

# **My Vapid Espresso**

by Joyce Pei-Shan Yang 楊佩珊

## **The Fancy Cafe**

It rained. It rained out of expectation. No one brought an umbrella. People ran like sprinters to look for cover. Sitting in the same seat in the identical cafe as usual, I was immersed in the smell of my Espresso. Through the transparent yet foggy window, the people seemed to pass by in fast forward. Espresso, my only choice, relaxed me from the whole day's tension and separated me from the dull outside. The steam of the Espresso spiraled from the edge of the cup paralleled his image circulating in my brain. The rain did not seem to spoil my exhilaration. I recalled what he had done the day before. I was working on some homework in my dorm room, when I heard a voice. Curiously, I looked out the window and saw a man jumping and waving. It was Charles.

He was yelling, "Hello! Joyce! This is Charles!"

"Charles? What are you doing here? It's almost twelve o'clock."

"I brought you some delicious snacks and of course, your favorite: Espresso!"

Ever since then, his brilliant smile had been engraved in my mind. Charles, an upperclassman of my university, is a friend who I met in the school chess club. Two years older than me, he was much more mature than the other boys at my age. I had a crush on him the first time we met. With his big eyes, shining smile, and gentleness,

he was almost my prince charming. However, being a timid college student, I never expressed my feeling. The only thing I could do was observe his every movement from the dark corner. Every time he caught me looking in his direction, I would turn around, or pretend to be looking at someone beside him.

I was not sure when he had started to have more contact with me. What he did recently confused me a little. Although we had joined the same club, our relationship was far from being good friends. When we met on campus, the conversation would just end because my mind was blank with nervousness. I could only say hello to him or had a small talk about chess; and that was all. There was no any further association between him and me. Nevertheless, some changes happened recently. He started to send me text messages and chat with me on MSN almost every night. These actions increased my affection toward him even more though I sometimes could not tell why he did that. I tried to convince myself that I was thinking too much; everything which had happened was usual.

I was deeply moved by what he had done that day. No boy had ever given me the attention that Charles gave me that day. It was really a big surprise that he was willing to ride a long distance in the cold weather only in order to bring me my favorite coffee. I wondered why he knew that Espresso was my favorite, but that was also the point why I felt amazed and touched. With his attentive movement, all of my previous

worry evaporated with steam of the Espresso he gave me last night. I thought that he got close to me only because he thought that we could easily get along with each other. We have the same interest—chess. Actually, I never talked to him with ease. When we met, I was too shy to look at him eyeball to eyeball; but I tried my best to look natural every time. With his sweet actions, I gradually got used to his appearance in my monotonous life just as then I had got used to drink Espresso.

### **The Encounter**

Walking in front of the College of Humanities, my roommate— Vicky and I were gossiping about a geek in our English class. Suddenly, I noticed that there was a guy who wore the white Nike sneakers, the familiar black jacket, and the same baseball hat walking toward us. Although he was still far from us, I could recognize that he was Charles! Instantly, I felt a shiver down my spine. However, to let him say hello to us, firstly, I pretended that I did not see him and continued my chatting.

“Hey! Joyce! I see you guys from the long distance. Where are you going? Oh, is this your roommate? Hello! I am Charles, a member of the same club as Joyce’s. So you are...” Charles was looking at Vicky.

“I am Vicky, Joyce’s roommate,” Vicky replied with sparkling smile.

“I saw you before on campus. Nice to meet you!” Charles reached out his hand.

“Nice to meet you, too!” Vicky shook hands with him.

“Sorry Charles! Vicky and I have to hurry up or we will be late for our class!”

“Oh, that’s Ok. I can go to find you this evening after my job as a tutor.”

“Ok, see you then!”

“See you!”

Every conversation between him and me made me fiery and bashful. I wished that I did not have the class so I could talk to him longer. However, being too nervous, I always ended our conversation as fast as I could. It seemed to be stupid, but I just could not go on our conversation. As we parted ways, I walked away from him, eyes looking at the ground and trying to cover my blushed face while trying not to giggle out loud. I tried not to, but I could not help but turn around and take a glance at him. He was still looking in my direction with the same smile that was etched in my mind days earlier. My imagination came up that I was the Goddess in his eyes. Meeting him by chance made me so excited that I could not concentrate on the class at all. The image of his smile was repeated in my brain. I could not help but think of him. Everything about him had become the spice of my life.

For the last couple days, I could not wait for the evening to come. He had begun to visit every night since the day he brought me coffee. He was always the kind of person who was good at making surprises. I felt like the protagonist in a romantic movie. He often brought me my favorite coffee which I could not sleep without

drinking. Bitter but sweet, harsh but bland was the taste of the Espresso he gave me.

Every time he came, he brought night snacks and drinks not only for me but for Vicky as well. We all thought that Charles was so thoughtful that I must cherish him. I knew that I loved him so much, but I did not think I had enough confidence.

**On MSN...**

**[12:03]My Mr. Right—Charles😊:** Yo~ JOYCE!

**[12:04]💖 Charles's baby—Me:** Hey Charles!

**[12:04]My Mr. Right—Charles😊:** Do you want to go out for dinner on Friday? I want to treat you to something nice.

**[12:06]💖 Charles's baby—Me:** Huh... ( In a fever of excitement, I did not know what to reply.)

**[12:07]My Mr. Right—Charles😊:** You can bring Vicky as company!

Charles invited me to have a dinner on the Valentine's Day. He was so considerate that he told me that I could ask Vicky to go with me as company. I was extremely delighted so I called Vicky telling her the exciting news right away. She was just as excited when she heard about the date. She promised me that she would make me look perfect in front of Charles that night. Vicky was a girl who always caught up with the trend. By reading fashion magazines, she always knew what the most popular style was. What was more, she was good at make-up. I had lots of

confidence in her; with Vicky waving her magic wand, I would be the modern Cinderella.

### **On Valentine's Day...**

While Vicky helped me put on my makeup, I told her that I thought Charles might ask me to be his girlfriend tonight. I had been dreaming of a perfect night. I was so excited that I could even imagine the romantic situation: After finishing our dinner, we danced under the stars on top of his building. He surprised me that he take out a bundle of flowers with ninety nine roses from his back and told me that he was crazy about me. Embarrassingly, I told Vicky my dream. For a second, we looked at each other, and began to involuntarily giggle. Being the good roommate that she was, Vicky said that she would find a proper time to excuse herself from the date. She did not want to be the super big third wheel. We also simulated the situation. Not only this, Vicky pulled some secrets out of her personal love tricks. She told me that I must be a little reserved when I agreed to be his girlfriend; therefore, he would not think that I was easy to chase. I took down as many notes in my mind, hoping that I would not clumsily do something stupid as I knew that I would be nervous in front of Charles. He was the torch of my dull life and the tasty flavor of my Espresso.

### **After Dinner...**

After we finished the delicious dinner, Charles took out a delicate present from his

bag. My heart was beating so fast that I could not even breathe. He gave me the present and said, “Joyce, I am so lucky to have you as my best friend. You are the most important girl who leads me to know how I should fulfill my rest of life.” I was so moved; my tears almost ran out of my eyes. He continued, “Because of you, I come to understand who the girl I want to be with forever, ever, and ever; without you, it would have been impossible for me to know her! You brought her to me!” Then he took out a bundle of ninety nine red roses. “I love you, VICKY! I loved you from the first time I saw you on campus. I loved you for a long time, way before I met you!” Suddenly, my time froze—the air, the conversation, our expression, my tears, and even my heartbeat. In my mind, only a voice broke through the dead silence, seemly trying to say, “Ahaha...You are so silly!” Trembling, I snapped out of my short period of unconsciousness and built up enough strength to utter weakly “Congratulations, I am so happy for you! You finally got what you wanted!” Unexpectedly, I took up and ran away from the unbearable situation.

Chess led me to be cheated; Charles had led me on; Vicky’s smile culminated in the victory. I had failed entirely. I hated myself for believing Charles was the one, and I the one for him. I now sat at my same seat in the identical coffee shop as usual; I drank the same flavor of coffee. However, it could not be bitterer and harsher. The Espresso, once my favorite coffee, was not sweet and flavorsome anymore. Therefore,

I threw the vapid Espresso away; and made up my mind not to drink it anymore. I  
swore to abstain from my once favorite Espresso.