

The Redeeming of Light

Written by

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Based on, If Any

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INT.HOSPITAL-NIGHT

A girl named Tongyue Zhang (17), wearing the blue school uniform, is standing in the hospitalization department, thinking of something in her mind.

INT.CLASSROOM-DAY

(Dismissal bell rings)

Tongyue is so hungry that her soul is about to be deduced y the cafeteria. She keeps staring outside the window and looking at the clock.

A man named Linyang Liu (35), who is tall and thin, wearing a pair of glasses and a white shirt, is standing by the blackboard. He looks very angry, shouting to the students preparing for lunch in a stern and loud voice:

LINYANG LIU

Sit down! Who told you guys to move? Did I say the class is over? I'll write down the students who left and report them to the director!

Tongue rolls her eyes and speaks in a low voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Here we go again, another last class every Wednesday, and hungry stomachs hurting us.

LINYANG LIU

Everybody you can go now.

Tongyue starts to pack her bag in a hurry and is about to go out when Linyang calls her back softly.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Hold on a moment, Tongyue. I wanna talk to you for a few minutes.

Tongyue rolls her eyes again, standing up and walking toward the man, staring at him in impatience.

Linyang hands Tongyue her paper.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Do me your favor to read it again, please.

Tongyue frowns, absently looking at the paper, then raises her eyes slightly to look at Linyang.

Boys and girls walk by, with a mocking look.

BOY A

Look at that, she's being left again.

Linyang speaks in a cold voice.

LINYANG LIU

You guys can help me clean the office if you don't eat.

Tongyue shrugs her shoulders, seeming to be used to comments like that.

Linyang sighs looking back to Tongue and continues to ask her.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

How do you feel?

TONGYUE ZHANG

Not bad.

LINYANG LIU

Is that what you want?

TONGYUE ZHANG

Uh-huh.

LINYANG LIU

Are you ready to give up on yourself? Do you think I should give up on you as well? I don't think that is what I should do, I never give up everyone easily...

Tongyue sneers.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

I'll call your parents about your situation.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Go ahead, then.

Neither speaks, and there is a terrible silence in the classroom.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

Sir, can I go eat now?

Linyang keeps silent, turns away, and shakes his head at Tongyue.

EXT. STREET-EVENING

In the evening, when the campus is full of students being picked by their families, the only thing that greets Tongyue is the setting sun and the flying birds. Tongyue walks alone on the street that she has walked so many times.

She stands still and skims her lips as she watches the kids talking and laughing with their parents.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE-EVENING

Walking up to the large, doomed, and empty house, she grabs her key and opens the door.

INT. TONGYUE'S HOME

A middle-aged man (43) in a suit walks out of the room. Tongyue opens her mouth in a surprising voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Daddy?

A beautiful woman(41) in a dress walks out of the kitchen. Tongyue's mouth gets wider and wider.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

Mommy?

DAD

Come on, enjoy our dinner, honey.

Tongyue lets out a cheer and bounces over to the table and sits down.

She takes a big bite of her meal. Suddenly, Mom speaks.

MOM

Your teacher called me.

The smile on Tongyue's face freezes, and she looks at her mom and then at her dad, somewhat at a loss for words.

MOM (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you?

Tongyue's movements with the knife and fork stand still in mid-air.

MOM (CONT'D)

Your teacher said that not only did you get a bad grade on the test but you also scribbled on the paper, is that true?

Tongyue stops eating with a big mouthful of food and instead lowers her head, absently fiddling with her knife and fork with the omelet and steak that she has chopped up so thinly.

Dad pours juice into Mom's glass.

DAD

Let's eat first.

Mom doesn't stop talking.

MOM

Speak up!

Tongyue speaks in a very low voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG

That stupid fucking man!

She stares at her mother.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

Is that why you came back?

MOM

Tongyue Zhang. Your dad and I work hard to earn money outside, you marked this score, let us...

Tongyue sneers.

TONGYUE ZHANG

No face? Am I right?

She fists clench

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

Then you can pretend you don't know me.

Dad is on his feet in a flash tugging at Tongyue's sleeve.

DAD

Hey! How can you talk to your mom in that way? You just say whatever your mother asks!

TONGYUE ZHANG
That's exactly what I said!

Tongyue straightens her back.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)
Am I right? Is that what you want?
You can pretend you don't know me.

Mom throws her fork, shouting in great anger.

MOM
Your dad and I work outside all day
long, and this is your attitude? Is
this how you treat us?

She slaps the table.

MOM (CONT'D)
I really regret giving birth to
you, why did I give the fucking
birth to you? Your father and I
work all the time for what? Have
you thought about it?

Tongyue sheds tears.

TONGYUE ZHANG
You only come home once in a while
because you heard that fuckin' man
complaining, right? All parents
take good care of their children,
but what about you guys? What are
you guys doing? I come home every
day and there's no one at home!
You've been away for half a year.
Have you ever care about me, except
for living expenses? Did you know
that I had a high fever a while
ago? Why are you so busy? You heard
the teacher snitching and you know
you are back, right? And you are
complaining that I've embarrassed
you, aren't you? And now it's my
problem?

Mom rushes up to hit Tongyue and Dad pulls her back.

MOM
I beg your pardon?! I really regret
having you! You're a burden!

Tongyue becomes furious.

TONGYUE ZHANG
Who forced you?!

Tongyue stands up and kicks the chair away, ignoring Dad's eye warning and Mom's anger.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)
Uh-huh, you regret giving birth to me, and I regret being your daughter, we will not interfere with each other in the future, Okay?

She rushes out.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)
Goodbye, never again!

She runs away crying.

EXT. STREET-EVENING

Tongyue cries as she runs, running extra, extra fast, and people passing by stop to look at her.

A little girl pulls a woman by the hand.

GIRL
Mom, why is she crying?

GIRL'S MOM
It's none of your business, honey.
You wanna eat ice cream?

The woman walks away with the little girl.

Tongyue stands still, and she doesn't notice the car driving toward her.

[car hock]

Tongyue's hands bleed. She looks at her bleeding hands in despair. She doesn't move. A man walks toward her.

MAN
Little girl hey! Step aside!

He looks at Tongyue's bleeding hand.

MAN (CONT'D)

How so careless? Where are your
parents? I'll take you to the
hospital, okay?

Tongyue speaks in a cold voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG

I don't have parents.

INT. HOSPITAL

Tongyue covers her bandaged hands and heads out the door.

LINYANG LIU

Tongyue?

Tongyue freezes and stops.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Damn it!

She turns to run.

LINYANG LIU

Hey! Little girl! Where're you
goin'?

Tongyue stops and walks over to him, with a deep breath.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

What's happening? What happened to
your hand?

Tongyue looks up.

TONGYUE ZHANG

My hand...seems like...it's none of
your business huh?

LINYANG LIU

Where are your parents?

TONGYUE ZHANG

I don't have any parents. I'm a
burden to those two.

Tongyue's eyes avoid him and she gently hides her injured
hand behind her back.

Linyang doesn't speak for a long time, just frowns at
Tongyue, then nods.

A little scared, Tongyue takes two steps back.

LINYANG LIU
Are you going home now?

TONGYUE ZHANG
I don't have a home anywhere.

Tongyue screws her head up and looks at him.

LINYANG LIU
Oh, my kid. Where can you go if you
don't go home?

He comes over to Tongyue and pats her shoulder gently, carefully, and deliberately as if he is afraid of offending her.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)
You might want to sit somewhere.
Would you like to go with me?

Tongyue remains silent for a while. She frowns.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)
I won't force you if you don't want
to. But it's too dangerous for you
to stay in the hospital alone.

Tongyue nods.

He leads her towards the hospitalization department. He keeps silent, taking big, quick steps forward. Tongyue follows him.

A single ward on the fourth floor, the door hidden, the caretaker coming in and out of it, seeing him was like seeing salvation, walking up to him.

CARE TAKER
The old lady threw a huge tantrum
this morning and fell into coma
again.

Linyang bows and thanks her as he pushes the door and walks in.

INT. WARD

On the bed lay an old woman with thinning gray hair, and the instrument next to her is still ticking. Next to the bed is a small couch, a black bed, a computer, a guitar, and a stack of books and homework.

Tongyue stands still, not knowing where to go, but can carefully move to the edge of the bed. She asks in a very soft voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Is this your grandmother?

Linyang doesn't say anything, takes a towel from the nearby water basin, and carefully wipes the old woman's cheeks. After a long time, he says.

LINYANG LIU

Oh, my! Look, I haven't come to the hospital for a day and your face is dirty. You see, it's still me who wipes it clean, right? None of them are as good as me, are they?

He smiles, with a bit of rosy smugness on his cheeks. He then bends down and picks up his guitar, sitting down on the chair.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Shall I play the guitar for you?

He turns his head to Tongyue.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Why not sit down?

Tongyue nods and sits down on the sofa.

He starts to play and sing a touching song named See You Again.

(Guitar sounds)

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

It's been a long day
without you my friend,
and I tell you all about it when I
see you again...

Unconsciously swaying her body to the melody, Tongyue's eyes redden and her nose is sore. She feels like she is listening to the voice of a lonely wanderer calling home toward the setting sun, deep and empty.

When the song ends, he stands up and bends down, looking at the old woman's slightly blinking eyes, his voice also trembles slightly.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

You like it, don't you? Although I'm tired of teaching these kids, my level hasn't dropped at all! The money you spent on enrolling me in classes back then really worked! Right?

The way the old woman's head bobs slightly surprises Tongyue.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Ah! You nodded your head! You understand me, don't you? You're gonna have to praise me!

He looks back and sees Tongyue with a surprised look on his face, and walks over to the sofa beside her and sits down, speaking in a proud voice.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Look at this little girl, she's my student, and I have a lot of students now!

Tongyue lowers her head.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Tongyue?

She turns back to him, facing him with some urgency. Linyang smiles and waves his hand.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

You don't have to be nervous. Would you like something to eat?

Tongyue shakes her hand. Linyang wipes the sweat from his head.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Won't your parents come over and help?

LINYANG LIU

My parents?

He leans toward the back of the couch with a tired look on his face.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

Dude, I've never met my parents.

Tongyue freezes for a moment, her brows furrow, then looks at him at a loss for words. Linyang smiles back.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)
 What's wrong with you?

Tongyue begins to tremble slightly.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)
 But to be honest, it's really nice
 to have parents.

He sits forward and looks at her seriously.

At that he purses his lips and the soreness at the tip of
 Tongyue's nose becomes more pronounced, followed by tears
 falling down her face. Linyang turns to Tongyue and hands her
 a box of tissue and watches her dry her tears. But the tears
 just didn't seem to go away.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)
 Wait, Tongyue. I'm not saying this
 to upset you.

He looks at Tongyue and then at Grandma.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)
 We both have our struggles.

Tongyue speaks in a shaken voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG
 I'm sorry

Linyang smiles softly again.

LINYANG LIU
 No, how normal. We all would be
 uncomfortable, right? You are still
 young, little girl. You need the
 world to give you a chance and
 time.

Tongyue looks up at him and his eyes are firm, not hateful or
 condescendingly harsh towards her. Tongyue tries to wipe away
 her tears.

TONGYUE ZHANG
 Thank you.

LINYANG LIU
 I didn't say anything to you! What
 are you thanking me for?

TONGYUE ZHANG
 I'll do my best.

LINYANG LIU
I'm sure you will.

TONGYUE ZHANG
Sir, it's time for me to go home.

Linyang nods in satisfaction.

LINYANG LIU
I'll give you a ride.

Tongyue looks at his grandmother's bed and says.

TONGYUE ZHANG
Your grandmother needs company. I
can go back myself.

EXT. STREET-NIGHT

Tongyue returns home by moonlight. A group of people gather
in front of her house, talking.

TONGYUE ZHANG
They must be looking for me.

She looks at her parents, who are so anxious that they are
jumping out of their skin, and frown, then Tongyue walk over
to the crowd.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)
Dad! Mom!

Mom turns back to her, first hitting her dad who is still on
the phone, then pulling him over to her and hitting her not
so gently.

MOM
Where have you been! What happened
to your hand?

TONGYUE ZHANG
I went to the hospital.

MOM
Don't come back the next time you
run!

INT.TONGYUE'S HOME-NIGHT

Tongyue picks up her phone and checks the message.

LINYANG LIU (V.O.)
Is the little girl home yet?
Communicate with mom and dad, they
love you very much. It's time to
sleep, get some rest, adjust your
state, come back next week and
we'll work together.

She puts her phone aside and sleeps.

MONTAGE STARTS.

INT. OFFICE-DAY

Tongyue takes a deep breath and steps in.

TONGYUE ZHANG
Sir, I want to ask a question.

INT. OFFICE-NIGHT

TONGYUE ZHANG
Madam, I know it's your office
time.

INT. CLASSROOM-DAY

Tongyue is reciting the words.

INT. OFFICE-DAY

TONGYUE ZHANG
Can you help me with this question
again?

MONTAGE ENDS.

INT. OFFICE-NIGHT

LINYANG LIU
Tongyue, aren't you excellent?

Tongyue keeps her head down and doesn't say anything.

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)
What's wrong? You'll find out how
much you can surprise yourself!

He takes a candy from the drawer and gives it to her, patting her on the shoulder, and sends her out of the office.

INT. CLASSROOM-DAY

Tongyue seems to be worried because the test results come out.

Linyang hands out everyone's test papers and when it is time for Tongyue to get hers, he sees her sitting alone in her seat.

LINYANG LIU

Open it.

She opens the bag and mumbles.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Dear me. I got 1520.

She takes a deep breath with a smile on her face, while Linyang Liu has gone.

She doesn't think any more about it, shoving her stuff into her bag and running home. She is in such a hurry that she doesn't look at the pedestrians to relieve herself. She just wants to go home.

INT. TONGYUE'S HOME

The house is still empty.

She puts down her bag and just takes it for granted. But today is her birthday, and she is going to give herself a proper birthday party.

Placing the candles on the cake. She closes her eyes and folds her arms.

TONGYUE ZHANG

I wish those around me would always
be safe and healthy.

She then blows out the candles and eats the cake while she takes her paper bag out of her schoolbag to look at her exam papers. Among the English papers, a postcard appears.

LINYANG LIU (V.O.)

My little girl, Happy Birthday!
Seventeen years old, am I right?
(MORE)

LINYANG LIU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I wish you, this little girl who makes me proud, to go farther, to read more books, to experience a more varied life. Have fun, spend time with your family. You are the best! Better late than never. Happy birthday again.

Tongyue's nose is sore. The tearfulness of the touch radiated a soft warmth that wrapped her tightly.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Thank you, Sir.

Without even thinking much about it, she goes out to the gift store buys a fruit basket, and makes a mad dash for the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL

Tongyue calls out to a nurse.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Excuse me. I'm looking for Mr. Liu Linyang.

NURSE

He's gone. We can't find him either. We're looking for him as well. His grandmother needs surgery.

TONGYUE ZHANG

How's everything going?

NURSE

Not so lucky. Just a few days left unless the surgery is successful. Do you know where he usually goes?

Tongyue is lost in memories.

MEMORY STARTS

LINYANG LIU

I'm not like you, when I'm alone in the office, I think of my grandma, and I especially want to cry when I think that her condition may worsen. Really, I was crying so many times, I didn't know what I was going to do when my grandma was gone.

(MORE)

LINYANG LIU (CONT'D)

There were many times when I was walking alone on the beach being returned to the waves one by one, and I even wanted to return myself to the sea as well.

MEMORY ENDS

TONGYUE ZHANG

I can have a try.

She runs away.

EXT. STREET-NIGHT

It is a bit of cool night by the sea, but she is sweating so much and wringing her long hair into a wet mess, looking anxious and wretched. There aren't many people there. But the sound of the seagulls is still there, and the rhythm and melody seem to be calling out to the distant moon.

She sees a man on the reef beach.

The man is walking toward the sea, farther and farther away, and the water is past his legs and approaching his waist.

Tongyue throws her bad down and darts into the sea, pulling him toward shore.

TONGYUE ZHANG

What are you doing?!

Linyang keeps silent, letting himself be pulled with all my strength. When she is sure he is out of the water, she holds him down and sits on the ground, then runs to the side, huffing with exhaustion. A few minutes later, she turns her face to him. Helplessness and sadness are written all over his face at the moment. She sits down next to him and first just looks at him without saying anything, then she picks up her cell phone and sends a message to the hospital to tell them to take it easy. She speaks in a very low voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

You can't give yourself back to the ocean because you don't belong here.

Linyang turns back to her, squeezes out a smile.

LINYANG LIU

Where should I be?

TONGYUE ZHANG

You should be in your own light.

She is choking. Linyang tries to reach out and wipe the tears from her eyes, but she stops him.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

Your grandmother needs you.

After a moment of silence, Linyang speaks in a low voice.

LINYANG LIU

I feel sorry for what my grandmother has done for me. My grandmother is the only one for me.

TONGYUE ZHANG

But the one thing you have left now besides your grandmother is hope.

She stands up, speaking in a pleading voice.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

You are all that's left of your grandmother too, aren't you?

He keeps silent. Tongyue cannot stop the tears from flowing. Her cell phone keeps ringing, she cannot be bothered to read it yet.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

You pulled me out of the darkness in my life and I'm especially thankful for that, so I'd like to ask you to try and pull yourself out again.

Linyang turns his head and smiles.

LINYANG LIU

Thank you.

Tongyue takes two steps closer.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Just go back to the hospital, okay?

Linyang nods and starts running furiously in the direction of the hospital.

The wind blows a tingle down Tongyue's neck, which is followed by a surge of coolness mixed with scorching heat.

Then Tongyue picks her phone.

Lots of messages from mom and dad.

MOM (V.O.)

Happy birthday, honey, I'm sorry I can't spend it with you this year. We'll be back next week. You've improved and got the marks you wanted. Congratulations! We're so proud of you. This is your birthday present, just to welcome your seventeenth year. I hope my daughter will always be a happy little girl. My dearest, Mommy and Daddy are always looking out for you.

DAD (V.O.)

My little girl, please forgive us for making you unhappy months ago. Happy birthday! Enjoy every day, my dear. You'll get a big surprise next week. Wish you happy forever.

Tongyue picks up the phone and calls to her mom.

TONGYUE ZHANG

Hey! Mom! No, I'm coming home!

She goes back to the hospital and sees Mr. Liu sitting in front of the window, signing the critical care notice. He then watches as the doctors and nurses wheel Grandma into the ICU room.

She walks up and touches him gently, he turns and they both smile. He unwraps the fruit basket, handing her a large apple inside. She takes a bite and smiles bitterly.

TONGYUE ZHANG (CONT'D)

Sour.

He takes one as well.

LINYANG LIU

No, it's sweet.

The hospital headlight comes on, hitting them with warmth and softness.