

Jimmy's paradox

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Tears running down his face, Jimmy stood alone near a metal railing on the Tsim Sha Tsui boardwalk. He knew he had to call off his wedding to Audrey. And he knew it was going to break her heart – the one thing he had sworn he would never do to her. But paradoxical as it was, breaking her heart was now the only thing he could do to save her life. He picked up his cellphone and dialed.

“Hey, honey,” he said, putting a smile into his voice. “Can you come over to the boardwalk? There’s something I need to tell you.”

“Where have you been? We’re supposed to be on the stage right now. Oh you must come over to see this, the stage is the most beautiful one I’ve ever seen. They’ve decorated it with icing sugar, whipped cream and glacé fruits. In just an hour we’ll be standing at the top of it together...” Audrey’s heart beat like a fledgling against the frost.

“Audrey? Audrey? Listen, the cake... it’s not for...” Jimmy’s lips were too weak to spit the last part out, as if his dribbling sweat glued his flesh together.

“For?”

“Never mind, just come over quickly. You don’t want to miss our wedding, do you? And don’t let any chef spot you.”

Audrey lifted her puffy wedding gown and began to clamber down the seven tiers. She tiptoed carefully, not to dust the flowery patterns of icing sugar. When the chefs strolled towards the dessert cart, she slid playfully behind the chocolate lilies and giggled.

Meanwhile, Jimmy fidgeted with his glossy lapel as he struggled with his next step. *Should I tell her the truth and my plan? No, she’ll stop me. Her crying face is the last thing I shall ever want to see. And she’ll be so lonely and unprotected if I’m not around. They may hurt her, just as what they are going to do to us tonight. I cannot let anything happen to her. Then should we run away together? No, we can’t, there’s nowhere to escape to. Besides, the chefs will make one more pair of ‘us’ again, the next Audrey will also be at risk. Oh but I don’t want to leave her. We have only been together for a week, but they... they can still go on for so many years.*

As Jimmy was brooding over his decision, he was startled when Audrey tapped his shoulders.

He gazed at the loving bride in front of him; a blissful smile peeked over his face. His mind was whirling from all that they shared together, like how the two woke up one day to discover themselves lying next to each other in a tin mold and introduced themselves timidly. They were soul-mates when being transported from a crowded kitchen to a dessert cart. In the isolated trolley, they were glad to have each other as companions. Day after day, they ventured through wonderlands of cupcakes and puddings. When they stopped at the sight of a classic wedding cake, Audrey whispered “I wish one day I can walk down the aisle of this cake with you”.

One morning Jimmy entered the unknown world to see if there was a place for their honeymoon. He pushed open the door of the cart and climbed up a metal railing to have a clearer view. This was a whole new planet with giants standing still and facing an empty aisle. Suddenly, he recognized a familiar but gigantic figure. *Audrey?* Then he heard the giants with white toques murmuring. “The chocolate figurines we made closely resemble the couple.” “Yea, not only are they beautifully made, the taste is also superb, the newlyweds will surely enjoy them.”

Jimmy gaped at the couple the whole morning. He wished desperately that they were the ones snogging over there, but he knew another ending was waiting for them.

Recalling this, his subtle smile was melted with a sting of bitterness. Still, his tearful eyes fixed upon his bride.

“What?” Audrey blushed in a way she used to mutter sweet nothings. She held out her arms and wiped his tears away with her cold tender hands. “Dear, we can’t stay in the heat too long, it’s suicidal. What do you want to tell me?”

“Audrey,” he lowered her arms. “We can’t be married. I’m sorry.”

“I’m sorry?” Audrey chuckled before her laughter died like the fireworks after blossoming across the harbour. She read his seriousness.

Jimmy continued coldly, “And since we won’t be getting married now, I suppose you won’t mind us exchanging our costumes.”

“What on earth are you trying to play?”

Jimmy was too urgent to answer the agitated bride that he started removing her bridal veil. Audrey pushed him away. Though confused and heartbreaking, she obediently exchanged her gown with his suit.

“I guess you need some time to chill yourself out... in the fridge.” He felt exceptionally relieved that he was able to hide his emotions as Audrey staggered the way back. “Audrey?” He walked towards the whimpering girl, who turned her face that was messed with chocolate tears. An immediate rush of love propelled him to kiss her for one last time, but he abnegated himself and walked ahead of her back to the wedding cake.

“Where’s the groom figurine of the wedding cake?” The head chef roared. “There’s only half an hour before the guests arrive! I want the chocolate team making another ‘Jimmy’ immediately!”

Jimmy held his “bridegroom’s” hand as the cake was displayed to the guests. He was very calm as he knew she was safe. He then understood, the ultimate pulchritude of their lives lay not in the length of time they shared together, but the depth of love they showed within a spark of lifetime. He might not be able to live a long life with Audrey like the human Jimmy could, he could no longer kiss her, see her, but he gave his life for her. Perhaps, this was the deepest meaning of love.

At the end of the day, the leftovers of the cake were stored in the fridge. The devastated Audrey hurried to the crumbled ‘stage’ to look for her bridegroom to interrogate him, but he was nowhere to be seen.

Suddenly, a giant with a familiar face opened the fridge. “Oh, who has put you in the wrong suit, Audrey?” He lifted Audrey up with his palm and kissed her tiny forehead. “You know, I’m so happy to have you as my wife.”

With the warmth of his lips, a drop of chocolate rolled down Audrey’s cheeks.