

# Neon Love Pt I.

By TheGreatValette

Published on Stories Space on 05 Jan 2016

<https://www.storiesspace.com/stories/romance-/neon-love-pt-i.aspx>

Miles Davis reverberated smoothly across the dark room, the trumpet built up steadily the way his own anticipation was building at the thought of her waking. Hong Kong Island's skyline shone brightly into the room from across the water. Gael lit another cigarette, as he sat in a bamboo papasan, and propped his feet up on the window sill. He watched the boats; tiny red and white lights in the darkness moving down the waterway toward the sea. How many hours, since he arrived in China, had he spent dreaming at that window? He mused about the millions of lives which hummed vividly around him - lives lived in a world that differed profoundly from what he knew to be his own. Gael remembered the initial energy he felt pulsating through him in those first early months - stepping out of his tiny loft's building and into the neon lit jungle of his neighborhood - a modern Marco Polo - cut off from the West for the first time in his life although he could see its influence everywhere he went. Hong Kong was the greatest thing that had ever happened to Gael. He worked four days a week in Kowloon, and he spent the other three exploring. His favorite discovery so far was Mei. She was an entire uncharted world sleeping peacefully in his bed. She lay in his bed like an elegant Chinese box full of poems just waiting to be discovered. Mei had crashed on Gael's bed earlier that afternoon to escape the other pressing obligations in her life. He didn't mind being her hiding place, and he welcomed the unannounced visit even if she went to sleep almost immediately. He eyed the diamond ring on her elegant hand which scrunched sheets up around her face. Tonight, he knew nothing was going to come between them. Gael's quiet contemplation was broken as he heard a light waking whimper from the mess of silky black hair which spilled out over his pillows. She moved like river water under the sheets; stretching her arms slowly above her head, and squinting in his direction. "What time is it?" her small voice called out. "Almost eleven, time to get up; we're meeting Chen in an hour." "In an hour? But I'm so comfy..." "Alright... we can drink on the bed." She smiled as she looked at the half empty whiskey bottle, "It looks like you drank much already." "Most of that was from two nights ago when Mrs. Chow from down the hall came over for a drink." "The old lady?" "Yah she drinks like no one I've ever seen." "You are a liar!" she said laughing. "I'm dead serious." "Wow... Chow Laoshi... Maybe she was wilder than us when she's young woman!" "I bet Hong Kong was crazy in the 50's!" "Pour me whiskey!" she yelled, "I don't want to be beaten by Chow Laoshi!" ..... "Yi, Er, San!" she shouted, tapping her glass down on the bar and then tipping it back. He just watched. "Why you don't drink?" "I wasn't ready," he said smirking "Come on pussy!" she teased. She had adopted, and now loved the word pussy after hearing him use it once, and she did not discriminate

with who she used it on. "You drink like the old lady across your hall!" "Alright! Alright!" he said, tapping his glass down as was his ritual. She motioned for the bartender to pour another, repeated her countdown, and then ordered another. "You know, I do actually want to remember tonight," he said. "Can't handle eh?" she was smiling, leaning on the bar with a slightly sloppy aura. Clearly it wasn't going to take much whiskey for her to be good for the night. "Speak for yourself. You are already acting a bit like some drunk panda." "Awwww! Panda's so cute!" "I just don't want to repeat what happened to me in Taipei." "What happened in Taipei? You wake up in a bad place? Or kiss with a ladyboy?" "What? What the hell woman?! Of course, I didn't make out with a ladyboy. Anyway isn't that Thailand?" Gael shivered with disgust, and she let out a long amused laugh. He took another drink in hopes the moment would pass. "No, I think you can find ladyb..." "I don't care where you can find them!" he shivered again "Aw so sensitive!" she said slapping him on the shoulder. "Here let's take another!" "Nah... let's chill for a minute. Where the hell is Chen?" "OOK," she said with slight disappointment. "You don't have to drink, but tonight... Tonight I am free." She motioned to the bartender, but Gael shook his head, and the bartender walked off. "Tonight we're free..." he thought, standing up. .... Gael first met Mei at an art show in Hong Kong proper. The show was made up of pieces that combined traditional Chinese painting techniques with cityscapes - skyscrapers towered on silk like the mountains of ZhangJiaJie. He was admiring an exceptionally large cityscape of intricate detail when Mei walked over and stood silently next to him. She had a martini in her hand, and she wore a most elegant black silk dress - her eyes glimmered in the spotlights. "This is my favorite painting in the show," she said not looking at him. "Yes, it definitely is phenomenal. I haven't seen anything like it back home." "So you are American? What brings you to Hong Kong?" "I have a two-year contract teaching in Kowloon." "That is great! I love Hong Kong. Have you been here long?" "Since February, so almost a year. I'm really looking forward to my first Chinese New Year. Are you from Hong Kong? Your English is really good." "Thank You, and no, I am from Shanghai. I move here so I could paint whatever I want." "A painter! I'd love to see some of your work. Not an easy city to live in as an artist." "No, it isn't! Do you visit many art shows?" "Actually, this is my second - the first was some horribly pretentious thing full of that pseudo post-modern art. You know, like where they take garbage and shit and nail it to a wall and call it deep. I didn't think that type of shit had made it over to China." Mei laughed though Gael couldn't tell if it was because she thought he was funny or because she was uncomfortable. He felt a chill go up his spine as he contemplated the possibility that she may herself create similar pieces to the ones he described, but his paranoia subsided as she replied, "I think all art has something valuable to say - even the ones made of garbage and shit," She was trying to hold back a smile, "it needs to exist to make a statement about those kinds of people, and to stand in contrast to the truly great art like this painting. Chen has so much talent. I can't believe he has come this far." "Chen? So you know the painter? I would love to meet him." "Yes, we went to university together, and now he is successful!" "And what is your name?" "I'm Mei." "Nice to meet you, Mei. I'm Gael." "Nice to meet you too - come on, I will introduce you to Chen." ..... The street the bar was on was packed with people, and illuminated by giant neon signs that ran down the length of the street for each establishment. This is how he pictured

Hong Kong before he left the U.S - dirty, crowded, and loud. He loved this street and made it a point to frequent the bars there. Gael watched Mei now from a few feet behind as she walked, and reveled in the fact that she was with him tonight and not her fiance, Wang. She looked back and smiled every ten steps or so to check that he was still there, and he just smiled back. "Chen isn't coming." she yelled back at him looking at her phone, "He is going to a party up on Victoria." "You wanna go?" Gael asked. "He says Zhang Yimou is there!" "Well shit. What are we waiting for?"