

(5) BY COURIER

[五] 專人傳送

It was neither the season nor the hour when the Park had frequenters; and it is likely that the young lady, who was seated on one of the benches at the side of the walk, had merely obeyed a sudden impulse to sit for a while and enjoy a foretaste of coming Spring.

這時節，這時候，公園裏頭應該沒甚麼人才對；看起來那位年輕女士只是隨一時的高興坐在走道旁的一張長椅子上，享受一下即將來臨的春意。

She rested there, pensive and still. A certain melancholy that touched her countenance must have been of recent birth, for it had not yet altered the fine and youthful contours of her cheek, nor subdued the arch though resolute curve of her lips.

她沉思靜想地坐在那裏。她的表情帶著一股幽鬱，一定是爲了最近發生了甚麼事，因爲她年輕的臉頰依然姣好，曲線俏麗的雙唇依舊，只是看起來有點意志堅決的樣子。

A tall young man came striding through the park along the path near which she sat. Behind him tagged a boy carrying a suit-case. At sight of the young lady, the man's face changed to red and back to pale again. He watched her countenance as he drew nearer, with hope and anxiety mingled on his own. He passed within a few yards of her, but he saw no evidence that she was aware of his presence or existence.

有個高高的年輕男子大步地走進公園，沿著她坐的椅子旁邊那條通道。後面跟了一個小孩提著一只皮箱。看到那女士的時候，這位男子臉色轉爲紅色隨後又回復暗灰色。他一面接近她，一面看著她的表情，自己的臉上呈現希望與焦慮交織的神情。他從她身邊几呎的地方走過，但是呢，從她的表情，看不出他的出現，也看不出他的存在。

Some fifty yards further on he suddenly stopped and sat on a bench at one side. The boy dropped the suit-case and stared at him with wondering, shrewd eyes. The young man took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow. It was a good handkerchief, a good brow, and the young man was good to look at. He said to the boy:

他繼續往下走了五十碼，突然間，他停了下來，坐在一邊的公園長凳上。那小孩放下皮箱，伶俐的眼睛望著他看，到底要幹甚麼。年輕人拿出手巾擦額頭上的汗。很好的手巾，很好的額頭，而且這男子長得很好看。他跟小孩說：

'I want you to take a message to that young lady on that bench. Tell her I am on my way to the station, to leave for San Francisco, where I shall join that Alaska moose-hunting expedition. Tell her that, since she has commanded me neither to speak nor to write to her, I take his means of making one last appeal to her sense of justice, for the sake of what has been. Tell her that to condemn and discard one who has not deserved such treatment, without giving him her reasons or a chance to explain is contrary to her nature as I believe it to be. Tell her that I have thus, to a

certain degree, disobeyed her injunctions, in the hope that she may yet be inclined to see justice done. Go, and tell her that.'

[我要你帶個信給坐在那張長椅上的女士。告訴她我就要去火車站搭車到舊金山，在那裏，我將參加一個往阿拉斯加獵麋鹿的隊伍。告訴她，因為她已經命令我不准跟她講話，也不准寫信給她，我只好以這個方式來向她的正義感提出最後的一次上訴，爲了以前所發生的事。告訴她，控告而棄絕一個不值得這樣子對待的人，而且毫無理由，又不給機會解釋，依我相信，是與她天性相左的。告訴她，我就是爲了這個，多多少少違抗了她的旨意，希望正義能重見分明。去，去告訴她。]

The young man dropped a half-dollar into the boy's hand. The boy looked at him for a moment with bright, canny eyes out of a dirty, intelligent face and then set off at a run. He approached the lady on the bench a little doubtfully, but unembarrassed. He touched the brim of an old plaid bicycle cap perched on the back of his head. The lady looked at him coolly, without prejudice or favor.

那年輕人放了一枚半塊錢的銅板給小孩手裏。小孩的臉髒髒而聰明，拿起伶俐的眼光看了年輕人一會兒，然後一溜煙跑開。他走近坐在長椅上的女士，有點遲疑，但是並不害羞。他拿手指頭碰了一下舊花格子單車帽的帽沿，帽子貼在後腦子上戴著。女士冷靜地看他，也不嫌他，也不表示甚麼歡迎之意。

'Lady,' he said, 'dat gent on de oder bench sent yer a song and dance by me. If yer don't know de guy, and he's tryin' to do de Johnny act, say de word, and I'll call a cop in t'ree minutes. If yer does know him, and he's on de square, w'y I'll spiel yer de bunch of hot air he sent yer.'

[女士，]他說，坐在另一張椅子上那個尖頭要我給你送來一齣歌舞劇。假如妳不認識他，他是在搞甚麼鬼的話，告訴我，我馬上去叫條子來。假如妳認識他，而且他還正典的話，那麼，我就要告訴妳他送給妳的一團熱空氣。

The young lady betrayed a faint interest.

從女士的臉上看到了一些許興緻。

diaphanous garment of impalpable irony. 'A new idea -- in the troubadour line, I suppose. I -- used to know the gentleman who sent you so I think it will hardly be necessary to call the police.

air vaudeville, and we might attract attention.'

[歌舞劇！她說，她故意拿甜蜜的口吻這麼說，好像是要把自己說的話蒙上一層輕飄的諷刺紗衣一樣。[真是個新鮮主意--我猜是屬於法國浪漫派的 我是曾經認識差遣你來的那位男士，所以嘛，叫警察大概可以不必。你倒是可以表演你的歌舞劇，只是不要唱得太大聲，因為這時間要做露天演唱還嫌早了一點，我們也可能引起旁人注意。]

‘Awe,’ said the boy, with a shrug down the length of him, ‘yer know what I mean, lady. ‘Tain’t a turn, it’s wind. He told me to tell yer he’s got his collars and cuffs in dat grip for a scoot clean out to ‘Frisco. Den he’ goin’ to shoot snow-birds in de Klondike. He says you told him not to send ‘round no more pink notes nor come hangin’ over de garden gate, and he takes dis means of puttin’ yer wise. He says yer refereed him out like a has-been, and never give him no chance to kick at de decision. He says yer swiped him, and never said why.’

[噯唷，]小男孩說，從頭到腳扭動了一下，[妳也知道我在說甚麼，女士。我不是說要跳舞，是要講話。他要我告訴妳，他把他的全部家當都放在那只箱子裏，準備翹到三藩市那個地方，然後要到北海去學蘇武牧羊。他說妳叫他別再送妳甚麼情書，也不要他到妳們家院子門口胡纏。他希望這樣子能讓妳開竅開竅，他說妳一腳把他踢開，連哼一聲的機會都沒有。他說妳莫名其妙地給了他一棒，讓他丈二和尚摸不著頭。]

The slightly awakened interest in the young lady’s eyes did not abate. Perhaps it was caused by either the originality or the audacity of the snow-bird hunter, in thus circumventing her express commands against the ordinary modes of communication. She fixed her eye on a statue standing disconsolate in the disheveled park, and spoke into the transmitter:

女士眼神裏稍稍提起的興緻猶存。大概是因為那個要學蘇武牧羊的創意或者膽子，居然迴避了她明白表示不准送信傳遞的旨意，還是達到了她。她眼睛望著未經修整的公園裏頭一座沒人安慰的塑像，講給傳遞者：

‘Tell the gentleman that I need not repeat to him a description of my ideals. He knows what they have been and what they still are. So far as they touch on this case, absolute loyalty and truth are the ones paramount. Tell him that I have studied my own heart as well as one can, and I know its weakness as well as I do its needs. That is why I decline to hear his pleas, whatever they may be. I did not condemn him through hearsay or doubtful evidence, and that is why I made no charge. But, since he persists in hearing what he already well knows, you may convey the matter.

[告訴那位男士，我用不著再重複地解釋我的理想。他明白那一直是甚麼。只要提到我的理想在這件案子裏扮演的角色，絕對的忠心和真誠是至高無上的。告訴他我已經好好反省自己的心，我明白它的弱點，也明白它的需求。也就是爲了這個，我拒絕再聽他的上訴，不管是甚麼。我不是爲了謠言，或者未經證實的證據來定他的罪，所以也不必控告他。但是嘛，既然他堅持還要聽他已經明明知道的事情的話，你可以跟他說：

‘Tell him that I entered the conservatory that evening from the rear, to cut a rose for my mother. Tell him I saw him and Miss Ashburton beneath the pink oleander. The tableau was pretty, but the pose and juxtaposition were too eloquent and evident to require explanation. I left the conservatory, and, at the same time, the rose an my ideal. You may carry that song and dance to your impresario.’

[告訴他，那天我從花房後門進去，本來要替我母親剪枝玫瑰花。告訴他，我看到他和艾

小姐在那叢粉紅色夾竹桃下面。景緻是很漂亮，但是這樣子成雙拼對地亮相，明明白白地，已經太過明顯，用不著再解釋甚麼。我從花房出來，把玫瑰和我的理想都一股腦兒忘了丟在那裏。你不妨回去你的節目主持人那裏，表演一下這齣歌舞劇。]

'I am shy on one word, lady. Jux -- jux -- put me wise on that , will yer?'

[有個字我有聽沒有懂，女士。成雙--成雙--甚麼，教教我好不好？]

'Juxtaposition -- or you may call it propinquity -- or, if you like, being rather too near for one maintaining the position of an ideal.'

[成雙拼對--或者你可以說，太過親熱--或著嘛，假如你喜歡，就跟他說，對於一個有意中人的，和別人保持這樣子的距離太親近了。]

The gravel spun from beneath the boy's feet. He stood by the other bench. The man's eyes interrogated him, hungrily. The boy's were shining with the impersonal zeal of the translator.

走道的小石子在小孩的腳下蹦跳起來。他現在站在另一張椅子旁邊。那個男士的眼睛飢餓地看著他。小孩自己的眼睛閃亮地好像翻譯員，不關自己的事的樣子。

'De lady says dat she' on to de fact dat gals is dead easy when a feller come spielin' ghost stories and tryin' to make up, and dat's why she won't listen to no soft-soap. She says she caught yer dead to rights, huggin' a bunch o' calico in de hot-house. She side-stepped in to pull some posies and yer was squeezin' der oder gal to beat de band. She says it looked cute, all right all right, but it made her sick. She says yer better git busy, and make a sneak for de train.'

[那個女士說，她相信一個性子來胡說八道，想要和一個馬子和好的時候，馬子總是呆呆地受騙，所以嘛，她不要看你給她的連續劇。她說她逮你逮了個正著，在溫室裏面抱著一大把花點子石榴裙。她從後門溜進來拔花的時候，你巴巴地掐著另外的那個馬子正要得趣。她說看起來俏得很，不錯不錯，可是沒得讓人看得噁心。她說你趕快夾起尾巴，悄悄兒搭你的火車去吧。]

The young man gave a low whistle and his eyes flashed with a sudden thought. His hand flew to the inside pocket of his coat, and drew out a handful of letters. Selecting one, he handed it to the boy, following it with a silver dollar from his vest-pocket.

那男子低低噓了一聲，眼神裏突然想到了甚麼。接著，他的手飛快地找到大衣裏邊的口袋，從口袋裏抽出一把信。他選了其中的一封交給小孩，跟著也從背心口袋裏拿出一枚一塊錢的銀幣交給小孩。

'Give that letter to the lady,' he said, 'and ask her to read it. Tell her that it should explain the situation. Tell her that, if she had mingled a little trust with her conception of the ideal, much heartache might have been avoided. Tell her that loyalty she prizes so much has never wavered.'

Tell her I am waiting for an answer.’

[把信交給那位女士，]他說，[交給她讀。告訴她，這封信會解釋當時的情形。告訴她，§假如她對理想的理念能調合上一些信任的話，就不會鬧得這麼痛心傷感的了。告訴她，她所最珍惜的忠心絲毫沒有動搖過。告訴她，我在等她的回話。]

The messenger stood before the lady.

這位傳令兵站在女士面前。

‘De gent says he’s had be ski-bunk put on him widout no cause. He says he’s no bum guy; and, lady, yer read dat letter, and I’ll bet he’s a white sport, all right.’

[那個尖頭說他吃了啞吧虧，白白地被潑了一桶冰塊。他說他不是個鬼渾的，還有，女士，你讀這封信。我跟妳賭他這個人很正。]

The lady unfolded the letter, somewhat doubtfully, and read it.

女士攤開信，有點遲疑地，然後讀道。

Dear Dr. Arnold: I want to thank you for your most kind and opportune aid to my daughter last Friday, when she was overcome by an attack of her old heart-trouble in the conservatory at Mrs. Waldron’s reception. Had you not been near to catch her as she fell and to render proper attention, we might have lost her. I would be glad if you would call and undertake the treatment of her case.

Gratefully yours,
Robert Ashburton

敬愛的雅諾醫師：我要感謝你上星期五我女兒在瓦頓夫人家參宴，在花房裏心臟宿疾突發的時候，所給予最親切而及時的援助。不是爲了你在近旁她要跌倒的時候扶住她，給她適當的救助，我們很可能已經失去了她。我很希望你能與我聯絡，診治她的病情。

艾羅勃敬謝

The lady refolded the letter, and handed it to the boy.

女士把那封信又摺起來，交給小孩。

‘De gent wants an answer,’ said the messenger. ‘What’s de word?’

[那尖頭要回話，]信差說。[要我怎麼說？]

The lady’s eyes suddenly flashed on him, bright, smiling and wet.

女士的眼睛剎那間發亮地望著他，明亮，帶著微笑，而且濕濕的。

‘Tell that guy on the other bench,’ she said, with a happy, tremulous laugh, ‘that his girl wants him.’

[告訴那張椅子上的那個性子，]她說，一面帶著快樂，有點激動的笑聲，[他的馬子要他。]