

(10) AFTER TWENTY YEARS

[十]二十年之後

The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely 10 o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets.

巡更的警察沿著街往上走，一副瀟灑的樣子。但是這瀟灑是個習慣性的而非爲了賣弄，因爲根本沒甚麼人會看他。時間是夜間才不過十點，夾著雨意的冷風早把人們趕走，街上冷清的。

Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye adown the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter; but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

一邊走，一邊試試店舖的門關好沒有，一邊又舞著他的那把警棍，把眼睛像雷達一樣，左右掃描這這條平靜的大街，這位威舞又帶著幾分驕傲的警察，好像是圖畫裏的和平守護神一樣。左近是個習於早關門的商業區。偶爾可以看見一家香菸店或者賣通霄的小吃店亮著燈火，其餘都是早關了門的商店。

When about midway of a certain block the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke up quickly.

走過半條街左右的時候，警察突然慢了下來。在一家黑暗的五金店門口，有個人依門站著，口裏咬著一根未燃的雪茄。當警察走近的時候，這個人很快地說。

'It's all right, officer,' he said, reassuringly. 'I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands -- "Big Joe" Brady's restaurant.'

[沒事，警官，]他以保證的口氣說。[我只是在等一個朋友。赴一個二十年前的約。聽起來奇怪，不是嗎？假如你要確定沒甚麼事的話，我跟你解釋。在那時候之前，這家店原來是家餐館--<大白公>布萊弟的餐館。]

'Until five year ago,' said the policeman. 'It was torn down then.'

[直到五年前，]警察說。[然後就被拆了。]

The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed

face with keen eyes, and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarfpin was a large diamond, oddly set.

站在門道的這個人拿火柴點他的雪茄。在火焰的亮光裏，看到這個人蒼白的臉，下巴大而方，眼睛機警，右邊眉毛附近有一小條白色傷痕。他的圍巾拿顆鑽石鎖著，一顆鑲得怪異的鑽石。

‘Twenty years ago to-night,’ said the man, ‘I dined here at “Big Joe” Brady’s with Jimmy Wells, my best chum, and the fines chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just like two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn’t have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be.’

[二十年前的今天晚上，]這個人說，[我和魏吉米，我的摯友，在這<大白公>布萊弟的餐館吃飯，他是世界上最好的人。他和我都是在紐約長大的，好比兄弟一樣。那時候，我十八歲，吉米二十。隔天早上我就要到西部去闖天下。你不可能硬把吉米說服到外面去闖闖，對他來說，紐約是世界上唯一的地方。於是嘛，當天晚上，我們約訂我們在二十年後，同日，同時，同地，在這兒見，不論我們情況如何，須要跋涉多遠的距離。我們那時候想，二十年之後，我們的命運已經決定，我們的財富也已經賺著，不論我們走的是甚麼頭路。]

‘It sounds pretty interesting,’ said the policeman. ‘Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven’t you heard from your friend since you left?’

[聽起來蠻有意思，]警察說。[見面之間的時間倒是很久。你們分手之後，你聽過你的朋友的消息嗎？]

‘Well, yes, for a time we corresponded,’ said the other. ‘But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he’s alive, for he always was the truest, staunchest old chap in the world. He’ll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door tonight, and it’s worth it if my old partner turns up.’

[噢，是的，我們通信了一陣子，]這個人說。[可是一兩年之後就互不通訊息了。你看，西部是個大宗買賣，我在那兒拼命地打滾，多彩多姿。可是我知道吉米，只要他還活著，他一定會來，因為他一直是世間最真誠，最堅信的老小伙子。他不會忘記的。我從千哩之外特地趕到這張門這裏，只要我的老弟兄出現，也是值得。]

The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with small diamonds.

那位在等朋友的從口袋裏拿出一只昂貴的錶，錶蓋鑲著小小的鑽石。

‘Three minutes to ten,’ he announced. ‘It was exactly ten o’clock when we parted here at the restaurant door.’

[十點差三分，]他說。[我們在餐廳門口分手的時候，是正好十點整。]

‘Did pretty well out West, didn’t you?’ asked the policeman.

[在西部幹得不錯嘛?]警察說。

‘You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of plodder, though, good fellow as he was. I’ve had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor-edge on him.’

[廢話!我希望吉米能有一半好就好了。他有點拘謹，儘管他是個大好人。我必得和那些想和我分一羹的滑頭們比試。一個人在紐約變得墨守成規。大西部把一個人磨得鋒芒。]

The policeman twirled his club and took a stop or two.

警察把他的警棍轉了兩下，走了一兩步。

‘I’ll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call time on him sharp?’

[我必須走了。希望你的朋友出現。不等他一兩分鐘嗎?]

‘I should say not!’ said the other. ‘I’ll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth he’ll be here by that time. So long, officer.’

[我不可能不等他一下!]那個人說。[我會等他個半小時。假如吉米還活在世界上的話，他在半小時之內也就來了。再見，警官。]

‘Good-night, sir,’ said the policeman, passing on along his beat, trying doors as he went.

[再見，先生，]警察說，一面繼續巡他的更，一面試商店的門關好了沒有。

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

天上開始下起一陣清冷的小雨，風也從不定向的陣風，刮得固定而兇猛。在那街角走動的

寥寥几個人影子，可憐而靜悄悄地快速地走，大衣領子翻得高高的，手插在口袋裏。等在五金店門口，千哩迢迢趕來赴少年之約的那個人，不知如何是好，一副困窘的樣子，一面抽雪茄，一面等著。

About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

那個人大約等了二十分鐘，這時候，一個個子高高的人，穿著大衣，領子翻轉到耳朵，匆匆從街對面走過來。他朝等候的人直走。

‘Is that you, Bob?’ he asked, doubtfully.

[那是你嗎，巴伯?]他遲疑地問。

‘Is that you, Jimmy Wells?’ cried the man in the door.

[那是你嗎，魏吉米?]門道上的那個高聲問。

‘Bless my heart!’ exclaimed the new arrival, grasping both the other’s hands with his own. ‘It’s Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I’d find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well! -- twenty years is a long time. The old restaurant’s gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?’

[真要命!]剛來的這位說，一面拿自己的手抓著對方的雙手。[是巴伯，不是蓋的。我確定只要你還存在，一定能在這兒找到你。這個，這個，這個!--二十年真是時光易逝。老餐館已經不見了，巴伯；但願它還在這兒，我們能在此地再進一次晚餐。西部是把你怎麼個整的，老相好?]

‘Bully; it has given me everything I asked it for. You’ve changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches.’

[漂亮無比，我要甚麼，它給甚麼。你變了很多，吉米。你比我想像的高出兩三吋。]

‘Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty.’

[喔，我二十歲之後又長了一點。]

‘Doing well in New York, Jimmy?’

[在紐約幹得好嗎，吉米?]

‘Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we’ll go around to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times.’

[還可以。我在市管區部門裏有個位子。來，巴伯；我們轉過街角到一處我認識的地方，我們好好敘舊敘舊。]

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

兩好友勾著手沿著街朝上走。那個西部來的，因為渾得不錯，得意洋洋地自吹自擂起來。另一位，縮在大衣裏，注意地聽著。

At the corner stood a drug store, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face.

在街角的地方有一家小店，電燈照得通明。當他們走進亮光的時候，兩好友不約而同地調轉頭互相看對方的臉。

The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

那位西部來的突然停下來，把手放開。

'You're not Jimmy Wells,' he snapped. 'Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug.'

[你不是魏吉米，]他一口咬定。[二十年是段長時間，但是還不夠把一隻羅馬鼻變成獅子鼻。]

'It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one,' said the tall man. 'You've been under arrest for ten minutes, 'Silky' Bob. Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you. Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go to the station here's a note I was to hand to you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells.'

[有時候夠把一個好人變成壞人，]高個子的說。[你已經被捕十分鐘了，<滑溜溜>巴伯。芝加哥判斷你可能來我們這裏，打了電報來跟我們說想跟你談談。不聲不響地走，不是嘛？很聰明。到局裏去之前，我有一張便條要轉給你的。你可以趁這窗子的亮光看。是巡警老魏寫的。]

The man from the West unfold the little piece of paper handed him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

那個西部來的把便條打開。他開始讀的時候手很穩，可是，當他快讀完的時候，兩手有點顫抖。便條很短。

Bob: I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck the match to light your cigar I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow, I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plain clothes man to do the job.

Jimmy

巴伯：我按時赴約了。你拿火柴點雪茄的時候，我看到你就是芝加哥要的人。我自己不忍心這麼做，所以繞過街角，找來一位便衣執行任務。

吉米