

Flaming the whale

-for my teacher Yu Dongtian

程月旻

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In 2004, when I was eighteen years old, I studied, with the aspiration of becoming one of playwrights, in a well-known academy in the heart of Shanghai. Every Monday afternoon at one o'clock, nine of us girls were roll-called by our acting teacher in a rehearsal room on the top floor of the academic penthouse. We then learned to mimic and to create, plants, animals, fairies, aliens. The rest of the afternoon, we watched a film or an episode of TV series, depending on the time remained. Sunny afternoons, the acting teacher led us either to the Huadong hospital or to the Huashan hospital, both of which were a block away from the academy, to observe the lives and the death.

On most of the unscheduled school days, the acting teacher led us out of the Jingan district into the Zhujiajiao Town. The acting teacher owned a secluded little apartment on the corner of the town, with a view of the great Yangtze River and of most importance, without a didactic middle-aged male supervisor. If we had great literature ghost hauling on our minds, we popped up a creative performance workshop. In most cases, temporarily lack of inspiration, we called a barbecue party and played popular games.

In her days of being released from the job of the acting teacher, the woman named Yu Yu, from Chengdu, the capital city of a southeast province. She was an extremely vigorous, trenchant lady of twenty-nine or thirty, a doctoral candidate for performance studies, and altogether a very impressive person. I am not aiming to amend or to adorn here. As far as I knew, she had published two novels, wrote and produced an acclaimed animated TV series at the age of twenty-one. And it was known that she had been awarded the position of a lecturer even before she accomplished undergraduate degree. She was energetic. She was intelligent. She was shining wherever she walked about. Every one of us, no matter how conceited or eccentric, adored and respected her.

The appearance of the acting teacher in 2004, though the time of more than a decade, is still visible when I closed my eyes. If admirations were kilos, she should have earned too many from us. Having being a heavy smoker and on a strict diet, even under the treatment of acupuncture, with the height of around 170cm, she was definitely 80kg, not less than that. Her head, although with a mass of wisdoms inside, was much bulkier than what a beautiful woman should have. Her waistline was just the same size as her breast line. Compared to her sturdy arms, her feet were extremely tenuous. At that time, however, There's no doubt for me, that all the features of female film stars, eastern and western ones, had been eclipsed and vanished, when the acting teacher gleamed her eyes, opened her pouty and fleshy lips and articulated her thoughts; except for an American film actor named Chloë Sevigny, who gained reputation for her bisexual charm in independent films, who perhaps caught one or two expressions of our acting teacher.

When summer came and the temperature rose, high enough for girls to lose their minds, we (Most of us, were single then, falling in unsustainable crushes time to time.) relied heavily on the advices of our veteran acting teacher. By then, we sat on the glossy sap of the courtyard, opened beers, tiptoed the flowing water and

fantasised about romances. (It was forbidden to swim. However, as the acting teacher proposed, some of the girls jumped into the rapid muddy streams while the others served as guards.) The acting teacher stepped out of apartment only after we had chatted for quite a while. She fit into us, took a darting look at every one of us, then turned her handbag inside out for a cigarette and lit it. She blew the first thin smoke ring out towards the orange Sun, took a short gulp of her first beer, rubbed her puffy chin, and in her sonorous speedy voice, possessed us with a new chapter of her previous romances. Once she started recollecting, our curiosity was never bated. The story of Yu could have been a piece of petty local news that tended to be ignored, but the version came from the acting teacher was enriched with attitude. I always feel it mingling in my mind while I was collecting props after a show, taking shower after a one-night stand, and having supper alone in the early morning.

As a baby in the womb, our acting teacher, Yu was supposedly the last button to buckle her family together. When her father refused to maintain the marital relationship for the child's sake, her mother, signally twinge, took several pills and firmly believed that an appropriate abortion was delivered. The consequences of the treatment led to the early arrival of a plum-liked girl, and the termination of her twin brother. The boy had an intact torso with gout of fleshes on the top. Whenever Yu thought of her twin brother, and the subtle, ultimate gap between herself and the boy, she wouldn't take her born-to-be binge-eating disorder too seriously. (Our acting teacher paused, raised her empty bottle and declared that she was evaporated before she stood up and grabbed her second beer.) At the sight of the lump little girl, strangers had been dreadfully sorry for her not being a boy, for life could be less tough. Acquaintances shunned talking about her figure. Radically, her mother indulged her with food—As long as she shaved her hair short and kept wearing the boy's uniform. It not only spared her mother extra expenses on customized skirts, but also inspired a mother the sight of a living son; though, in this case, she was lack of friends at school.

After classes, when the assembled loneliness put on Yu's weight, she dawdled around parks in the old square on the other end of Chengdu. There she got along with people over a certain age and their swaggering grandchildren. They did not pay much attention to her appearance. Moreover, the seniors threw out some soft questions and she replied, in her registered deep tone. They did not at least concerned if she was not a boy.

(One of us interrupted and questioned the authenticity of the successful gender concealment. It took almost no time for Yu to alter her tone. She advised us not to smoke, then took out a lighter, cupped her hands clumsily around and failed to catch the fire, absolutely in the way of our male supervisor. We started to take stock in her biography from then on.)

Later, as a student of the literature department of Academy, Yu used her talent of disguise in producing characters, and in no time she had picked up the secret of outlining dialogues. On the early second grade, a guest professor highly praised her production, and eligibly instructed her to retouch the love scenes; to study the incalculable sentiments; to set up a relationship and to break a heart if possible. Yu had no interest in playing house, but her obvious craving for literary success, found her a better solution, to work as bartender. Witnessed people falling in love and falling apart nightly, Yu wrote, gushingly, and her novel was published. When Yu's long lost father got wind of her nightlife, he was furious. (He used to be a regular visitor of disco room and played around with quite a few women.) He fled to Shanghai, caught Yu behind the counter, and forced her to quit the job, as he felt obligated to do so. It turned out that Yu left the shabby karaoke bar and joined one of

luxury nightclubs. Her father made another unpleasant visit after two month, and Yu was obliged to change the working spot again and faked her gender and identity. (To be honest, I was next to fall out of this chapter, and a satirical squint from our acting teacher drew me back.)

Incredibly, Yu became the most popular bar boy soon in the Jazz club, where she enjoyed flaunting the art of being a modest friend and listener in the name of "Eel", the nickname of her supervisor, a scraggy widow. Eel was the one responsible for evening calls of girl's dormitory and a decisive foe of girls' night entertainments. Time and time again, she tried catching Yu at the door but fell asleep at the early morning. Simply for entertainments, Yu stamped her foot upstairs, just enough to wake Eel up, and then slipped back to her room. Sometimes Yu proffered Eel a little gift for her voluntary nightshift, and it was promptly and immediately returned, delivered with a lengthy sermon on nighttime safety cautions.

Yu had amassed a large amount of lonely hearts in the Jazz club and triumphantly paired some of them. What was left of the loneliness, Yu converted into dairies, which she kept securely under her mattress and burned into ashes time to time. She didn't mean to reproduce her real life into literature. One true friend of Yu's dual identities was her roommate of dormitory, her lover, a gorgeous girl named "Virgin", who had showed her face in commercials since she was five, who studied acting then and was absolutely sick of it. Yu spent most of her spare time with Virgin. Even early mornings, when Yu came back from work, she would hold Virgin into arms and slept tightly.

Here I am not going to explode more details of Yu's story, for privacy protection only, but I assure you that the trances of love and how it equaled to cold blood had been revealed properly. I still regarded Yu as one of my beloved mankind, a writer with a hard-boiled heart and boundless passions, a woman made of water and flames. And this is much less solemn than what I thought in 2004, that I believed she was not only the one I beloved of all mankind, but also the one I would outreach in the seen future. As a precaution publishing the first novel, or being awarded the best new playwright, or both, I wrote two versions of thanks to Yu, and rehearsed a moderate one for stage, leaving the other for the acknowledgement. But the main tasks I have to deal with in 2004 were got up early; did odds and ends for senior students; caught the public shower in time; finished homework before midnight; the toughest of all, was had supper with the boy I love secretly while his girl friend kept clinging on him.

One Monday afternoon, just after the winter holidays, I noticed a spare name abruptly appearing on the list of my class. On the notice board by the door of rehearsing room, there was a small neat hand-written Chinese name, "Nida", on the bottom of the list, followed by some unknown characters. It seems to me that the name belonged to a Tibetan male. I asked our acting teacher who he was. She seemed confused at first, but quickly recollected that he was a commissioned student. I asked her if he was going to join our class officially. She said yes, that he would be a member of our class. She added, with some afterthoughts, that he would work in culture department of Lhasa after graduation. I asked her why he had been absent in the summer term. She shrugged and answered, "Too much barley wine." She then smiled contemptuously, as much as to imply, that the Tibetan would by all means have nothing to do with her.

During the first month of our winter terms, the Tibetan name--- though it had not been overlapped by an actual figure --- was not removed from the list. It hadn't been marked out or lined through. However, we began to forget about it. It came out only when we were routinely roll-called before classes began.

One Sunday afternoon, in the courtyard, as we were fighting against the naughty fire and sprinkling the cumin on the spitting lamb skewers, the acting teacher lingered around the gridiron, tapping a cigar on the back of her hands. We at once offered a zealous invitation for her to take a bite, but the acting teacher denied. When our feast literally began, as usual she sat among us, and then got into her story-telling position--leaning back on the chair, with the right hand holding a smoking cigar in front of her face and the left one under her chin. She hadn't regorged her first smoke when someone rang the doorbell. It took her a while to straighten herself in her seat. The bell was ringed out again when she ambled through the courtyard with a thread of thin mist, looking like a swaggering fish tail.

When our acting teacher stepped back, we saw a boy followed her. Honestly, I can remember nothing impressing about him at the first sight. He was one of the aborigines I saw quite frequently in TV news, short, dark, lean and sinewy, though I haven't been to anywhere near Tibet in my life.

"I am Nida." He greeted smile at every one of us, and asked our acting teacher with an aborigine accent, "Am I too late?"

His made some of us smiled back. I almost threw a "No" out.

But our acting teacher replied: "Yes, definitely you are too late." She shot a sharp glance at a girl named Fang, who waved a beer up in the air, signaling the withdrawal of the welcome ceremony. Nida introduced himself to every one of us girls and we greeted him with handshakes. Then our acting teacher knocked on his left shoulder and gave him an academic timetable. Nida stared at the paper for a moment, wearing his face with a passive smile, and went away.

The bell was clicked again after we cleaned all utensils and just about to play the game of "truth or dare" in the kitchen. Nida pranced back with each hand carrying a bailey wine. He poured two full glasses and proposed a toast to our acting teacher. We burst into irresistible laughs. The acting teacher, standing behind him, puffed her right chins and seemed very disturbed. She didn't add any comment to Nida's return, nor used she any drink from him. When Nida drank both glasses of the bailey wine up gleefully, I remember the cigar box was dropped from the hand of our acting teacher.

When we started the first round of "truth or dare", Nida stood right opposite the acting teacher. I am sure that by the time Nida broke into our girl's club that evening, there was in every girl's body some fugitive chemical reactions operating. And to accelerate those reactions, when our acting teacher gave a spin to the empty beer bottle, which ended in pulling up somewhere between Fang and me, Nida expressed a desire to be the substitute for the penalty. The atmosphere couldn't be more explosive. Our acting teacher glared at Nida, who before she detained looking towards. In return, he stared at her without flinching. The daring Fang interrupted, just at the right time, indicating Nida to tell us some real Tibetan romances. Nida casted his eyes down on the still beer bottle, and squeezed a slack smile out. "Romances?" he repeated, "What's that?" Fang leaned to Nida, and spoke on his ear. "I'm not tired at all." Nida insisted, "I like the game---and I am ready for assignments." Fang leaned forward to Nida, but this time said nothing. Our acting teacher cautiously pulled a quarter glass of bailey wine and looked at Fang, while every one of us, was courting on her reactions. Fang mentioned one of regular solo warm-up before our acting classes, "Animal simulation", and suggested that Nida took the chance to learn it. Our acting teacher said it was not at class. Fang asked our acting

teacher if she was our friend. Our acting teacher said what did she mean if she was our friend. It was the first time I had heard the acting teacher speaking in an icily commanding tone. What's more, as she took a gulp of the bailey wine, she ordered Nida to give a written explanation on his absence; otherwise he would get failed in the acting classes.

We resumed the game. Nothing concerning me went on the table in the first few rounds. I glanced at the acting teacher from time to time and noticed sometimes Nida peeping at her. The drunken Nida was getting flushed and his eyes were a bit flirtatious. It was a weird scene.

Nida was appointed again at the end of the game. When our acting teacher informed him to simulate a wild animal and let her guess, he blinked his eyes and said, "Oh, That's easy." However, things were not as easy as people thought when he had more than three glasses of bailey wine. He erected. He walked stiffly. He chewed his teeth and looked at nothing. When our acting teacher stepped forward, he asked her if she'd caught a yak. The acting teacher gave out a strong clap beside Nida's ears. She told Nida to lie on the floor. "I did," Nida answered. She told him not to control his body. "I didn't," he answered. She asked him to focus on his body, and move, in the way of the first wild animals jumping out of his mind. "I will," he giggled, "That's easy." He closed his eyes. He bowed his legs and widely opened his month, chattering. It was pretty the sound of a hungry birdie, until suddenly he spread his arms, jumped onto the table briskly, howled --- sounded like some kind of starving raptor--- an apartment-shaken simulation.

When the weird chemical reactions inside my body had completed, and again I was able to look at Nida steadily, I came across with the sight of the acting teacher. She didn't seem to be compellingly. Instead, she clapped hands cordially. Nida then sat silently on top of the beer bottle and scrunched up. When he smashed the beer bottle on the floor and chattered again, every one of us, awakening, recognised the birth of birdies and laughed out. He opened his eyes and seemed conceited. He asked her if she'd got it. The acting teacher tossed the cigar box from one side to the other, and couldn't stop the smile leaking out of her eyes, even if she tried to. She took out a cigar, lightened it, and let it burning when she criticized Nida's extravagant simulation of an unknown raptor. Nida seemed to hate the answer. He insisted it was a hawk. Finally, it made our acting teacher chuckling. She caressed her chin to and fro. She said most possibly it was, and then dragged on the cigarette butt.

The next Monday afternoon, Nida attended the acting class on time. He had missed none of classes during the next month. About his absence before, one of us girls said he had been affected by the H5N1, another said he had opted for temporary religious seclusion, while rumors went around that he had been married, and lost his wife in an accident. But when our supervisor implied that Nida could have stolen the chance of his college, Fang spoke for Nida's innocence, and we all chose to assert her in silence.

On the last weekend of December, after meeting in front of the girl's dormitory, routinely, the acting teacher led us though the center business district and boarded the bus to Zhujiajiao Town. Her face hadn't been painted, but she wore a loose black coat with a zebra belt making out her in inexistent waist. Unreasonably, I surmised that a loving affair had just occurred to her. When I sat beside her, I smelled of extraordinary liquor and could not help feeling disturbing.

The bus broke down two stops before it arrived. We had to walk on the pebble pavement all along the Yangtze River in the chilling afternoon. To release the pain of

being short of cigarettes and to kill time painlessly, our acting teacher chewed gums and released another chapter of her Romance, "the Carp".

The sudden disappearance of Yu's true friend, her lover, Virgin, took place in the last academic week before summer holidays when Yu got off from work earlier than usual one morning. The supervisor, Eel, aware of Yu's profound affection towards Virgin, generously offered her Virgin's whereabouts. It was told to Yu that Virgin was leaving with a man in the late night. In the worst desperation of the world, Yu believed Eel. However, Eel had no intention of telling Yu the truth, that Virgin had left with her father, for an urgent filming. Eel invented a competitor for Yu, first drawing out his baldhead, and then claimed his status as a married director, to add more credits to the inexistent man. Being sick for a whole week, Yu lost her job and failed in an academic examination.

But there were two things Eel hadn't counted on: Yu's faith for love and her extensive social net. As soon as she slightly revived from lovesickness, she felt called upon to send a few words to her supposed beloved girl. She organized a party and there she confessed her gender and identity. Her previous customers, was impressed by Yu's honesty and listened heartily to her last professions of love, standing for help. Abruptly, one of her previous customers, a photographer interrupted Yu with the information that, in the first place, he had worked with Virgin three days before, and in the second place, Virgin's father had never left his daughter alone in the shooting spot and didn't have the slightest intention of giving her up to another man.

Awfully infuriated, Yu returned to her dormitory in late night and went straight to the top floor. In Eel's rest room, Yu started to loose buckles of her clothes. Eel responded with a shriek and turned her body around. She started to fire the full clip and heaped upon Yu ferociously. The curses on her appearance, for more than one time in Yu's life, had stuck her heart, and now they passed through. When Eel, who was still holding her back against the sight of Yu's naked body, heard a sound of soft tearing as something was ripped off from flesh, Eel couldn't resist her curiosity and with every desires of a widow, she dared to look back. Yu wore a set of full-body tights, looked like a harmless swollen baby, and was busy pulling one of her arm out of the sleeve.

This chapter ended here, as our acting teacher stopped at the doorway and delved for the key chain in her coat's pocket and her handbag. We checked our down jackets, tucked our pink frozen ear into caps and hid in the eaves when it began sleeting. As ten minutes passed, I asked our acting teacher if she'd left a pair of spare keys in the neighborhood. She didn't answer me at once, and before I suggested her to call the unlocking service, she grabbed her mobile phone and muttered: "Be quite, girl! What do you think I am doing here if I've got any duplicated keys?" The complaint was basically unfair. Almost every one of us had kept somber silence as we were dwelling on the pressing ending of the latest chapter of "the Moor". We had for long stopped questioning the authenticity of Yu; we had reached the common understanding that the acting teacher was and would be our friend; but we just could not possibly depict the appalling nudity of Yu even if we had tried hard.

When our acting teacher phoned the local locksmith, we descried Nida. He was striding towards us, with a huge trunk bucketing over the pebble road. He had his Tibetan Mohair-collared coat on, he was smoking a cigarette, and he seemed to be comfortable with the terrible weather. Fang got excited about the discovery and waved over Nida from hundred-meter away. Nida whistled back and run over to us. "Didn't you go back to Lhasa this weekend?" Fang asked him. Nida nodded. He heaved smoke, threw the cigarette butt into the pool under the water pipe, told us the

damn flight was delayed, and then asked whom we were waiting for. One of us girls told him about the missing keys. Nida nodded again and flashed us a warm smile. As he approached the gate of the block, he unbuttoned his coat, took the silvery-sounded key chain off from his neck and held it steadily in his hand. We stood frozen, watching. By the time the acting teacher reached Nida, He unlocked both the gate of the block and the door of the apartment and the key chain lay silently on his neck again.

Our acting teacher stood over Nida, keeping an arm's length with him, and shrilly-commanded Nida to speak with her. Nida followed our acting teacher through the living room. When they reached the courtyard, they began to ramble shoulder by shoulder in the sleet-turned rain. Fang caught the squelching door and yelled over to our acting teacher, "Is there something you need help with, Yu?" Our acting teacher seemed raging and threw a heavy "Just close the door, little girl!" back to Fang. The door slammed closed. We sat in front of the glass door and watched our acting teacher. She took over a lighting cigar from Nida; she shook his hands from her shoulder; and she pointed the cigar at him and blew out steams, apparently gave him a warning. Finally Nida ducked his head to the chest and reeled back alone.

When two of us began to prepare the dinner with our acting teacher, the others (me included) were ready to play a new game of "open-ended story". Fang asked Nida if he would like to have some bailey wine. He shook his head. Fang asked Nida if he felt like joining in us. He shook his head again. Fang asked him if he knew the rules. He nodded his head. Fang told Nida that what we needed was a judge. Nida reluctantly moved his chair towards us and stood up.

One of the girls drew a note among a pile of them and handed it to Nida. He unfolded it and asked the girl to start the story with a ugly weird girl who was born in a single-parent family. "Pick up the thread, add one character each time," Nida read it out and pressed his watch, "and you'll have three minutes." Without taking too much time thinking, the girl brought out the story with brief beginning of "the carp" and paused precisely at the spot that "the carp" entered a famous theater academy in Shanghai when Nida called a halt. After a very short silence, another girl provided a turning point of the story, that "the carp" misunderstood what was going on between her and her roommate and continually imposed sexual harassment on her roommate; it was reported to the supervisor. The third girl smirked, picked it up quickly, and told us when "the carp" was kicked out of the dormitory, she insulted supervisor, and caused the old lady a lethal heart attack. Nida stopped her right at the time. After another short silent, I bumped my arm into a beer, got wet and left the table embarrassingly. The game continued, and Fang took my turn. The last section of the story I had heard that night, was that the girl's father, the mayor of a southeastern city in China, used his network to patch up the scandal.

As I walked out of the bathroom, the game was called. Nida was striding in the courtyard with a bailey wine in his left hand. Our acting teacher, trotting after him, tried to hold his right hand, but he shoved her away violently. They ran through the silver snow into the navy blue night of the courtyard. We overheard rumbles and squabbles until a breaking splash popped out.

Three of us girls, headed by Fang, jumped into the solid spotless water and called out for Nida while our acting teacher did neither. She just stood phoning the ambulance. Then she turned around and walked back to the living room, holding a dead cigar. I went over to her and asked if she needed any help. She shook her head, lit the lighter, but never worked out to reach the cigarette top.

The last Friday before the winter vacation, again we received a text message from Yu, inviting us to her home on Sunday. Meanwhile we alive to the fact that owing to the death of Nida, she had been expelled by the academy, and wouldn't be authorized to mark in the final examination. Having exchanged schedules, almost all of us chose to stay at academy and prepare for tests during that weekend, except for one girl, who hit hard with a painter living Zhujiajiao Town. On Saturday, I read papers and rehearsed performances; but between whiles, spasmodic chemical reactions occurred in my body and I had to take rests and thought over the invitation. In the end I decided to make things all clear, instead of smoothing them over. I waited for the girl at the bus stop on Sunday morning but she didn't show up. Annoyed at the girl's raving out, I messaged one of her boy friends, the painter, hinted him about the other, and then got on the bus and asked the bus driver for my first ever cigar in life.

It was getting dusky when I arrived at the door of the apartment and poked the bell. Yu appeared with a huge carton in her arms, a lightened cigar between her lips, and a startling stare into my eyes. She wore the same black coat, without the zebra belt and much loosen this time. I tripped over cantons and polythene sheets, found myself nowhere to sit in the about- to -move living room. With hesitations, I opened the French door, spared my foot on the sapless sod, sat down on the sill, and suddenly aware that I hadn't informed Yu of my visit.

The courtyard fell into a dark grey winter evening when Yu sat beside me--- as as . Crows cried, sparrows chirped and steam gurgled. It was much less hustle and bustle than any of the previous evenings I spent in the apartment. Nonetheless, The first thing Yu said to me was " Shame on the other girls! They just missed my secret roasted carp!" In an instant, a velvety electronic stroke through my stiff body, cutting me off any other physical reactions but to follow her to the kitchen. When she walked into the kitchen, she opened the microwave and took out a plate with an intact carp, added fairly good amount of salt and spices. I watched her suspiciously and even with a certain amount of diner's worry. When she had finished seasoning, she put it back in the microwave and turned the machine on. She then sat on the dining table, picked up the cigar she left before, issued me the last chapter of her romance, a dapper ending of the story of "the whale". From start to end, it lasted not more than five minutes. As soon as the story ended, we both smelled burning. The carp was slightly on fire. "Did you see it breathing?" Having thrown the plate of blackened carp into the sink and open the tap, Yu asked. I shook my head, and told her it was just expansion and contraction. Yu burst into a joyful laugh. "Don't tell around that I could never cook, or no one will marry me!" I remember I resisted the fierce chemical reaction in body and didn't kiss her rising cheeks.

Five years later, I chanced to interview "Virgin". During the tea break, I told her that I used to hear a story about her and I had no idea if it's true. She held a burning cigar between her thumb and her index finger, half napping, and didn't tell me to shut up. Hovered by long-lost chemical reactions, I rubbed a cigar between my palms, and set to bring the whole story of "the whale" back , including the last chapter.

The heel of Eel struck Yu, hitting severely on her forehead. When Eel, who was still on her back to the sight of Eel's body, heard a queer clash from her heel, she was relieved. Her witless brain barely operated, she turned her head around, and dared to look up at Yu. Yu lay on her back as in death, her flesh overspread from her half-torn body suit. Eel came forward and inspect Yu. Suddenly and causelessly, Eel leaned, and put her lips on Yu's lips. Yu, retaining her perception, felt a tough kiss from Eel. As the kiss went wild and violent, Yu came back to life and moved her lips away. For the first time in her adulthood, in front of another mankind, Yu torn her

bodysuit apart, and unreservedly, even artlessly, revealed her collapsed torso with bloody prints and heat rashes. The impact of the vision was so great that Eel fainted and fall down upon Yu immediately.

For a whole month in the summer vacation, Yu had continued to stay at hospital, while Eel had been resorting in a coma. With rumors about their relationship around and without any responses from Virgin, she had never been closer to be at a loss. One day, however, all of a sudden, Yu observed the reviver of Eel. She was told to phone the only sibling of Eel, her younger sister. She did. But nobody answered the call. It was a short period for Eel to travel back and forth across the border of death, and by the time Yu returned, Yu had already deadly died. Yu's very last act of mercy was to print a tender kiss on the hard lips of the solemn Eel before the body of Eel was carried away.

After a new academic semester began, Virgin finally came back from the shooting scenes and summoned Yu out of classroom. But she didn't distinguish Yu from her classmates. Instead, she saw a middle-sized girl in black dress coming towards the door. As usually, Yu bowed her body, hugged Virgin tightly, and asked if her diet and exercises made senses. As an answer, Virgin deftly took her zebra belt out and tucked it on Yu's black dress. Yu grinned and was about to tell virgin that she had loved her so much, when Virgin told her she had been resigned from academy for career. With a little thought of being at loss, Yu hesitated to mention her feeling and instead, gave Virgin a best friend forever's blessings. Virgin then asked if Yu would like to be introduced to her boy friend, the director of her current film, and slowly and dully, Yu rejected. It was the first and last time when Virgin opened her arms for a farewell hug, Yu stepped backwards.

It was a long time before "the virgin" could spit a smoke out. She opened her watering eyes, quivered, and tried hard to repress her tears but failed. I stood up and helped her to discard the burned-out cigar to the trash tray. I always maintained that the story of "the whale" owned partial of the truth, but all of a sudden, things turn out to be crystal clear; what makes the story other than the truth and more than the truth, is a veritable longing of true love.

