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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I stood staring into space, filled with joy. The air was dense with excitement and I found it difficult to breathe. I was standing in the middle of the train station of what a decade ago would be part of the China Sea. According to my memory, Ho Yuen was an undeveloped but secure town where I lived for the first four years of my life. Now, I was going back to visit my old friends and kindergarten teachers, especially Mr. Zhang, my affable educator and confidant who I respected and admired.

I got on the bus outside the train station, about to go exploring and discovering the astonishing developments of my hometown. The coach took off with a loud roar, and the next thing I knew I was already on the highway, speeding. There seemed to be no limit to the maximum speed of the public transportation and it just kept on increasing its velocity. The vehicle was travelling at such an unnecessary speed that I could barely see the dark green foliage next to the road. The bus accelerated endlessly as my heart began to beat like a train, escaping furiously from a fatal explosion.

When the breath-taking journey finally ended with a sudden clamorous brake, I let out a sigh of relief and thankfulness. After all these years, I was finally back home. Looking at the modern Ho Yuen, the scene of my last day in here eleven years ago appeared in my mind? Mum said we would never come back to this town. I really missed this town. I missed the playground, the candy shop, and all my friends, Skinny, Fatty and much more.

I also missed Mr. Zhang. He was a funny English teacher (he always said that my English was really very poor). He was fatter than Fatty and had no hair

on his head but many under his nose. We had dinner yesterday before father, mother and I went to the train station.

We had it in a hotel, the only one in the town. It was a tall brown building with many beautiful rooms that I thought only people not from this town would live in. When we had lunch, Mr. Zhang was not like the same Mr. Zhang I remembered. There was no smile and no story and no jokes.

He was always talking to me and always said things like “ be a good boy” and “ you are the student I love the most” and “ I miss you”, but I did not really know what he is talking about. After lunch, he gave me a big big hug. He also said many things to me that I did not understand except for the last sentence, “ be a good boy”. How could I describe the current Ho Yuen? Revolutionized? If I had not been conscious on the destination label on the train ticket, I would affirm I was in a developed Asia city like Hong Kong. Eleven years ago, there was only a narrow trail leading to the town and no sign of civilization could be found. Now, standing under the lime lights, I saw rows of streets in a neatly aligned fashion and technological advances could be spotted everywhere.

The only structure I scarcely recognized was the tall hazel building in front of me, the site where I used to dine with Mr. Zhang and it was also my lodging for the holiday. The hotel used to be tiny and surrounded by only a few shops, but the edifice that stood in front of me was another story. It was colossal and enclosed by several mega-stores with sparkling and colourful window displays. Strolling up the street, I was so amused by the products that I nearly collided with an elderly man who was carrying tons of plastic

bags. I hurriedly turned around and tried to apologize but before I could pull out any sound from my mouth, the person fired at me with a list of expletives, “ How dare you little brat! How dare you shove an old guy whose hands are both busy! I’m going to call the police! I’m going to punish you? ” The senior citizen was shrieking in an unpleasantly hoarse voice.

He was short and seriously hunched like a decrepit camel. Moreover, he had an extended, messy and filthy beard hanging on an abnormally wrinkled bloodless face. A stirring but petrifying idea instantaneously flashed in my mind. “ Are you? Adrian Zhang? ” I asked hesitatingly. The man gave me a disgusted look and declared, “ Don’t you dare change the topic! I’m certainly going to ring the police and lock you in the slammer! I had been there for five years and hope you too, but yes, I’m Mr. Zhang.

” Oh my god! What dire disaster had caused him to end up in this state. The Mr. Zhang I was familiar with had a face like a peeled boiled egg with a neatly trimmed moustache. Though he was overweight, he had an excellent posture.

He was also humorous and an extreme example of politeness. He even considered the word “ hell” a swear word. Furthermore, he was a very reasonable teacher. Gazing at the vagrant in front of me, a sense of grief and sympathy flooded over me, “ Is it possible for me to help carry your plastic bags? ” Mr.

Zhang gave me another sickened expression and bawled huskily, “ So you are trying to persuade me not to punish you! Of course not. By the way, how do I know what you are thinking? How do I know that you are not trying to

steal my possessions? ” Huge lumps of tears started forming in my eyes, fighting their way down. Even though I did not want to, I must admit this impossible fact. The benevolent Mr. Zhang in my mind had turn into a vile, suspicious and discourteous villain.

I asked for the last time, trying helplessly to disprove the reality, “ Do you remember who I am, sir? ” “ How the hell would I know your name! If I did, I would wish I could forget it forever! ” I shook my head in despair. It seemed pointless staying in this town. In distress, I muttered, “ My name is Kelvin. ” Revelation suddenly appeared on the dotard’s face, but it was purely sorrow. No sign of jubilation. After a few minutes of silence, he finally announced, “ you have changed.

” I let out a forced laugh, turned to face the hotel, and grinned to myself, “? people not from this town? ” I walked down the street, people passing me by. They looked me up and down but they did not look me in the eye. I was just another stranger in my hometown.