

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

Economic cabin in a big airplane, crowded, dark, passengers asleep.

A Chinese girl sits in a middle seat, writing in a cute diary book (e.g. Hobonichi /Midori) with the light above her seat.

She has a strong Chinese accent.

DONG YI LING: Dear Diary,

I have finally got onto the plane to the United Kingdom. The British Dream!

Or is there a word for that? American dream, British dream...?

Deep breath in and out. Happy/excited.

Anyways, I could not believe this has happened eventually. And I am actually on the plane now.

Another deep breath in and out. Looking around in the dark.

Everyone around me is asleep now but I am too excited to sleep. I am so wide awake and I cannot wait. I had always wanted to come to London, you know it.

Pulls out her necklace with a fish in the shape of half a Ying–Yang (Taoism) symbol, it is made of jade.

2018, September, oh no, it's day, month and year. Whatever. The 10th, wait, is it still 9th in the UK? Nevermind, soon to be 10th.

Light change or something indicating time difference.

Still in similar airplane cabin, crowded, dark, passengers asleep.

Same girl writing in her diary book. Her accent is softened.

DONG YI LING (CONT'D): Dear Diary,

I have finished my first year. Time felt long and short at the same time when you are along in a new place with so much happening. I could not wait to see my parents. I guess I had got used to being lonely. I have made many new friends, but we just hang out or party together. It doesn't feel the same with friends back home. Even after one year of getting used to each other's accents, it is still so hard for me to understand their jokes, nor could they get most of my jokes. It's just not funny anymore while you have to explain the joke, you know? 25th of June, 2019.

The passengers moves away leaving her the only one on centre stage with her seat(showing as a swivel chair) a bed appears(It was covered by the passengers before).

There is a Gu Zheng Case under the Bed. A poster with the word 不蒸馒头“箐”口气 written on it in, not printed font but calligraphy.

Same girl is writing in her diary book in her tiny student accommodation.

DONG YI LING (CONT'D): Dear Diary,

Tomorrow is my first performance of Gu Zheng in London. Hopefully everything goes well. I haven't been to Wimbledon before. I wonder what does the famous tennis field looks like. There is another thing that kept me thinking. Mom said she is a tiny bit worried about the news of the flu in Wuhan. They are not that far from there, I hope they are ok. News said it's

fine... but some doctor on Weibo said it's something strong. Then the local government said it's only rumours and the person is now in jail for spreading faulty information. I don't understand this whole thing. By the way, Merry Christmas. 25th of December, 2019.

She gets up from the chair and turns the light off.

SCENE FIVE

The Chinese girl is walking around Wimbledon Common with her Gu Zheng bag (note it is very big and heavy). It was almost dark, around 4pm. A Chinese girl that looks similar to her approaches, she is wearing fancy early 1920s costumes. She speaks in a posh accent.

They looked at each other, stunned.

A long pause.

DONG YI LING:

Broken voice, almost screaming

You are real!

Beat.

Calms down a bit. Looks around.

Are you real?/

DONG YU QING: Yes of course I am real.

(Rolls eyes in an elegant/polite way.)

(Mockingly) "Are you real?"

Beat.

Hug?

They hugged strong.

You look like you but much older now/

DONG YI LING: Wooo, akhenm, excuse you young lady, I am not old. We are the same age.

DONG YU QING: Sorry, I am stunned, I didn't mean to offend. You are so different.

DONG YI LING: For all these years I thought you were just my imaginary friend. Yes then this makes more sense. Maybe you are my hallucination. Can everyone else here see you? Oh nice, there's no one around.

DONG YU QING: *(rolls eyes again)* I could have said the same about you. However, if you can hug me that means I am a real person, not some imaginary... I have flesh and bones.

Turns around. I suppose, long time no see?

DONG YI LING: Yes! Long time no see. How many years has it been? How are you? Your dress looks so nice and ... stylish.

DONG YU QING: I am very well, thank you for asking. And thank you for your compliments. Your costume also looks very...special.

Examines Dong Yi Ling's clothes.

Beat.

How are you? What has brought you here?

DONG YI LING: Aww, thank you! I am also good, thanks. Actually, I have just finished my concert around the corner. Next time you could come and see it, if you'd like. Here's my Gu Zheng.

Points at her Gu Zheng.

DONG YU QING: What is Guzheng, do you mean Zheng? What happened to piano?

(Note: Here she says Zheng instead of Guzheng because Gu means ancient and in the early 20th century people only call it Zheng. It is a commercialised name by a seller to make it sound more artistic. Because comparing to Guqin/Qin and Guse/Se, it had always been categorised as a common instrument instead of an instrument for the more educated people.)

DONG YI LING: Yes, Zheng. I play both. In fact, I got my scholarship because of that. I'm quite lucky. *(shy)*

DONG YU QING: You must be a university student now. How amazing. What are you studying?

DONG YI LING: History and Ecology, I am doing a double degree in University College, London. I am now living in a student accommodation, it's not so far from here. Do you live around?

DONG YU QING: That's nice. We can see each other more often. My family settled around here after my mother thought that the house given by the government was too small.

DONG YI LING: How are your parents now? Last time before you leave, you said you would have a sibling soon.

DONG YU QING: They are both very well. Thank you for asking. The only problem might have been my father's work. He has been having so much pressure ever since we arrived. You know, the Great War just finished. And there are three younger brothers at home. So many times I told my father that I am old enough to help him. Instead he asked my mother to find a husband for me.

Beat.

DONG YI LING Wait a minute. I'm confused. Rewind. Your parents are finding you a husband already? And, what war? Syria? But what does it have to do with your father? Are you talking about the Hong Kong Protest?

Beat.

DONG YU QING: The Great War.

Beat.

Dong Yi Ling is so lost.

It started with the Archduke of Austria–Hungary's assassination in Serbia.

Beat.

Dong Yi Ling follows and nods, even more confused.

Then the Russians and Germans are involved. After that, France, Belgium and Britain/

DONG YI LING: Hang on, why are you citing the First World war?

DONG YU QING: First? There is a second? Is it happening now? Where do you get this information from? I need to tell my father about it.

Dong Yu Ling: stops her from running back home.

DONG YI LING: Wait. The Second World War had already finished in 1945.

Why are you..

They look at each other in shock.

DONG YU QING: I am sorry. What did you say? 1945. It is 1919 right now.

DONG YI LING: This might sound crazy but I don't think we are in the same time. Or have I got into your world, or you into mine? Where am I?

Takes out her phone and examines.

Yes, I still have three bars of signal.

Beat.

DONG YU QING: What are you talking about? What time. Are you trying to say that you are from the future? Or are you a prophet? And what is this odd self-lit block you are holding?

DONG YI LING: Have you heard of alternate universe? I had always wondered why did you appear in our house in Nanjing, just like that.

Beat.

DONG YU QING: I thought you were a cousin or a child of my father's colleague. I have never been to your house, nor have I seen your parents.

Beat.

What is alternate universe?

DONG YI LING: It is another world with another you and me. Perhaps we are the same person of a different time or something.

DONG YU QING: That sounds similar to reincarnation. However, how would we be able to see each other if this is reincarnation. If we are from different worlds, which world are we in?

DONG YI LING: It seems to me that we are in our own world, and this is a limbo. Or do we have a special magnetic field that we just...

Mother (Wang Zhao) of Dong Yu Qing appears far.

DONG YU QING: My mother is calling. Come with me, I will introduce you. They walk to each other.

Dong Yi Ling tries to wave at Wang Zhao but Wang Zhao does not respond.

DONG YI LING: I don't think she can see me. Don't tell her or she might think you are crazy. See you soon!

WANG ZHAO: It is getting very dark now. What are you doing in the park?

DONG YU QING: I was with a friend.

WANG ZHAO: A friend! Why did you not invite your friend for dinner? Is it a boy or a girl?

They walk away.

SCENE SIX

Dong Yi Ling sits on the bench in the park. It is very dark.

She is writing on her phone. The screen is lit and you can only see her face.

She is typing.

DONG YI LING: Dad, what is great grandpa's name?

Raises her head.

Oh, he's sleeping right now.

Environment changes into her tiny accommodation, she is sitting on her bed.

She takes out the necklace and examines it.

Takes out the diary. Shows Dong Yu Qing writing in her room.

Dong Yi Ling: Dear Diary,

I think I have found...

DONG YU QING: Dear Diary,

We met again...

Black/fade out.

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

Chinese men in early 30s and a chinese girl who looks around 8. They are in an Chinese fusion art deco studio.

FATHER: *Reads and pauses for Daughter to follow and repeat each sentence.*

《礼记·儒行》 儒有可亲而不可劫也，可进而不可迫也，可杀

而不可辱也。(ru you ke qin er bu ke jie ye, ke jin er bu ke po ye, ke sha er bu ke ru ye.)

DAUGHTER: *Repeats*, What does it mean?

FATHER: An honorable person could be a devoted friend but should not be exploited, he could be pushed to do his best but should not be forced to do what he does not wish to do, and he could be ordered to die but should not be humiliated. 是以, “士可杀不可辱”。(shi yi, shi ke sha bu ke ru.)

DAUGHTER: An honorable person should rather choose to die than to be humiliated?

FATHER: Yes. We have to fight for our dignity. If a person is humiliated, this person is not living as a human. Then, what is the point of living up to animals?

DAUGHTER: I would like to be a puppy. Look at Cathy, she is always happy!

FATHER: Dong Yu Qing! Girl stiffens, shoulders up in a slightly scared gesture. How many times did I tell you? No pets in the study. Takes the dog out of her hands and pushes/throws it out of the room.

(Note, this is not a violent throw, he would bent down so the dog should be able to jump out of his hands easily and land on the ground.)

This is a sacred place.

DAUGHTER: But/

FATHER: Do not talk back to me. Now, repeat this sentence.