

陳寶珍：奇男子奇女子
The Love Story of Weird Guy and Weird Girl
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Translated by Duncan Hewitt

As soon as weird guy got himself a girlfriend, he immediately became convinced he was the fount of all knowledge and the arbiter of all values. On any subject you cared to name—from international affairs to local news, to the merits of various household appliances—regardless of the time or place he would expound his opinions, so resonantly as to leave no room for doubt And when it came to matters related to his girlfriend—like her job, her ideals and even what label nightie and slippers she should wear—weird guy was especially insistent on his right to intervene.

Once, when they were having dinner in a smart restaurant, his girlfriend said sweetly: “I’d really like to have steak tonight.” “What’s so good about steak?!” weird guy retorted immediately. And so that night she ended up having to force down a pork chop which tasted like a lump of wax.

His girlfriend’s company selected her to take part in a training scheme. It would almost certainly bring chances for promotion dropping into her hands. But weird guy objected strenuously. His reason?—“If you’re studying after work, who am I going to do things with? Anyway—promotion?! How dare you! I’ve never been promoted, have I?”

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LEUNG Mee Ping 梁美萍

Headless, 1994.

Two pieces. Elastic plastic and thread, 140 x 280 cm each.
Contemporary Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition 1994.

Weird guy actually hardly ever took his girlfriend out—in fact he ordered her to go straight home after work. And he might ambush her at any time, by phoning unannounced to check what she was doing. If she had ‘gone missing’ without applying for permission in advance, weird guy would lose his temper and give her a grilling.

Sunday is designated the day for going on dates, but weird guy never wanted to go for a walk, see a movie, go out to the countryside or take in a concert. So his girlfriend had to take the train and then the bus, then walk the last part of the way to his house, in order to make him some ‘home cooking’ with food she’d bought herself. Then they would eat together, sitting facing each other, and she’d listen as weird guy grumbled about how the food was too salty, the soup wasn’t salty enough and the like. After they’d eaten, she’d wash the dishes, do his washing and ironing and tidy up, then drag her weary body home, all alone.

Sometimes his girlfriend thought: we’re still only going steady and life’s already getting more and more

depressing. If we get married it's bound to be even harder and more monotonous. And her heart suddenly went numb. So the next time weird guy lost his temper over some trivial thing, she steadied her nerve, and told him they must split up. But before long, there she was again, shopping basket in hand, cheerfully taking the train, heading back down the well-trodden path.

Apparently there were two major reasons. Firstly, mother said: "That's what men are like; but he's financially sound, he doesn't go to brothels, he doesn't gamble and he doesn't smoke; as men go that's pretty good. If you chuck this one, there's no guarantee you'll find a better one." Secondly he implored her pathetically, sent her flowers every day—anyone's heart would have softened. But as soon as she gave in, the imploring stopped, the flowers stopped too, and life reverted to exactly how it had been before. Weird guy even said to her: "I wish you were a bit older, a bit uglier, and a bit fatter, then no one would chase after you, and you'd stay with me for life."

Under his influence, his girlfriend gradually became weird too, so that in the end she didn't mind at all. She even smiled about it and said to herself: "This is what love's all about!"

But please don't criticize them, or they might start to believe that the 'love' they share is now so wonderful that others are jealous of it.