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Chinese Box

By Jean-Claude Carrière

John, it's Mary. Not there, okay.

Don't forget to call the kids.

(machine beeps)

John, it's Jack again. I haven't been able to get in touch for days.

What's going on? You've missed the deadline twice already.

If you don't get in touch with me by the end of today, we're killing the story.

(typing)

(phone rings)

Yeah?

I know Morgan-Grenville said they were releasing the document today.

No. I would have said yesterday if I'd meant yesterday.

Today.

Your today.

Yeah, put it somewhere near the end.

Okay.

Bye.

Scores of British lawyers, administrators and police, all of them long-time employees of the Hong Kong government, boarded the ship, "Oriana," their destination: England.

But this was no ordinary farewell.

Those sailing out on the Oriana

are part of an exodus of Britons leaving Hong Kong as the colonial era draws to an end.

There is a revenge element in it, we think...

revenge in quotation marks...

that people in the past may have been discriminated against purely because they were

of a particular race.
Now the reverse
appears to be so.

Anchor:

for British citizens
here are over.
And as the Oriana sailed
into the sunset,
there was a palpable sense
of an era coming to an end.
John!

John, up here. Up here.
Someone you should meet.
This charming lady is
Amanda Everheart.

- Hello, Amanda Everheart.
- It's such a pleasure to meet you.

She wants to know everything
there is to know about Hong Kong,
and the clever thing started
by reading your book.

I wonder, would you mind
signing a copy for me?

- I'd just love that.
- I thought this was out of print.
- I found it fascinating.
- Listen, hold that will you?

You read it?

Yes, I did. I took a few tips and made a few
investments actually.

I particularly liked the chapter when you
talk about Hong Kong
as an honest whore.

Of course we're all
dying to find out
how she copes
with her new pimp.

Speaking of which,
here's a man who has very
strong views on that subject.

I'll leave you in his capable hands.

Don't let him get too close.

What will you do,

Mr. Spencer
when the sun rises over
Hong Kong on July 1st?
Well, Mr. Aristedes,
I think I should get out of bed,
have a bit of a fart,
a shit, a shave, and a shower.
And I'll look for my...
Listen, nothing is going
to be different, is it?
I mean the Chinese have
been here 10, 15 years.
- Nothing's going to change.
- I know that.
I mean this great big
department store
is just having a change of
management, that's all.
That's my problem,
I have a problem.
I cannot photograph
social crises
until somebody dies.
They gave me money. I'm not giving
it back. I'd rather give a kidney.
But I have a problem.
What am I going to do?
Where am I going
to get the real stuff?
The real stuff is the deals.
The deals happen
behind closed doors.
What deals?
You've been here what now, 15 years?
Because of deals?

John:

just the deals.
Sometimes you just
fall in love with a place
without really
knowing why,
without really ever
fully understanding it.

The way I fell
in love with Vivian.
How is it I want so badly
the one woman I can't have?
John!
How are you?
Nice to see you.
You are sober,
yeah?
We are about three minutes
and 20 seconds to go.
So John, why don't you
ask Vivian to dance?
You know I'm never good with this,
uh, this sort of...
- I might do that.
- I'll see you in a minute, right?
So much of Hong Kong
exists below the surface.
They don't know that this is
the woman I love above everything.
If they could see what I see,
hidden in her eyes.
There's an old game we play,
telling ourselves this is enough.
I want to ask
you something.
What?
I want to ask
you something.
All right,
ladies and gentlemen,
are we ready to celebrate
the last few seconds
of historic 1996
in Hong Kong?
Let's hope that the Hong Kong
that we know and love
will still be here,
same time next year!
Here we go,
count with me!
10...
nine...

eight...

seven...

six...

five...

four...

three...

two...

one!

- Happy New Year, John.

- Happy New Year.

Happy New Year.

Happy New Year.

Stay back!

Stay back!

Stay back!

Stay back!

Stay back!

My action

is to stand against
the loss of personal
and cultural freedom
in Hong Kong after 1997.

This is just
a personal decision.

I don't want anybody
to be blamed.

Call the police!

Someone call the police!

Get a doctor!

Call for a doctor!

Oh my God.

Is a doctor here
somewhere?

Somebody call
for a doctor!

Keep them back!

Reporter:

the death of William Wong,
the student activist who shot himself at the
stroke of midnight
in front of the
up-market crowd
at the Hong Kong Club's

New Year's Eve Party.
The leader of the front-line
theater group, Eric Lee,
has admitted responsibility for helping
the distraught student
stage the suicide.
The group has described its action as
"The Theater of Assisted Suicide."

Weeks:

becoming a city of fear.
Why? Because the Chinese
want to change all
the laws relating
to human rights.
They're taking that
refusal to admit mistakes
right there into the history
books in Hong Kong.
- So what are my kids asked...
- But that's face, isn't it?
Well, face maybe but there's
a certain thing called truth.
- And they don't admit it.
- But is our truth any better...
So my kids are being
asked to believe lies.
Is our truth any better
than their truth?
Their truth is different from
the perspective of a democracy.
It's their perspective instead
of British perspective.
Even the San Francisco courts
have decided in advance
that there's
a problem in 1997.
- They have a perception of it.
- There is a problem.
Weeks, if there's any problem it's
the making of the likes of you.
And the wicked foreign
press is to blame.
- Of course.

- This is getting a bit too heavy.

Really, what Hong Kong is about is making mega-bucks.

- Money, money, money.

- We're all here because of that.

There's \$25 billion now earmarked for China, from US and direct international investors.

I can see the dollar signs blinking in your eyes.

- Well what's wrong with that?

- It's like a casino.

It's just like a casino, you're absolutely right.

- You were talking about the...

- Woman:

John!

Ah, John.

Is this...

is this water?

You were talking about democracy.

Don't forget that Hong Kong never had democracy, and Hong Kong never asked for democracy, and didn't get it until 1984.

But having been given it as a present, it might miss it if it's taken away again.

You feeling okay?

Would you miss a present if it was taken away?

... 1,000 flats,

and what they did was they bought the rights to buy 1,000 flats.

When they got them, they were selling them off for half a million

dollars each.

- You cynical son of a bitch!

- We're in Hong Kong.

Careful what you say
or you're in real trouble.

I got a lawyer here to
take you to the cleaners.

Everything has its price,
everything is for sale.

- Nobody falls in love.

- That's why we're all here.

Woman:

the most important thing.

With a lovely girl like that
and you don't fall in love,

- something's wrong with you.

- John, what are you doing?

Get up,

come on, get up.

- Are you okay?

- Are you all right?

- What's wrong?

- Funny way to fall down.

Are you all right?

- Sorry.

- Have you had a bit too much?

The conversation was so...

...boring, I fell asleep.

- Oh come on.

Money, money, money

is why you're here.

- Oh, it's why you're here as well.

- Well, I live on it, basically.

They'll be only one party

that day where the...

Are you sure

you're all right?

We better do those

tests right now.

John:

you see your life very clearly.

The things you've

left undone.
That time in Beijing,
we were both ready
for each other.
It seemed inevitable we
would become lovers.
And yet we let it pass.
And then it slipped away.
A toast to our deal!
To our
joint venture.
To our
great success!
Another round
of drinks?
My wife will
be pissed.
Chang,
you're still single.
Take my advice,
don't get married.
Excuse me,
closing time.
Bye.
Hi.
I've quit my job.
I'm tired of junk that
doesn't last even a day.
The stock exchange prices,
corporate earnings,
I can't...
I need something that's
not here today
and gone tomorrow.
You won't
find that in Hong Kong.
But you see,
I have.
You have?
That's why I want you
to come away with me.
I can't.
You spend
your whole life

waiting for Chang
to ask you to marry him.
And that's wrong?
Of course.
Yes.
Yes?
Why?
Because you know
in your heart,
that he's never
going to ask you.
Will you
marry me?
Thank you.
I...
I can't.
Why!
What are you
frightened of?
I'm offering you
something real.
I'm offering you
something now,
something concrete!
Don't be a coward.
Please.

John:

from a broken heart,
you must get a piece of
jade and keep it close.
Then your blood
will go into the stone.
And the stone will get
into your blood.
Your blood will then
become the stone
and you will
stop bleeding.
Hi.
I've got some goodies for you.
Look at these watches.
- No, sorry.
- How about some handbags?

No, thanks.
Hey guys, Rolexes,
Cartiers, Dunhill lighters!
It's not up to me.
Come on, a bargain.
\$100?
Hey boys, you want
pretty girls?
Come on.
I take you to a good place.
Fuck off!
How are you
feeling, John?
Fine.
Good.
Does it hurt?
I'll live.
A bit sore
in the butt.
So, is that
test finished?
Yes. We've done
all the tests we need to.
We pretty much know
what's going on.
What is that?
I'm afraid I don't have
very good news for you.
You got a serious
problem here.
It's a form
of leukemia.
And I think it's gone
to your brain as well.
That's why you're getting
these dizzy spells and fainting.
It's not common,
but it's spreading
very quickly.

John:
have do you think?

Doctor:

Three months, six months.

Jim:

backing away from him,
and finally he gets her into the thing,
and then suddenly he hears,
bam, bam, bam,
on the door.
And he freaks out
and the girl is...
So you know
what happened?
Some guy escaped
from an insane asylum...
What was that?
He said there is a bomb
in the City Council.
That's why
slow traffic.
Oh fuck!
I can't bear
this fucking city.
I can't...
Is it Vivian?

John:

all I wanted
was to tell Vivian
how much I loved her.
But now I see that's
the one thing I mustn't do.
I can't offload
my illness onto her,
or Jim,
or Mary
and the kids.
I don't want the look in their
eyes to remind me I'm dying.
I wonder if I can hold out
longer than the British.
Not that I could be
described as an empire.
And anyway,
Hong Kong won't die.

It'll change maybe.
Coffee.
Coffee.
Is the coffee
any good here?
Awful.
So why come here?
Because nobody
disturbs me here.
Why are you staring?
I wasn't staring,
I was just looking at you.
Very funny.
I've never seen anyone in
Hong Kong look quite like you.
Your clothes,
your...
behavior.
I'd like to know
more about you.
What's your name?
What's yours?
John.
Jean.
Can I interview you,
Jean?
I'll pay you.
What for?
I'm interested.
I'm interested in how you...
- how you see, how you
perceive Hong Kong,
what you do here,
how you earn a living.
I don't want
to tell you.
I mean it interests
me about whether...
whether you
will be as free
when the takeover
happens,
whether you can still live
the life you have lived until now.

Listen,

what's free?

Ah.

My coffee would be
free if you paid for it.

Then I'll pay for
your coffee.

Thank you.

Can I do
an interview?

Well, actually I've got to go.
I have no time for that.

Listen, if you
change your mind
just give me a call.

I'll pay you.

It's open.

You have to be a damn
Sherpa to climb these stairs.

You moving in?

I ran into a bit
of trouble.

- Can I stay here for awhile?

- Sure.

- Thank you.

- You always do.

As a token of
my appreciation,

- Chateau Hong Kong, 1997.

- Good, very welcome.

Chateau

Hong Kong, 1997.

It's a good year,
there's no denying it.

Can I now go
to my corner?

My corner
of all time?

Yes.

Go on.

- Make yourself at home.

- Sorry.

You know,
this girl had a...

like a boyfriend,
and he got home a little
earlier than anticipated.
What are these?
Just stuff I've
been shooting
What stuff?
Stuff on the street,
you know.
Really?
Pompeii.
Yeah. Hong Kong
before July.
Pompeii
before Vesuvius.
So now you're saying that
there might be an eruption?
Might be.
- Come and look at this.
- What is this?
What is it?
Look at this girl.
Who is she?
I don't know.
She's all wrapped up,
face covered,
ears covered.
The only thing you
see are the eyes.
She's hiding.
Everybody should wear a mask
with the air quality here.
What's she
hiding from?
This is good.
Great light.
Beautiful.
Boring.
Standing on a corner
In Hong Kong
My baby was down
In Hong Kong...
Fuck off!
He's making Armani suits.

Copy suits.
That's Ralph Lauren,
I think.
It's bad to be alone
In Hong Kong...
Here are shoes made.
Great little stools.
I love those stools.
You been
down too long
Worried about you, baby
You been
down too long
Hong Kong
egg foo yung
Chicken chow mein
Chop suey
Hong Kong
Hong Kong
Hong Kong.
Excuse me.
Shut up!
I'm doing business here!
- You want some take-out?
- I take care of foreign devils.
Stinky devils.
Shut up!
Now this one, she's beautiful.
But her temper,
I don't think you can take it.
This one...
- This one's a man.
- A man?
This one, she's gifted.
Dumb as usual.
Look at this one.
She's great.
She's half Thai,
with two babies...
very sentimental but vicious.
You'll like this one.
She laugh all the time.
I don't know why.
And this one, she has been

in some magazine
as cover girl.
This one has been doing some movie.
Of course a sexy movie.

Jim:
a magazine...

John:

Jim:
is not that big.

Woman:
practical city, you know.
It doesn't matter what kind of
big magazine, or small magazine.

Jim:
need somebody
who's more interesting
than these faces.
Who is that?
Do you know that girl?
- Which one?
- The one in the middle.
Oh, she's too expensive
and too high class for this place.
- Does she work here?
- No, not here.
Oh, this is a very old picture.
I don't really remember.
- Was she a hostess?
- She looks like one.
Probably in the place
called Black Moon,
the most expensive
nightclub in Hong Kong.
So, it depends
on whether
you want them to be
nude or with bikini.
You mean to tell me,
after all these years,

you never
made it with her?
Trouble is I can't stop
thinking about her.
Keep seeing her
working as a whore,
taking her clothes off,
smiling at some
guy she doesn't
even know,
lying beside him
in a sleazy hotel room.
Sometimes it's nice
to be the only one.
You know that dog
does that all the time,
just to please
his master.
Every day he runs till he drops,
and then they lift him out,
put him back in his cage
alone in the dark,
just so that when they
want him to fight,
he'll win for them.

John:

about Vivian and Chang.
She told me about
her escape from the mainland,
how she'd met him soon after
she'd arrived in Hong Kong,
about the sacrifices they'd made
to get to where they are today.
I'd heard that she'd supported
him when he was starting out,
introducing him
to useful contacts.
But only now
did I realize
quite how those contacts
had been made.
- Hi, Chang.
- Hi, John.

- How's business?

- Fine, thank you.

The word is

you've got problems.

Yeah,

problems.

Want a drink?

- Thank you, bourbon.

- Vivie!

- Vivie.

- Ah, hi.

Friends of yours?

Yeah.

Where's the blonde

come from?

- Russia probably.

- Oh, yeah.

A lot of Russians

in that line I hear.

I wouldn't know.

You know why...

why Chinese people

like blondes, don't you?

Why, John?

So they can sleep with them without being

reminded of their wives.

I told you this John.

Remember?

Who's the guy?

- Her agent.

- Her agent.

What the sort of, um...

introduces talented artists to...

to rich patrons?

I bet she earned

a bit for that.

Maybe I should be an agent.

I want to change my job,

maybe I should do that.

What do you think they earn?

Agents.

What do you think they earn?

Do you know?

20 percent.

25 percent, maybe.
What do you think?
You okay John?
What's wrong?
I'll tell you
what's wrong.
What is it?
Nothing.
Nothing.
Except that I love this woman
and she loves you.
I've always loved
this woman.
There's something...
something that I'd like to ask you.
It's about this.
Bring back memories?
Is that why he
can't marry you?
Important man, Chang, aren't you?
Important man. Businessman.
A public man!
Ladies and gentlemen,
I would like to introduce to you...
I am her agent.
The most beautiful lady...
Have you ever seen
anything as beautiful?
I'm sorry to disturb you.
I have a very, very beautiful lady.
This lady is my client.
I represent her,
I am her sole representative.
I only take 30 percent.
She's at the bar. When you
have a moment, go and see her.
I'm sorry, look, listen.
You see this lady,
I am her agent. She is at the bar.
She is a beautiful lady, beautiful.
Leave me alone,
I'm talking to this man!
Don't do that to me,
I'm talking.

Listen, I want to show you this...
This beautiful lady.
Leave me alone you stupid...
Go on, Chang.
Go on.
You don't fight,
do you?
You don't fight because you're a pimp!
And pimps don't fight.
Okay, John.
Come on.
Leave me al...
Okay relax, John.
Everything's okay.
Okay, John?
Give it to me,
John, please.
Please?
Burn it.

Chang:

relies on its amazing capability
to adapt to the ever-changing
environment.

Reporter:

rumors of your affiliation
with some less-than-reputable
businessmen?
My partner and I and the Chung-Lin Group
are legitimate businessmen.
And we have a long good record
of doing business in China.
The rumor is ridiculous.
Michael,
I really want to know
when we can start a family.
I can't tell you.
My dealings with China
are so complicated.
I don't know what
will happen.
My love for you
won't change.

Actually, I feel like
we are married.
How are you?
My business partner,
Miss Wong.
Mr. Lee and his wife.
We all know who she is.
Our company is
going public.
I hope you know
what that means!
The past
is the past.
Don't worry.
I will always
protect you.
Your mother sent
you another letter.
Same old thing.
I have an idea about
what your mother wants.
Smile naturally.
You look good together.
You two should
get married someday.
John Spencer!
Do you want to do
that interview?
Maybe.
Well, you want it or not?
What do you think
you're worth?
\$1400.
\$1400?
Yeah.
I could get a
hooker for that.
Well go and get yourself
a hooker, I don't care.
But you won't
have a story.
All right, \$1400,
but it better be good.
I don't want any rubbish.

I want the real story.
- All the nitty-gritty details.
- You bet you will get that!
Right.
Good, well then...
I'll tell you all my secrets.
I'll tell you what,
yes all your secrets,
and I'm going to video it, all right?
I'm going to film it all.
What, I'll be on TV?
So I'm a paid TV star now?
Well you'll be paid.
I'm not sure you'll be a TV star.
- Well, there's only one thing.
- Go on.
I don't like
answering questions.
Jesus, that is...
An interview is me asking questions
and you answering questions.
That is the nature of an interview.
Well, not necessarily.
You'll get a better story,
if you gave me your camera,
and I tape it myself.
- I tell you a whole story.
- Oh yeah.
Do you see mug
written on this face?
- Oh yeah, I see it now.
- I'll never see it again.
Come on, you know where to find me.
This is my neighborhood.
- Come on, sit down here.
- I don't want to sit down.
- I'll show you how to work it.
- Hurry up. I don't have time.
You ought to learn how
to work it and not mess it up.
It's a very valuable
camera this, all right?
Take this off, don't try
and do it without that.

Now, that's how you
turn it on, all right?
My name is Jean.
I was born in 1970.
We lived in a very small place,
very cramped.
the five of us.
Sisters, three sisters.
It was like a room.
My family's from China.
My dad worked,
but it wasn't much help
because he gambled a lot, too.
And he used to lose
a lot of money.
And when he does that,
he'll take it out on Mom.
And I remember...
on really hot summer nights,
my dad would go out
and get drunk.
And then he would
come home,
and...
he would fuck us,
the three of us in turn.
John!
John!
- Yeah?
- A girl leave you this.

Jean:

I couldn't have sex for love.
It was too painful.
So I did it for
financial reasons.
My pimp,
he had an idea.
He made dates
with tourists
who would
come to me,
and then when they see me,
they were horrified and they run off.

So I don't have to do
anything and I got money.
It was a scam.
Because they still had to pay me because
they made a deal already.
So thanks to my scar,
you know, my private parts
didn't get too sore.
There were exceptions.
One time, there's this cop,
he's a bit fucked up
in the head,
and he really wanted
to do it with me.
You know, really.
And I had no choice but to do it.
That was horrible.
And he used a
blood-stained jade.
It was an evidence from a
sex crime he was investigating on.
And he did it with that,
for hours and hours
and it really hurt.
I was screaming,
I was kicking,
I was doing everything
I could to stop him
but I couldn't.
So I grabbed a knife
and I cut his dick off.
Yeah, there was
blood everywhere.
She cut the guy's dick off?
That's what she says.

Jim:

of Hong Kong for you.
Hey what is that red thing
in the background
with that face on it?
That's a face map.
They use it for telling
fortunes here.

They believe that a map
of the face is a map of a life,
that you can read
everything in it.
Can you read anything
in this girl's face?
I tell you, I would really love
to photograph her.
I mean, she's the most interesting
subject I've seen so far.
How can I get
in touch with her?
I don't know.
I don't know
where she lives.
I don't know where to find her.
I don't know
anything about her
except what she says.
And that,
I don't know whether to believe.
Do you believe it?
Did you fuck her?
I write every day
about this place.
I write about the economy,
I write about the politics.
And yet I understand zilch,
nothing.
And I just thought,
you know, that
if I could understand
what makes this thing tick,
this strange, funny girl,
then I'd...
I'd be in touch with
something, you know?
(talk radio plays)
What is that?
North Korea.
I don't understand anything
about North Korea, either.
Now,
let's talk about what

you really want to know,
about my scar
and how I got it.
Here's what I have
to say about that...
nothing.
(cheers, applause)
Shh!
Black market
Sneak around the corner
Budapester Strasse
Black market
Peek around the corner
"La police qui passe"
Come, I'll show you things
you cannot get elsewhere
Come, make with the offers
and you'll get your share
Black market
Eggs for statuettes
smiles for cigarettes
Got some broken
down ideals?
Like wedding rings?
- Shh
- Shh.
Tiptoe
- Tiptoe.
Trade your things
You want my
porcelain figure?
A watch?
A submarine?
A Rembrandt?
Salami?
Black lingerie from Wein?
I sell my goods...
Do you know what
Marlene Dietrich said
to a producer friend of hers
at Paramount Studios
when she first
saw Gary Cooper?
No.

She said,
"Oo-oh Daddy, will you get me him?"
The bar is closed.
No, um,
it's a bit early for that.
I came...
to...
teach you a few English words like,
I'm sorry I behaved...
like a jerk.
Um, and,
please forgive me.
And I really didn't
mean to hurt you.
It's the last thing
I want to do.
What do you want?
The trouble is I don't know.
I tried to make you love me,
that didn't work.
I tried to hate you and that...
so I suppose I just want
to be friends,
friends with you.
I don't want friend like you.
... for your K-ration
Compassion and maybe
An inkling, a twinkling
Of real sympathy
I'm selling out...
Take all I've got
Ambitions! Convictions!
The works!
Why not?
Enjoy these goods
For, boy these goods
Are hot!
(applause)
(strumming guitar)
So how's Vivian?
How's that going?
You know, every love story
is the same, I mean,
we have Boleros for that,

to describe the whole thing.
Usually, Boleros are written
when love begins,
and when love ends.
And in the middle, nothing,
because no one
wants to know about...
Life is very nice with you.
No.
Just the beginning.
The love begins, and you go,
I love you, and I will
give you the world
And I will love you even
more than I love myself.
And then
the relationship ends.
And then,
I hate you
I really hate you
I mean I detest you
And I hope your pet
Is run over by a truck
Because
You're a piece of shit.
They send you a record...
I swear to God,
women are something else...
cut with a knife,
every single song, except the one
that they want you to hear.
This is when they're
very upset with you.
You haven't gotten
that yet, no?
And it'll go like,
I detest you
- And that's what you're gonna hear.
- You're a nightmare.
When are you going
to move out again?
(singing in Spanish)
Give me some peace,
for God's sake.

You don't like that one?
Let me sing one you'll really like.
Relax, have a drink.
She wants me
to get a divorce.
Or she won't fuck me.
Just lie to her.
Who the fuck
is she anyway?
These northern
chicks are trash.
When she first came
here from China,
she was a
small-time whore
getting her tits
squeezed by scum.
She was shit
before I met her!
These northern chicks
only know how
to spread their legs.
Then they think
they're hot shit.
Shh!
Don't be so loud.
The owner is
a northern chick.
She's no different.
Another drink!
You've had
enough tonight.
Take a break.
She's refusing us!
Fuck your mother!
Does my money stink?
I have enough
to buy you!
Buy her?
You asshole!
Do you know who
protects this bar?
Buy her?
She's my wife!

Do you know who I am?

You fuck!

Buy her!

John:

the boldest show of support
Chang had ever made.

But by now she had learned
the limit of his commitment.

And for her,
it was not enough.

For in the strict mores
of Chinese society,
the stigma of her past
would prevent her
from ever being
an acceptable wife.

She go out!

She go out!

The girl with the scar?

- Go away.

- Where is she? Where does she live?

- Don't bother us

- The girl with the scar?

- Don't know, go away.

- She lives that way.

You never told me
you were a gardener.

What do you want?

- I want my money back.

- Huh?

I want my money back.

I thought the deal was that you
told me your story and I paid you.

I did.

Except you left out
all of that, it seems.

- Where did you get that?

- Doesn't matter where I got it.

- I got it.

- Give it to me! Give it to me!

- So is there anything...

- Mister, you paid me to talk,
and I did. And that's it.

Go get a life.

Was there anything that you
told me that was the truth?

- I mean, I'm not angry, I'm just...

- Is there some law

I have to tell you the truth?

Are we close? Are we friends?

- I thought the deal was...

- The foreign devil is hassling me!

- I thought the deal was that you...

- Piss off!

Jean!

Jean!

Jean!

I don't understand.

What more do you want to know?

You have this.

I want to hear your...

your version of what happened.

This was the school

that I used to go to.

One day we were

in that corner,

copying each

other's homework,

and then listening

to the radio.

And,

I looked at him.

We were this close.

And we just knew it.

We were in love,

and that was it.

From that day onwards,

we were together

every single day.

We couldn't be apart.

Madly in love.

This is the back

of William's house.

What's that?

We keep our secret

letters here.

- We meet secretly here.

- Why secretly?
Because we weren't
allowed to see each other.
Why not?
His father didn't like it.
His father worked
for a big company.
And all the employees are forced
to sign a contract saying that
they're not allowed to have relationships
with Chinese people.
One day, I got
a letter from William,
saying that it was all over.
How did you feel
about that?
I couldn't take it.
I went mad.
I tried to kill myself.
I drank poison.
Only I didn't die.
Why did William
suddenly break it off?
He didn't want to either.
His father forged the letter.
His father broke us up.
Terence Campbell
forged a letter?
So, have you seen
William since then?
We haven't spoken
to each other since then.
He was sent away.
You see that tree?
That's where we first kissed.
And that's the house.
See that window
at the corner?
That's William's room.
I was only there once because
I was never allowed in the house.
Maybe they'll let me in.
No,
no John!

John, they moved
out ages ago.
Other people live there.
Come on let's go.
(knocking)
John?
John?
I want to leave Hong Kong.
I don't believe you.
- What?
- I don't believe you.
I think you've just had a row
with Chang. You want to...
you want to make him jealous and
you want to play around with me.
I know you.
I know you very well.
I watch you in that bar,
playing with people.
You're very good at it, you know.
You're very good at it.
Well, you can't... you can't play
with my feelings anymore.
Is that how
you see me?
When I asked you if
you'd come away with me
I loved you,
I loved you,
with all of my heart.
And you said no.
And now it's
too fucking late!
Because now
I don't love you.
I don't love you at all.
As a matter of fact
I don't feel anything for you.
Are you finished?
John?
John?
Are you okay?
What are you
doing here?

- What?
- What the fuck are you doing here?
You shouldn't be here.
(dance music plays)
- Good evening, sir.
- Welcome.
(car horn)
Let me be
your underwear
So I can touch
you there
And there and there
I feel it
I feel it
I think
I feel it now
Good evening, sir.
This is Miss Lilly.
- Have a good time.
- Hi.
- Did you send me a message?
- No.
Would you
like a drink?
Hi.
Hi.
I'm Jenny.
This is Lilly.
- I know this is Lilly.
- And you are?
- I am John.
- Ah, John.
So, Jenny.
How long have
you worked here?
- Do you have a boyfriend?
- Used to.
- No more.
- Oh.
- No more.
- No more?
Yeah.
You want to leave?
Yes.

With, uh, me?

Or with her,

or together?

With me.

Yeah.

Jesus Christ.

Vivian this joke's

gone far enough.

My name is Jenny.

Shh!

You want me to undress?

Many men want

to make love to me.

You problem?

I fix.

I fix.

No, Vivian

stop this game.

Do you need anything?

I'm fine.

You know you can

come home anytime.

- I want you to meet someone.

- Who?

- William, I'm sorry we're late.

- Hello.

Remember Jean?

How are you? How do you do,

William Campbell.

I can't believe this.

- William?

- How are you?

- You're back.

- Uh, yeah.

When did you

come back?

Just a few days ago.

My father died.

I came back for the funeral.

Why didn't you

try to find me?

Oh my God, of course.

Right. You were the only person who got

into more trouble than I did.

How have you been?
Are you well?
I missed you.
You remember
I came to your house.
We exchanged letters.
I'm sorry, l...
You don't remember
any of that?
How could you? I've been
waiting for you all these years.
I'm...
this is very odd.
l... I don't know what's
going on here.
I thought we were
going to get married.
I'm actually supposed to be
getting married next week.
Are you out of your mind?
What happened to you?
We went to Island School
together.
Maybe you know my fiancée
Alice Wong. Do you know her?
She came to the school...
What the fuck's
going on?
You're marrying
Alice Wong?
- What the fuck is going on?
- I waited for you for 10 years!
- And you said you would marry me!
- I don't know you.
What the fuck is going on here?
I don't appreciate this.
John!
I'm sorry.
I'm sorry if...
How could you forget me?
I wouldn't forget
who I was engaged to.
And I was never engaged to you.
I'm sorry.

I really don't appreciate this.
And I don't know what it is
that you two are trying to pull.
I'm sorry.
All right.
Thank you very much.
That wasn't William.

Reporter:

to a recent announcement
which will restrict the right of assembly
and protest in Hong Kong,
a 19-year-old college student,
doused himself with gasoline
and set himself
on fire.

But a recent survey indicates that
the majority of Hong Kong people
expect business to continue
as usual after the hand-over.
The city remains on the move
and on the make,
seemingly in denial
of how things change.
Or will they change?

John:

about Hong Kong's future
as if it had a
definite direction,
and predictable outcome.
But everything in this city
has always been changing.
Maybe I wasn't meant
to figure you out.
- (whistling; guitar playing)
- (phone rings)
Now let's go.
Come on.
(machine beeps)

Mary:

John are you there?
John?

John, it's Mary.
I'm calling
from England.
And John,
I just got your letter.
You know there are many different
treatments for leukemia, John, many.
I really think you should
get a second opinion.
I don't know what
to tell the children.
And, well, I need
to talk to you.
I want to talk to you.
Will you call me back? Bye.

Hiya.

Hi.

I bought some crabs.
I'm leaving tonight.

- Yeah?

- Mm-hm.

Girl called to say
it was okay to return.
I wanna leave some of
my things here, okay?
You always do.

There's a place,
so I've been told
Every street is
paved with gold
And it's just across
the borderline
And when it's time
to take your turn
Here's a lesson
you must learn
You could lose more than
you'd ever hope to find
And when you reach
the broken promise land
Every dream slips
through your hands
And you know it's too late
to change your mind

'Cause you've paid
the price to come this far
Just to wind up
where you are
And you're still
You're just across
The borderline.

John:

Jenny again?

Vivian:

Don't think so.
Well if you see her,
will you thank her for me?

Crowd:

Fight for democracy!
Fight for democracy!
- Fight for democracy!
- Fight for democracy!
- Long live democracy!
- Long live democracy!
Fight for democracy!
Fight for democracy!
Fight for democracy!
Long live democracy!
Long live democracy!

Reporter:

... into one of the leading cities
and one of the greatest
trading economies in the world.
Hi!
The last gasp of air!
Colonial air, come on,
you must take a breath of this!
Arms up!
The Army Guard of Wales
are retired!
About!
Turn!

John:

you give me a moment.
Me sure that
in spite of the past,
and in spite
of the future,
this tick of our lifetime's
one moment you love me.