

「美」溥事考特 程惠勤 著

爱之道

The Dao of Love

世界图书出版公司

爱之道

THE DAO OF LOVE

as walked by Cheng Huiqin and Scott Pruett

程惠勤和溥事考特 爱的路上携手前行



*A true story of how desire and preparation can
overcome the challenges of time, space, and red tape.*

这是一个真实的故事！当拥有内心的向往和充分的人生准备，
它们将战胜时间、空间和各种人为屏障的挑战，抵达真爱的彼岸。

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阮次山代序：真爱无涯

对于像我这种年龄的人来说，情书是一种表达感情的必要工具，在我们那个年代，写情书是恋爱中的男女，或者追求异性朋友的一种必要方式。那时候，电话并不发达，所有的电话都是有线电话，除非通电话时四处无人，用电话传情当然不如关起门来写情书自在。

曾几何时，有了无线电话、手机发达之便，情书似乎已不具必要性，也没有经由电话传情那么快速、真实而浪漫。有一度，许多男女甚至已不再具备写情书的能力，男女同学之间，甚至于已失去那种把情书偷塞在女同学的书页间，急迫、期盼对方反应和回应那种叫人心动、焦急的等待、失眠或落泪的体验。

然而，无论如何物换星移，人类的爱情仍然需要表达，手机短信的发达，改变了男女之间互动的方式，爱情之于网路则开始了天涯若比邻的另一种追求、爱于被爱的新途径。对于像我这种已远离恋爱阶段的老一代人来说，网路谈情，手机传情是一种可用隔岸观光的心情去欣赏的新文化，此时看年轻的一辈人在这种氛围中爱得你死我活，另有一种感觉。

程惠勤和她的爱人同志事考特那种刻骨铭心的恋爱筑基于网路，从网上的谈情又回到情书时代的浪漫，不同的是他们的情书不用笔写，而是透过键盘，用的是英文，传达的是两种不同的文化背景之下的成长，有种不同半生遭遇和回忆的互动。他们俩的恋爱空间游走于中国大陆、台湾、美国和欧洲之间，跨越数千英里，很难想象，放在我那个年代，鱼雁往返的速度会如何发展这种情意。然而在网路的平台上，他们压缩了双方的实际距离，也加速了爱的心跳，让丘比特射出爱情之剑时，省了不少力气。

如今，在回味过去浪漫往事，在未来仍铺满爱情花瓣的幸福日子中，他们决定把过去在虚拟世界写过的情书以中、英文对照的方式公诸于世，这是一种创举，一种让生活在网路时代的无数年轻男女都会有共鸣的创举，他们称这是他们的爱之道，The 道 of Love，我倒是觉得这是他们之间

对彼此爱的誓言，用回忆、用“公然”的方式告诉另一半，告诉所有的人，他们期望用过去这么多经由网路表达的情意，随时使彼此的爱情再出发，再酝酿展现在前边的另一段爱情之路。这段爱情之路是无涯的，没有止境的，只要有真爱，就能永恒的走下去。

这本爱之道是一本属于心灵的书，值得用心去看，去体会，去共鸣，去回味。

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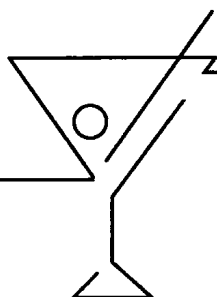


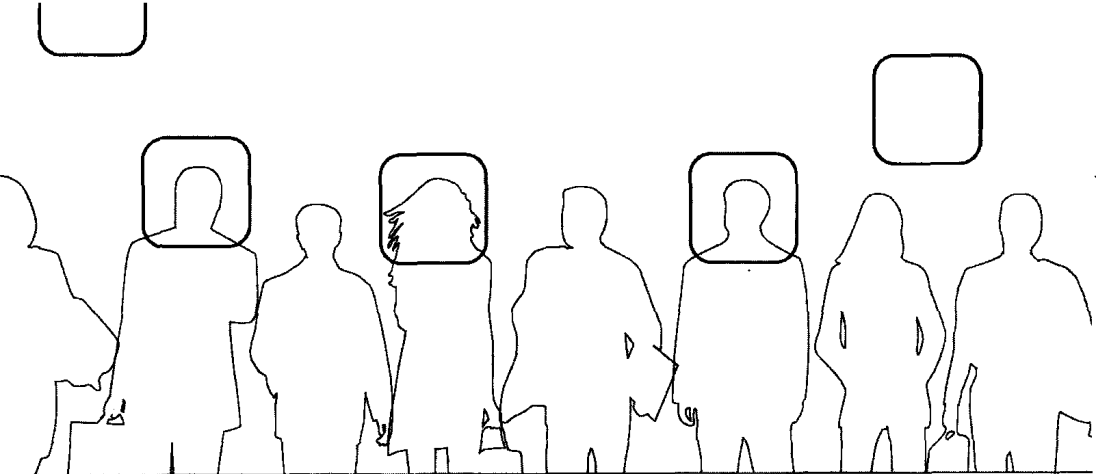
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Preface

The Virtual Cocktail Party

前言・虚拟鸡尾酒会

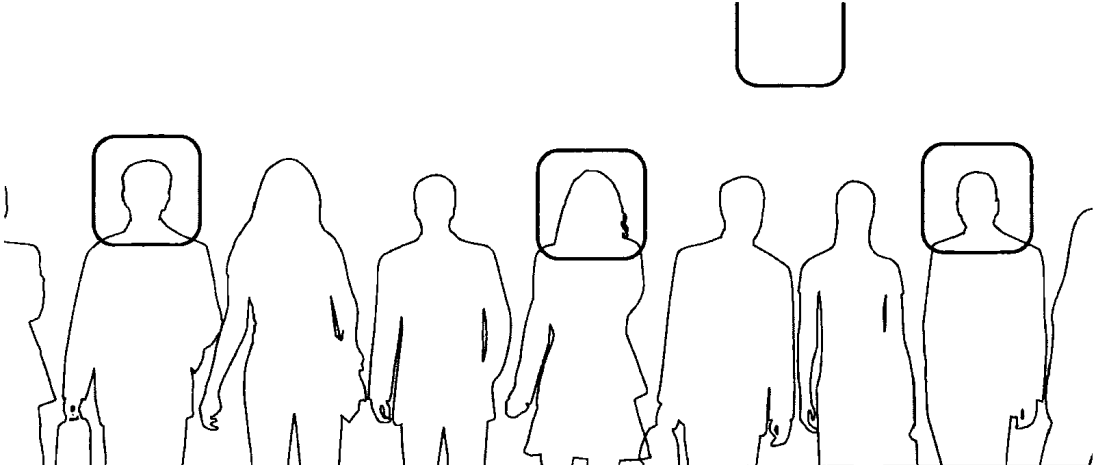




... a note from the girl.

This story actually begins one day in late summer of 2008. I must have been in an unusually relaxed and easy going mood because I even started to clean out an old e-mail box that I hadn't visited in ages. After deleting a pile of old mail, I finally reached the bottom of the mailbox. Sitting there was an old e-mail with a title that caught my attention, "Someone wants to know you..." It had been sent to me some two years before by one of my old college chums. I remembered that it was only a web link, and that I had never opened it. Thinking it might be something interesting that my friend wanted to share with me, I felt a bit guilty. So, I opened the link, and there I was at the Asia PenPal¹ website (APP). Not only was I in high spirits that day, but I also had some time to kill. So, I set up an account and even uploaded several photos. Now, this was really exceptional, because I had never done anything like it before. It was impossible for me to imagine that only three days later, someone meant just for me would arrive there in my inbox and unlock a journey to true love that I had dreamed about all of my life.

¹ 全书此网站名以化名的形式出现。



By the time this love had actually become a part of real life, when the glowing eyes with warm flame were there to stay, I almost forgot how everything started. The feeling of fate is so strong that it makes me wonder. Our souls are so familiar to each other, so intimate, that sometimes it's hard to breathe, as if it were all arranged by some mysterious power. But looking back, I have to ask, without the internet, how could we have found each other? We lived one in the eastern and one in the western hemispheres, in two completely different worlds. Without the internet, even if we had brushed past each other one day, even if we had seen that extraordinary look in the eyes, would we have stopped for a moment? The possibility is so small that it seems that it might never happen without some unseen hand. So perhaps, we came by chance to the same website at the same time following some mysterious guidance.

Now, I must go back to the very beginning. As I was killing time on the website that summer, I felt fresh and my mind was free, all because I had just gotten through a really tough period – I had finally ended a ten-year marriage. After enduring unbelievable darkness, I suddenly began to understand a lot of basic things in my life. Things became simple and clear. The world was wide open again, and experiences like pleasure could arise spontaneously. I had finally reached a peaceful and calm place in heart and soul. Those days of wandering along the edge of the abyss have since become my good fortune, because only after slogging through a dangerous path can one ever possibly gain rebirth. But even at my darkest moment, I could still feel, coursing through my

veins, a strong belief in love. That belief never vanished, but constantly stuck to one side of my soul, making me cry with tears in the longing for it. And it was in those moments, my heavy solid earthbound body would suddenly rise up on wings of gossamer, because the soul felt release and could fly up. I was in a state of extreme happiness.

That reawakening belief in love made me realize that finding my true love would not be easy. Whether it would ever be realized or not was no longer important. What was important was that I knew it existed. That assuredness enabled me to return to my true self. The power of that belief took me back to when I was young, full of freewill and a belief in art... Ten years gone, the sands of time steadily fall... if they could not diminish the innocence of my heart, my hunger for purity and truth, then I really had returned to my whole self again and had gained freedom.

This state of mind had an unexpected side-effect; I became rather difficult to be touched emotionally. I even felt a bit sad for those random passions, those feelings of need. Emotions can look genuine, but lack depth. The other side of love – its weakness and doubt, its calculating nature and eventual tiredness – had made me numb to the point that I thought I may have to remain alone. Was I to really be alone on this path of life? Though, I can honestly say, if that was the way things were to be, I already had no fear of it. I only knew I could not forsake my belief in a true love.

That's how it was when he first appeared in my mailbox. Even though he threw off an unforgettable energy from his whole body, I never imagined we could ever be together. But the look in his eyes was so unique. Was it this uniqueness making him different from all others that makes it seem like he, too, had come to this site purely by chance, without any purpose? He only wanted to find some pen-pals to practice his Mandarin. The look in his eyes was distant and deep, but without a trace of loneliness. On the contrary, he carried the rare look of determination and honesty. This man who is complete in his spirit can enjoy freedom and being alone more purely. These ideas I had of him were all proved real later, and it is because he can enjoy being alone that he can preserve a complete belief in love.

And so, in my mind, he was the most impossible. I thought, at most he might come here for a while out of curiosity, but as soon as the conversation got dull, he would leave without hesitation. Strangely, one reason we didn't lose touch might be because, during those first few months on APP, we rarely contacted each other. A whole month would go by without writing even one note, and not knowing where in the world the other was. But still, because of those extremely short, occasional messages to simply say hello, each one containing a touch of our sensibility to words and language, we seemed to gradually feel a kind of familiar energy with each other. It was only a feeling that we might want to share a kind of spiritual communication, but if we hadn't pursued it a bit more, we could have very easily passed each other by. That is, unless there was something predetermined. And all this getting acquainted happened over four months. After that, we ended our short greetings on APP and started our formal letter writing.

In this day and age, letters have become a luxury. And for a whole generation of young people, they are merely a collective memory. Moreover, there are many people who have already lost the ability to write letters. Now, you only see love letters in classic romantic novels. And people are often moved to tears when they see movies that have the theme of love letters, because it seems letters have already disappeared from people's lives. We, however, began writing each other once everyday. Thanks to the internet, letters can be received on the same day, almost instantly, making it possible to also reply on the same day. If not for the time difference, we probably would have stayed in touch every minute. In fact, we moved into the spiritual world of each other through letters, and their amazing power made us unable to resist it. We started a genuine journey of discovery of each other. What a heart throbbing moment, one after another! The self expanded in those letters; feelings were flowing and turning. Unintentionally, it became thrilling and soul stirring.

When a man and woman who have both experienced inner isolation find each other after endless exploring, then unbelievably, the one is proved to be the "split-apart" of the other, it's amazing! For in the whole two months of intense letter writing, what we were doing was reading each other's soul. It's enough to

make you tremble. It brought about such tremendous joy that, aside from coming together to walk the same path of life, there was no other choice.

If he is the kind of man who possesses a true belief in love, the one who didn't give up even after facing impassible mountains and rivers that forced him to double back, then there will be one day in the end when he will climb over the mountains and water to find you, to come to you. That's when there will be a magic meeting of the minds, as if in a world apart from the world, and yet it is real.

Occasionally, I still wake up in the middle of the night, and it hits me that my life is going to be complete from now on. Every once in a while, I might even break out into a cold sweat, but wake to be suddenly aware of the touch of my lover's hand... then I break into a laugh. I only have gratitude now. Believe me everyone, life will grant you something magical if you hold in your heart a belief in love.



...a note from the guy.

As for me, I had given up all together. Over the years, relationships had come and gone, a few had been precious and long-term. They had greatly enriched my life, and finally, I was beginning to get the hang of it... relationships that is – how to treat a woman better, how to understand her moods, or my own moods for that matter. I had learned how to encourage without pushing, how to wrap her up without tying her down, how to give her freedom without making her feel alone. But at the end of yet another long-term relationship, a friend who knows me well suggested I take six months off from dating – period. No dates. No sex. No getting involved in any way with someone of the female gender. He said I needed time to get my life settled again before jumping into another relationship where I put my focus completely on the girl.

I agreed his idea had merit, so I gave it a try. I knew it would be a cinch to avoid meeting new people because I was working on a graduate thesis at the time. With my nose stuck in a book, it would be extremely difficult to get distracted by some lovely lady's smile. When the paper was finished, I was only half-way through the deal – there would be at least three more months of celibacy. For others, a commitment like this would be easy. For me, in Las Vegas, three months would actually take some effort, an adjustment of normal procedures if you will. And yet, I didn't mind. I was feeling better about myself than I had in years. Experience had imparted some wisdom... and patience. The absolute last thing I wanted in the fall of 2008 was another ordinary relationship. If I were to get involved with someone, the relationship would need to be blissful and inspirational, based on much more than an initial physical spark. It would have to be something truly special. I wanted intellectual fireworks. If I couldn't have that, I would simply do without.

So, I gave up. In my experience, that kind of balanced relationship was a rare and illusive mystery saved for a lucky few. And I thought searching for one would simply be a wasted effort... effort that would pull me away from reality. Instead, I focused on fulfilling my own dreams, pursuing my own goals, creating my own opportunities, and having my own adventures. I was headed for Taiwan province.

The same friend who challenged me to go celibate for six months had himself met several interesting people on E-Harmony, the USA's most reputable internet match-making service. After two years of being entertained by stories of inappropriate matches and going through the ups-and-downs with him, I came to believe that even if you didn't find a perfect life partner, the Internet might still serve as a tool to meet some really interesting people... maybe even on the other side of the world!

As the time drew near for me to leave the United States, I started reaching out toward Taiwan province in order to learn more about the island. By communicating with some of the local people, I knew it would be easier to decide which part of the island to move to. The website I used to meet people was AsiaPenPal.com. Of course, like so many others, it is designed primarily to help people find a girlfriend or boyfriend, but it also has the flexibility to help people simply find friends, just like the name says.

As with all websites of this type, users are asked to write a profile about themselves. I wrote one that was honest and informative, trying to strike a balance between too much information and not enough. When you read someone's profile, it really says a great deal about them. As often as not, my impression of someone was based on what they didn't say. When a girl only says, "Hi! If you're interested in learning more, give me a shout," are they really worth shouting at? Maybe for someone else, but I needed just a bit more. Are they educated? Are they witty or creative? Do they have a variety of interests that help propel a conversation? When it came to writing my own profile, I had to find a way to put enough of those elements into it. That way, if there were some interesting people out there, they might notice that not only did I have a professional photo, but I also had half a brain, and was not interested in a quick hook-up.

Soon after posting my profile, I was in contact with a few ladies from Taiwan province and mainland in China. I was learning things from their point of view and getting a chance to practice some Chinese. It was great. I didn't write too many letters because this was a whole new way of meeting people, and I wasn't sure it was for me. Most often, after a couple of letters, the interest waned and we naturally moved on to other people.

It was during those early days of fumbling along, that I was first introduced to 'Lotusablue.' In late August, 2008, I got a very short note, but it was certainly enough to point me in the direction of her profile. "Wow! There's a great gal," I thought. "Too bad she's in Beijing." After a couple of brief exchanges, I believed she could be an interesting person to write to on occasion... and "Who knows?" I thought, "Maybe I'll visit Beijing, and wouldn't it be nice to visit an art museum together."

I like to imagine our first introduction as if it were at a cocktail party. The place is packed, and there we are, looking our best, being charming, mingling around the party eager to find someone interesting to talk with... hoping not to get stuck with a dud. Then in a bit of a rush to get through a crowded, rather noisy part of the room, we bump into each other... and pause. There's something different in the eyes... a connection... a recognition almost. The contact is brief, but well remembered.

Our first 'hello' in August was followed by a minor flirtation in September. At that point, life crashed in and pulled both of us out of the virtual cocktail party for a couple of months. That is, neither of us were online for a quite some time. I wrote my thesis, while Lotusablue traveled to Europe for work and an extended vacation. Neither of us was aware that the other had stopped visiting the website. We were too busy doing our own thing. She was, like me, becoming complete in and of herself, in her own space, with her own timeline. It was not until late December that either of us, without knowledge of the other's actions and within a day or so of each other, switched our Internet accounts back on. We were delighted to see the other was still around, for by then, we both knew, the other had something special that was definitely worth exploring.

Our Dao of love began with the written word... love letters, letters that grew in length and depth and desire, until... well, to believe it, you'll just have to read them for yourself.

Oh, yeah. My user name... VegasSinger.

From: AsiaPenPal [cupid@asiapenpal.com]

Friday, December 21, 2008 8:15 PM

To: spruett@runbox.com

To ensure receipt of this Activity Report, please add cupid@asiapenpal.com to your address book. For more info, please [click here](#).

Account Activity Report for VegasSinger

Dear VegasSinger,

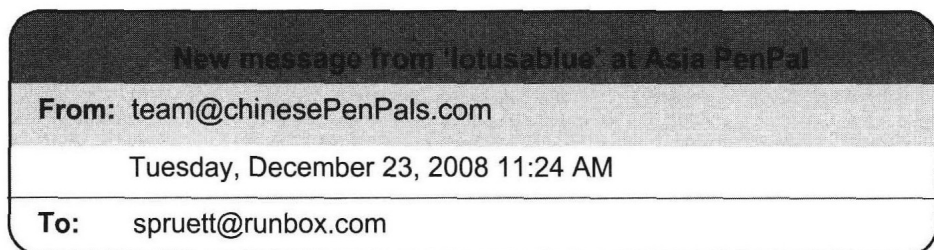
19 members want to meet you

These members are waiting to hear from you! They have either hotlisted you, viewed your account or sent you a wink. Recently you've had: 2 winks and 20 views. Login to Asia PenPal to see your full activity report.

Then flirt with other members to increase your chances of hooking-up! Send them a wink, add them to your hotlist or take the next step and send them a message!



They had account names like Cheers73, Wing280, and Mandy9093. Some tried to provide a little insight into themselves by using descriptive names like Sunshine28133, Juicy20, and Water Woman2. There was minicat77, whose overly eager look said she wanted to scratch my back. There was the beautiful YAQ1775, not the name of course, but the girl... very pretty. Some unwisely used their real names while others simply used a long series of numbers. But already, there was only one name that mattered – Lotusablue. Her picture is among those on the previous page, but how would you know? Who can you tell from one, or six, or even 20 snapshots on a webpage? You can certainly tell who you don't want. But even after gazing longingly at one photo after the other, imagining the feel, the touch, the taste of that person, that lover... there is absolutely no way to know whether or not reality will live up to your aching fantasy.



Meet Your Special Someone

VegasSinger you have a private message from lotusablue!

