

(Printed with an unregistered version of Fade In)

TITLE

Written by
Author's Name

Copyright (c) 2016

Draft
information

Contact
information

(Printed with an unregistered version of Fade In)

INT. - APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ji-an, a young adult Cantonese woman, sits in a darkened apartment, peering through her curtain at the busy, vibrant neon streets of Lang Kwai Fong below.

JI-AN

Sometimes I just watch everyone go by for hours.

After a while I don't feel real anymore.

She looks for a long moment and then lets the curtain fall. She snatches her key and goes out the door and into a small and dirty elevator. A couple get in, loud, giggling and drunk.

JI-AN (cont'd)

Hong Kong people never notice anything. I think all the neon's done something weird to their retinas because nothing surprises them anymore.

EXT. - A 7-11 - LATER

Ji-an walks around a 7-11 looking at the items.

JI-AN

I like trying to make people notice me. It takes creativity and dedication. (Pause.) it hardly ever works.

Ji-an eyeing the cashier.

JI-AN (cont'd)

What would be weird enough for him to notice?

She moves around the 7-11, carefully selecting armfuls of the weirdest combination of items she can find. She walks to the register and dumps down 4 packs of playing cards, 8 (chinese/weird snack), and many, many packages of pocky on the counter.

JI-AN (cont'd)

4 packs of cards, 8 (chinese/weird snack), and lots of pocky, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The cashier glances up once without interest and then starts ringing the things up.

EXT. - OUTSIDE THE 7-11 - LATER

She is walking back towards her apartment.

JI-AN
It didn't work. I still don't feel
like I exist and now I have 8
(chinese/weird snack) to eat.

INT. - APARTMENT - LATER

Ji-an is sitting on the kitchen floor eating the pineapple. Her apartment is cramped and crowded, dark and lit only by the faint coloured glow of appliances and lamps. Scattered around it throughout are many small, black and white paper cranes.

JI-AN
I often feel like I should just
finish it but then I feel too guilty.
(Pause.) What would my things do
without me?

She wanders around her house and talks to the objects she sees.

JI-AN (cont'd)
(To her calendar)
You'd flip out if I didn't turn your
page every month.
(To her clock)
Who would help you every time you got
wound up about something?
(To her dripping sink)
There's no need to cry! I'm not going
anywhere.

She lies on her bed in the dark in front of the flickering TV, folding a paper crane.

JI-AN (cont'd)
Maybe if someone noticed me apart
from my furniture I wouldn't want to
kill myself.

INT. - APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Ji-an is lying on her bed staring at the ceiling.

JI-AN

I like to challenge myself to lie
still for hours and hours. I think if
I do, one day, I'll trick my heart
into thinking I'm dead and it'll stop
beating.

She heaves herself up.

JI-AN (cont'd)

It never works. It just means when I
do sit up I feel twice as heavy as
normal, as if my legs have forgotten
how standing feels.

She grabs her keys again but as she is about to go she spies
her reflection in the mirror, eyeing it with a dissatisfied
expression. Going to her bathroom, she roots around and
finds some hair dye. She runs the tap and dyes her hair,
then dries it.

Looking in the mirror, her hair is now violently red.

JI-AN (cont'd)

I change my hair more often than I
change my sheets, but I don't know
why. What's the point of changing how
you look if no one looks at you?

She grabs her keys and goes out the door. In the elevator,
the same woman who was drunk the other night comes into the
lift, dressed for work and holding her head.

JI-AN (cont'd)

Too hungover to notice the hair, I
think.

EXT. - OUTDOOR DAI PAI DONG - LATER

Ji-an walks towards a dai pai dong in an alley. The chairs
are plastic, there are many older people and young working
Cantonese grabbing breakfast before work. She orders the
tofu brown sugar dessert and takes it to a table.

JI-AN

I think I'll sit here all day and eat
as many of these as I can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She begins to slowly eat the dessert.

INT. - DAI PAI DONG - SAME TIME

A young Cantonese man, HIRO, wipes down the Dai Pai dong counter and cleans up. He glances out at the tables.

HIRO

Cups, rags and sinks don't talk. Even if they did, I don't think they'd have anything very interesting to say. That's why I like to look at all the people who come here, and imagine their lives and stories. Cleaning is such a sloppy job anyway - it's just water and soap, doesn't matter where you splash it. So I can afford to spy on the customers and not pay attention to my rag. We get more interesting people than you'd think.

INT. - DAI PAI DONG - THE NIGHT BEFORE

The same couple from the elevator stumble in to the dai pai dong.

HIRO

Just last night we had a drunk couple who thought that we could marry them here. We asked them to leave but they insisted, so we threw some rice grains over them and gave them a free dessert and then told them to get out.

INT. - DAI PAI DONG - PRESENT MOMENT

Hiro tosses the rag he was cleaning with into the sink and yells back to the kitchen.

HIRO

I'm going to clean the outside tables!

He walks out and starts to clear the empty tables and their dirty dishes. He notices Ji-an, and then continues to glance at her and clean, trying to be inconspicuous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HIRO (cont'd)
No competition, though, this one's
probably the oddest costumer we have.
Always alone, and with different hair
every week.

She gets up abruptly and Hiro hurries to look away and look busy. She counts out some money, lays it on the table, and walks away.

He goes to her table once he's sure she's gone and spreads the money out, collecting it up. He finds among it a tiny folded white paper crane.

INT. - APARTMENT - DUSK

Ji-an sits by her window again with the curtain raised. This time it is open. She deftly folds a small paper crane.

JI-AN
I don't just watch people, sometimes
I throw things at them too. Well,
just my paper cranes. There's a
Chinese folk legend, it says if you
manage to make 1,000 paper cranes,
any wish you make will come true, but
I don't think I plan to live that
long.

She throws the paper crane down and watches it flutter. Once it is at ground level it cannot be seen through all the people and is crushed underfoot. She stares out the window and then slams it, turning away and brushing away a tear.

INT. - APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

She is frantically folding a crane. She throws it out. She loses sight of it and she collapses for a moment onto the window pane, then heaves herself up. She folds several until she has a whole handful. She throws them all out of the window except one, which she takes to the sink. She fills the sink and places the crane to float in the little lake she has created.

JI-AN
(Whispering to the
tap)
Don't miss me too much!

She leaves.

EXT. - DAI PAI DONG - LATER

Ji-an takes her dessert to her table and sits.

She eats painstakingly slowly.

Hiro spies Ji-an when she is buying her dessert and he follows her outside. He cleans the table just to the side of her and gets the paper crane out of his apron pocket. Looking at it, he frowns and glances at her.

Her shoulders are slumped and she looks defeated, but more importantly, she appears black and white to him.

He drops the crane in surprise, and she is back to normal.

He picks it up again and she is black and white.

Hiro is frozen, stunned.

JI-AN

If by the time I finish this bowl, no one has looked at me, I'm going to go home and do it. Two bottles of sleeping pills, grind in a coffee machine, mix with warm water, drink. Goodnight.

HIRO

(Out loud)

What did you just say?

Ji-an whirls around and stares at him, then turns back and hides her face. Hiro walks over and holds out the paper crane to her. She slowly turns and looks at him with amazement. She takes the crane.