。夜已深了，再去找地方也无意义。她在角落找了处能挡雨的位置坐下，准备撑到天亮。细雨落下，风越吹越冷。她望着灰暗的天空，心里竟升起一种奇异的平静：世上还有更多人连这样的落脚处都没有。

不久，一个女人气喘吁吁地从楼下走上来。看见阿碧坐在门外，她停下脚步，聊了几句。是阿洁的邻居，阿芬。明白情况后，她只说了一句：“来我这儿住吧。”便领她进屋。

事情就这么发生了。没有预兆，没有道理。两个素未谋面的女人，在深夜的楼顶相遇，随后睡在同一间屋，同一张床，像被一只无形的手随意摆到同一个位置。

这一切自然，却又带着轻微的不真实。阿碧躺在陌生却温暖的床上，忽然产生一种说不清的恍惚：每当她走到无路可走时，总会突然出现一块空位。但它从哪里来？属于谁？又会引她向何处？

她并未因此踏实。只是明白，人生的进退并没有固定答案。像是被一双“无形的手”推着向前，而那只推着她的手是谁的，或是否真的存在，她也不再深究。

## **Invisible Hands**

### *Winnie Mo*

After Ajie moved out of Aying's place, the days the three of them once shared—messy at times but following their own rhythm—suddenly fell quiet. Her courage, her impulsiveness, those sudden ideas and quick decisions were gone. The room felt peaceful, but with a faint emptiness.

Aying, however, was quite content. She could sleep without worry and spend whole days watching TV, free from anyone urging her to step outside.

Abi, meanwhile, became like a child shuttling between two homes—sometimes staying with Aying, sometimes spending a night or two at Ajie's. The two

places were nearly an hour apart, and each trip felt like checking where she temporarily belonged.

Her passion for painting quietly faded. Colors hesitated under her brush. Days repeated themselves, and whenever a soft sadness crept in, she would head out alone—studying the hurried faces on the streets, or sitting in the deeper corners of the park, watching the trees grow thinner as dusk descended. She often flipped through newspapers and magazines, searching for possibilities while waiting for a kind of luck that could not be named.

Communication was inconvenient then; everyone relied on pagers. To reach someone, you had to find a landline, enter the pager number, and wait by the phone for a callback. If the person didn't feel the vibration or couldn't find a phone in time, all you could do was wait. Sometimes half an hour passed, like dropping your heart into a well and listening to the echo fade.

One night, Aying had visitors. Not wanting to intrude, Abi glanced at the clock—already past ten—and decided to spend the night at Ajie's. There was no time to notify her. She hurried to the bus stop just as a bus pulled in. The dimly lit bus had few passengers: someone yawning, someone already asleep. With her bag on her lap, Abi sat by the window, watching the tired faces of these strangers. Suddenly she felt she was no different from them—drifting through the city, unsure where the next stop would take her.

After getting off, she walked down a damp, dim street. When she reached the building, the iron gate was locked. She waited a few minutes, then slipped in behind a tenant who returned home.

Ajie lived on the top floor, where two apartments shared a rooftop terrace. Climbing the stairs, Abi saw the light shining from Ajie's room. She lifted her hand to knock—but froze when she heard Atang's voice from inside. A thought flashed through her mind: Where will I sleep tonight?

She stood on the terrace, looking at the dense rows of rooftops below, yet none of them held a place for her. The night was deep. Searching for another place felt pointless. She found a corner that could block the rain and sat down, ready to wait for morning. Fine drizzle began to fall. The wind grew colder. Staring at the gray

sky, she felt a strange calm: there were many people in the world who didn't even have a place like this.

Before long, a woman came up the stairs, slightly out of breath. Seeing Abi seated outside, she paused and spoke with her. She was Ajie's neighbor, Afin. After understanding the situation, she simply said, "Come stay with me tonight," and led her into her room.

It happened just like that. No warning, no logic. Two women who had never met before crossed paths on a rooftop in the middle of the night, then ended up sharing the same room and the same bed—as if placed there by an unseen hand.

Everything unfolded naturally, yet with a faint sense of unreality. Lying on the unfamiliar but warm bed, Abi felt a quiet disorientation: whenever she reached a point where she had nowhere left to go, a small space always appeared out of nowhere. But where did it come from? Who did it belong to? And where was it leading her?

She did not feel secure because of it. She only understood that life's directions rarely offered clear answers. It was as if an "invisible hand" kept pushing her forward—and who it belonged to, or whether it truly existed, she no longer tried to figure out.