

The Adventures of Julia Wang
Book Four

Recoding Your Human Life

by Erika Queen

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Autumn term and Year 12

Hello again adventurer. I could call you, reader, but that would be sooo limiting!

You may feel a distance in time and space between us, but if you switch to sensing, there is none. You may sense my tears of joy in the gentle touch of the tip of a feather we share.

Eriqa couldn't feel the story at first, but then she sensed the tiny voice of the knowingness of the story and she began writing.

Today is Wednesday, 2nd September, 2026, and the first day of the autumn term in my official Year 12 at the London Academy of Excellence. We are back after a spectacular summer holiday which I, except for a few days, spend with Evie. For the first time, Li and I spend very little physical ... spacetime together. Let us see how much he will share about his whereabouts this summer.

Evie and I continue in the Cool Choir club. We truly like the singing, the acting and the interaction with our fellow students. During a break, we presented some Chinese songs, totally unintentionally. Now the choir is hot on singing at least one song in Chinese. We chose the title which translates into *I hope you are loved by this world*. See the additions for

details. On Theos, we sing this song in honour each time someone dives into the physical Earth for a new life, and the choir is quite large.

Evie is the joker card in my human life, and she and I have put our consciousness heads together to rework our human life planes. As part of Year 13, next year, at the academy, I had a farming project with Carl in China, though he doesn't know that. Now it has shifted to Morocco in Northwest Africa. Interesting! I have pulled my New School four lin- ear years closer, and this speed things up. 'Things' includes people who prepare or even move in preparation for this. We do this in total agreement with their consciousness. We work for humanity while providing cool experiences for people and their consciousness. This sounds like a brand pro- motion! The name, New School, is just a placehold- er for a term I won't pull in yet.

I will mention a recurrent event before Eriqa comes forth questioning me about it. The twins, Li and I have planned this Christmas' gatherings.

Mei starts out: "Ju and I don't aspire to be the grand-kids who switch between grandparents every other Christmas and New Year. We only chose to cele- brate Christmas because it's an almost worldwide tradition. New Year is just adding one to the year count, and we have two New Year traditions in the family. We'll celebrate this event when and wher- ever we are ... or not."

Ju sketches out the plan for their part of the family: "Kurt and Isabella will host this Christmas in Nice with us, Jo-Ann and Anna, Ya and Carl. We also invite Shun and her mother Aki Nakagawa coming in from Kyoto, Japan. She's a tough woman, but we'll ask Carl to arrange a return flight."

Li and I are quick to organize the rest of the family to gather by Ju-long and Luzi in Hastings. Beside the four of us, we have Kong, Ting and Cheng from Ireland, and Evie with her parents and brother. All will stay over.

We agree with Li's suggestion for both gatherings: "Dress code and presents are optional."

Even if this had been planned in spacetime, it would have taken less than five minutes. I send the plan around as a suggestion, and the answers are all positive ... of course ... if one can avoid plan-ning?

Sarah and Théo in France

A few days later, I have a video talk with Sarah from France, where she gives me a quick update. "When we arrived in France, I brought in the British car, and Théo hired a French registered one. We spent the first night in his room near the university, PSL Université Paris, which is a public research university. PSL stands for Paris Sciences & Lettres. The landlady is sweet and acts much like a mother to Théo. As he says: I can't help it. I'm just irresistibly pleasant to have around!"

She has gotten close to Théo. Not least because of the events they spend outside of time: "As you know, Théo and I connect here and There. He has his act on Earth and even on Theos, but beside these, he's the most wonderful and wise angel one can meet."

Indeed, Théo is a great mentor. He's also a great mirror. Her use of the term angel shows she hasn't closed the gap between her human awareness and the consciousness permanently yet.

She continues: "I must boost my French for sure. Not that it is bad, but just not sufficient for a more practical use in a day-to-day life."

I hear she understands she will use French in her coming human life. What the human Sarah doesn't know yet is that she will be the catalyst in that part of the African continent. This lines up with Laura in the 26th century in linear time.

Sarah goes into more detail: "We visit Théo's two years older cousin, Luc in Orléans. He is from Fes too and supported Théo in their childhood days. Fes is quite old, and in relation to Théo's profession, I tease him by saying that people must have invented canned drinks because the city is named after the sound you hear when opening a can: Fes! Sadly, his humour doesn't stretch that far. He even doesn't think the Fes hat was invented there. The hat is not particularly chic, so who cares!"

"It's wonderful and touching to experience you like you're just now ... living."

"Yes, I feel very much alive and enjoying even the tiniest things. How are things on your end? The

three of you have started on Year 12 at the academy."

"We enjoy our time here, and I especially enjoy my life with Evie. She has her dorm and I the apartment with Li, and it works well. In a flash, we'll have ended our time at the LAE. Has anything surfaced for you yet?"

"It's more like a feeling ... a sense of expansion." I sense she goes deeper to give a fuller answer. She laughs. "It's dry, dust, sand, hot air and a lot of kids!"

I know the answer to my next question, but I want Sarah to realise things for herself now that she has connected to the next part of her life. "I guess you can pack light, but first, let the French language be a priority. What about Théo?"

"Théo ... he's always here ... with me. There is a large building ... a university ... UAQ?"

"*Université Al Quaraouiyine*. Théo's new workplace. It was founded as a mosque by an Arab woman, Fatima. She was also called 'Mother of the Children'. She is going to work with you, and you've already met her."

"I have?"

I give her a moment. "It feels strange."

"Close your eyes and look into a mirror."

"Hm ... the same feeling ... I see nothing in the mirror, but I can sense myself staring back at me."

“And?”

“I’m her ... I have come to Fes again, as I did back then!”

“Yes, and 1,200 years collapses in a flash.”

Shortly after, we end the video call.

EQ: “Why didn’t Théo tell her this?”

“Because I did. It also gives a different angle on Théo’s part.”

I will make a short, but interesting remark about Isabella’s Moroccan connection.

When Sarah and Théo arrived in France, they visited the university where Théo and Garth work and study. Here he connected with Isabella and received her information of her Moroccan relative.

He made some inquiries and a few days later he had a person in Morocco in his hometown, Fes, Isabella could communicate with. Théo is not a relative, but the one who provided the connection.

What is interesting is that my project with Carl connects to this person’s family outside Fes. It is still two years ‘away’, but I am used to sensing connections before they manifest.

Later Sarah calls me. “I’ve checked up on Fatima. Some say she may not have existed. I know differently. This Ibn guy told my story, but who was he?”

“Ask Théo.” “Ibn is Théo!”

"Yes, he found the world should know your story, which had diminished over the five hundred years since Fatima lived. He did it in your honour."

"He's such a sweet ... one."

"Enjoy the rest of your holidays and let's see how things unfold when you return to Hastings."

"I can't even imagine how to get from here to there ... Fes, to continue working with kids ... and in the French tongue!"

I smile and wave to the video camera before signing off.

Mei and Ju's third birthday

Let us move to 27 September and Mei and Ju's most anticipated third birthday. I am in a video meeting with the family and Isabella and Kurt. The Japanese sitter and martial arts trainer, Shun, is on site too.

I address the birthday kids: "So girls, is the Park School still standing? I mean, you've been there for almost a month."

Mei assures me: "Yes, École du Parc is well. Ju and I are starting out gently. We'll pull up our sleeves later, so don't worry, changes will occur!"

I bow to the partaking challenge of changing the public school system from within a single school. I know they will succeed. As they say: why start something you know will fail?

EQ: "What does the Jesus guy say to such a statement?"

"We cemented the Cristos consciousness no matter how it looks on the surface. Also, time doesn't matter and humanity are playing the usual games."

I throw in another question: "How is the GMC?"

Jo-Ann answers: "We've got the old car off our hands and the Green Monster Car hums as content as ever."

"And the nice Nice people?"

Kurt is practical when answering: "Now that autumn sneaks in and the sailing season slowly ends, Isabella and I are looking for a larger sailboat, more suitable for the growing family. Maybe it will be Isis II, but Isis is Isis, right?"

"Isis has many names, her name isn't even Isis ... just rest the name-giving for now. Get the boat first. I expect Mei and Ju can point you in a fruitful direction."

Ju injects a comment ... a hint: "I like the name Elan. It's an Apache name meaning friendly."

Kurt smiles in the background: "Let's get the boat first, like Julia said."

Mei puts in a word for Ju: "Maybe Ju is ahead of you, and you just need to search for a sailboat with the name Elan?"

Isabella closes the subject. "Okay, we'll do that later, but thanks."

Ju answers: "You're welcome."

I sense the girls are amusing themselves with the boat thing. Like me, their small talk always has a deeper meaning or a direct value if one can pick it up.

Ju comments non-verbally on my observation: "It's on a need-to-know basis, or it wouldn't be much fun for anyone."

I turn to the martial art nurse. "Shun, how is the training going with the two old ... eh, girls?"

Shun sighs, but then she smiles: "One must go gently on them, but I sense they enjoy the training, though no weapons training ... yet."

Anna kicks back: "The older-than-us Jap trainer ... master has trained more years than we have lived. We can't possibly match that."

Jo-Ann answers me: "All four of us, well, five with Shun, enjoy the exercises."

I return to Isabella: "Isabella, how is the Moroccan connection coming?"

"You were right. The connection goes via Spain, but I only learned that after some communication with the person in Fes. The family tree is growing."

We reach the moment where we must end our talk, and I recite an Apache blessing with a twist: "Mei Ju walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life."

The next day Isabella calls me: "Elan is a sailboat construction. A brand, if you like. The one that suits us is an Elan 40, because it's forty feet long. It has three separate cabins and six plus two beds. The

eight beds mean we can invite two persons to stay overnight together with the four in Villefranche-sur-Mer. The naming, though we don't have the specific boat yet, turned out to be a bit tricky. We can't call the boat Elan. Well, we can, but it'll be like calling your Mercedes, Mercedes. The good thing will be that we already have a name sign on it. Instead of Friendly, we could use Kindness, but it wouldn't fit the boat."

"When you say that, you are already sensing into the particular boat. My humble suggestion would be MeiJu which, which as you know, means gorgeous daisy flower or other flower names. Ju has chosen the meaning to be daisy, so she can use the name Daisy too."

"I guess that's why the girls haven't given us other suggestions."

"They're not shy. It's your boat, so they simply want you to name it. I kind of did it now, but you would have gotten there, eventually. It's the obvious name, right?"

"It is. Especially for grandparents!"

"So, Isabella. Any other huge problems we must solve?"

"Ha, ha. It's always easier to solve other people's problems!"

"Indeed. An outsider is not invested and doesn't know the minute details, which shouldn't be taken into account, anyway. When you loosen the large knots, the small ones tend to dissolve by themselves."

Evie and Julia in Dublin

We have autumn half term from Monday, 26 to Friday, 30 October, but with a weekend at each end, we have nine days. As the week approaches and Evie and I are at the LAE, I have a question for her: "Any suggestions for half term?"

"You've told me how you met Kong in Elvendale, which kicked his butt to take the direction out of his mental/emotional prison. We could spend some time with the three Chinese in Dublin, letting the culture ... infuse us from their perspective."

"That's an excellent idea. Events pass through my awareness rather than linger. Though they're not forgotten in that sense, they're old news, and I face in other directions."

"You've had difficulties putting words to these things. It's also increasingly difficult for me to find words, because they're loaded and always inadequate."

"Yes."

I pull out my phone and invite Evie and me for a visit, asking if it suits them. I suggest we stay with Kong. Then I turn to Evie. "Evie, you remember our get-together in the apartment, and later our cake-orgy in Stratford Park."

EQ: This happened in book two.

"That was when I truly fell in love with you." "You opened your heart to your Self."

"Same thing. Cakes can do that. For the human, it feels so long ago."

“And in a whoosh, our LAE-days are a faint memory. What are your human passion and focus for our upcoming time in China?”

Evie shifts gears and takes me by surprise. “So you think you’ll be doing the school thing alone. It’s as much my project as it’s yours. I’m not there for the ride, dear.”

“Do I keep too much hidden from myself? I run a need-to-know thing right now.”

“No. Julia enjoys a human relationship, and so does Evie. It’s our ‘holidays’ on the planet. The treat for the ‘work’ we’ve given ourselves.”

She continues: “For now, you dive into business and management. You also have ideas for the teaching part. You’ve gathered experiences and spun threads all your short human life for this. Still, you can’t physically do all the different things that must be done during a day, unless you split into more bodies. That’s why you must have me and many others with you. You know all this. I’m just putting it into words.”

I smile: “Our roles have switched for now.”

Evie smiles too: “Oh, I’ve just been holding back on my part, enjoying it immensely! My ‘big girl pants’ are as large as yours.”

You may have noticed Evie said, ‘others with you’, rather than, ‘others assisting you’. And before that, ‘it’s as much my project as it’s yours’. Julia, being the head of the ‘thing’, doesn’t mean there is a hierarchy, only functions.

Let us shift the scene to Dublin when we step out of the plane after an hour and twenty minutes' flight from London City Airport. I text Ting and Kong, that we have arrived. It is mid-afternoon, and using three buses, we arrive at Kong & Co. Kong has a small home as part of the factory. Evie and I use the factory's main glass entry with two evergreens in the front. We pass the second pair of doors and spot Laura behind the counter. The motion sensor at the entrance has already told her someone is arriving.

I was ten when she saw me last year at Christmas, but ten-year-old Julia easily connects with seventeen-year-old Julia: "Hi, Laura!"

She proves she is well informed, as with all about the business: "Welcome, Julia ... and Evie."

Evie waves: "Hello, Laura."

She comes out to the front. "Do you need anything? You can put your rucksacks in the back through the door behind the counter."

"No thanks, we're good."

We get rid of the rucksacks. "I expect Kong is in production?"

She smiles. "Indeed, the place he prefers for spending his time. He pays me for dragging him out from there, if he needs to be elsewhere!"

The dragging payment is aunt Anna's later addition to Laura's contract. As Anna says: "She'll soon know more about your business than yourself. Her payment should mirror that fact. You can't afford to lose her, and don't give her other reasons to leave!"

An obvious rule to bring with me. I wave to Laura as we leave for the production area: "See you!"

"See you."

We go through a metal door, then a short corridor and a similar door. A metal staircase leads down to the production area. The large hall is partly divided in small workshops with a path between them, like a typical Chinese workshop area. Kong calls it 'The Alley'. Each workshop has its own 'street' number. There are no strong fumes and the noise level is down to a hum. I hear an electric forklift driving somewhere in the hall.

Kong's office is a container-size enclosure with the back to the wall near the staircase, windows on three sides, and a flat roof. Kong is not in here, so he must be enjoying himself with some artwork ... or working on a solution. I send a whispering poke like the first time in Elvendale. "Kong."

I get back a picture of the number fourteen.

"Workshop fourteen."

Evie and I walk down the alley with odd numbers on the left and even on the right, starting at the low end. Kong pokes his head out just before we get there. He has something in both hands and waves with his left one. "Hello girls!"

He gets a hug from both of us. Having his hands full, he can't quite hug back.

He points at a young man in the booth. "This is Oscar."

Oscar raises a hand. "Hi."

Kong continues. "This is my granddaughter, Julia, and her friend, Evie. They visit from London, where they study. Julia comes from Hastings and Evie from Sevenoaks, which is roughly midway between London and Hastings."

Evie moves closer and sniffs and more or less addresses Oscar. "A laser cutter, right? A new one too!"

They are using pieces of plywood for testing, so we can smell the burned wood still hanging in the air. There are a lot of shipping materials, so Evie hinted they have received the machinery recently.

Oscar responses: "It came this morning. We may get it up and running by tomorrow. Then we can cut some larger pieces. Jeanette works on installing the software on the computer. She'll come later. We just tested if the laser was actually functioning."

He uses the French pronunciation of the girl's name.

I have a question: "There must be more benefits than the size it can cut. For the 3D plywood pictures, you can just glue smaller pieces together."

Kong let Oscar continue the conversation. "Yes, you can, but you will always have the joints if they aren't meant to be painted over. We also cut large metal plates. The new controller can ... well, control a more powerful laser beam. The beam can also be thinner which also rises the heat, which is crucial for metal cutting."

"What is the accuracy of the XY-movements?"

Oscar proves he is into the details of the new cutter. "The step motors are set to ten micro meters, which is less than half of the width of the thinnest beam we get with this laser head."

We hear a woman's voice from the door. "Knock, knock. The afternoon tea is here. I knew you couldn't leave the cutter, so I brought it down here. Tea and cake for five. I talked to Laura, so I know we've guests."

The woman has a Black African look and smiles as she hurls a trolley inside fully loaded with stuff.

Oscar greets her: "Hi, Jeanette. How is the computer coming?"

She nods towards Evie and me before she turns to Oscar. "Hello everyone. It's ready, but I didn't have room for it on the trolley."

It is okay with Kong. "You can connect it later today or tomorrow, while Oscar and I work on the hardware."

"I would like to do it right after tea, to know if the software will communicate with the controller."

We pick our share from the trolley and find a place to sit. I turn to Kong. "Evie and I would like to experience different aspects of your business. We would also like to get permission to speak with the employees. After all, they're your most valuable asset."

Evie makes her own special inquiry: "I would like to begin ... tomorrow, with learning what you create. Kong, you know I've been working a little with

Ya, so I'm not a total newbie in the methods. I don't need someone to follow me around."

Kong is an efficient planner: "I guess you could combine a brief interview while the observations."

I have an idea: "I wonder if you make lamps by rolling the thin cut-out steel plates into a cylinder or a semi-cylinder with a flat back."

Kong answers: "We do the cylindric ones, but only for candles. Electric lamps must comply with different safety regulations and have specific markings."

Another idea comes up which allows me to help out: "Hm, if you team me up with one of your people who will take over later, we can make an accurate description of what is needed and how to obtain it."

Kong lights up: "That would be great. I guess Jessica could be that person. She has a young and flexible mind and is into technical stuff and art. Very skilled."

I know they are all highly skilled and also flexible. I have tabbed them all and whispered this place as a possibility to shine in a 'save' environment.

Evie has a suggestion: "Maybe we could meet her today and see if she is into someone looking over her shoulder while she makes artwork or maybe an interview. Julia can introduce her to her idea?"

Kong gives us directions. "You might find her in number eighteen. We close at 17, by the way."

We quickly finish our tea and Jeanette leaves with the trolley to pick up the computer. We wave to the guys. Now it is off to number eighteen.

Evie presses an imaginary doorbell: "Ding dong." A young female voice answers: "Yes."

We enter through the open door and Evie starts out: "You're Jessica, right?"

"Yes, but I'm also called Jessie, Cassie, even Jess and Cash, so I usually react if any of the names are called out."

"Hi, I am Evie, I am with Julia, Kong's grandchild."

Jessica looks observant at me: "I guess I've seen you somewhere?"

What she really means is that she has sensed me. "You might. I come sometimes around here."

Evie explains why we are here: "Julia and I have each our reason to disturb you this afternoon. We attend the London Academy of Excellence. We have half term, but use the time to visit Kong, Ting and Cheng, to look and learn about their businesses in multiple areas. We have spent time with Carl and Ya too, which was quite exciting. Julia must answer for herself, but I would like to observe your working methods and hopefully hear why you do things that way. I would also like to hear about your experience in this working place and maybe how you see your life in that context."

Jessica turns to me: "My oh my, Evie is obviously the talker here. Hope she'll give me some room to answer her. What's your request? Hasn't Evie covered it all?"

"Oh, I'll talk about illumination!" "Eh, what?"

"The safety compliances of electrical lamps connected to the mains. We might add LEDs."

"Oh! Well, that's a whole niche we haven't got into, and obviously one which fits well with most of our work being decorative of some sort."

"Kong and I were thinking you and I could make an accurate description of what is needed for the compliance and how to obtain it. You can take over the project when it has some structure. We'll, of course, find people you can rely on, and you can always contact me as well."

"My work here is not time-sensitive. I could work with Evie first and then clean this place for another to use. I can finish my stuff later. You and I can use an office in the administrative section. Most of us work down here."

"It sounds like a plan. I could fire up the project with a timeline and things to put there. I'll also contact some people and start the search. I'll talk with Laura about what office to use. Are you fine with that plan, Evie?"

"Sure! Does that mean I can start right away?"

Jessica points at an office chair. "Yes. Grab a sitting and find your tap-thing and we'll be in the air in no time!"

Evie looks at me and smiles. "I guess I'll learn some new slang I can show off at LAE!"

"Maybe Jessica wants a reference note!"

"I might well ... or pay per use! That's better, if we can negotiate a fair price."

I leave the two and stop outside number fourteen. I catch Kong's sight and show him a thumbs up. Then I point towards the stairs and he nods.

Laura shows me an office we can use and I am quick to fire up the powerful CAD computer with its three large monitors. Exactly what we need to get some overview. I know Carl has delivered this special hardware and, more importantly, the expensive software. Jessica and I don't need all that, just the monitors.

To begin, I make some working folders and ensure they are part of the backup process. Double work just sucks. I note some zones, now let us see how much we can accomplish. EU, UK, US, AU, CA and CN, China as the largest zone in Asia. We shouldn't forget Kong's workforce on Hong Kong Island either.

I hear Evie's laughter in the hall. She arrives at the counter with Kong and Jessica. I see it is time to shut down for the night. I poke my head out of the office door, which I have kept open. "I can hear the spirit is high. I'll just turn this thing off, and be with you."

Laura comes out too, after locking her office in the back. "Jessica, can you handle the tough London girls?"

She answers with some Spanish: "No hay problema. And they're just studying in London, not the tough stuff!"

I ask if she speaks Spanish. "Así que hablas Español?"

Laura answers while looking at Jessica. "I guess she has learned a few words to impress some males of dark complexion in the city."

Jessica plays innocent: "I don't even know if they're from Spain!"

Kong stops their thing: "Please, girls. Julia, how is your initial work coming?"

"I can inform Jessica that we're ready to lift off first thing in the morning."

Evie strokes her tablet. "And I have completed my thorough investigations of the deeper layers of Jessica's psyche and her work behaviour."

Kong is pleased with our progress: "Great, you can move on tomorrow. Laura, everyone has left, so you can turn on the alarm."

"Sure. See you all tomorrow."

I send Laura and Jessica off: "Say hello to the kids, Laura. See you tomorrow, Jessica."

We all wave and Evie and I with our rucksacks leave with Kong toward his car. We do a little shopping before Kong takes us to a small local Chinese restaurant.

Back at Kong's small house at the factory perimeter, we prepare for a relaxed evening, starting out with Evie and me telling him of our endeavours at this first 'workday' at Kong & Co.

We spend two more days with Kong, and the last evening Laura has invited us to dinner at her home. She is Chinese too, and with Evie getting used to the wide Chinese cuisine of endless new dishes and variations of ingredients and methods of preparation, there is always something new to explore.

I met with Laura and her kids last Christmas here in Dublin. I was ten and now seventeen, not that my physical age will change anything. Laura's youngest girl, Yina, is about ten, and Ya, as my grandma, is about twelve. At the Christmas party, she and I talk and sing.

EQ: You can find this in chapter Christmas in Dublin in book two.

We drive from the factory in two cars, Laura, to make a detour for last-minute shopping and to pick up Yina. Ya is home and opens the door, and Evie introduces herself. Kong, who has become grandpa in the small family, has introduced Carl's custom of all joining in on preparing dinner.

Ya is quite talkative and within minutes, Evie has become part of the family.

I shout at Ya: "Catch," and throw a memory stick with music to her.

"Thanks. What is it?" "Mixed!"

Evie shakes her head: "Music, not drinks!"

Ya laughs and plugs it into the DAB radio in the kitchen.

Why do I think of desert? ... Mixed? "Oh, we better check-up for ingredients to make virgin Piña Colada. Then we don't need desert!"

I write the ingredients while Ya checks the inventory. Fresh pineapple, coconut cream, vanilla ice cream, and ice from water. The garnishing is a pineapple wedge and ... No maraschino cherries, which was to be expected, but we have grapes, just remove the seeds. Large straws are here too. "Oh, blast. No small paper umbrellas! It's a must. Call ... no, text your mum."

While Ya is on her phone, Evie wants to be part of the fun: "Glasses? Tooth mugs will do if anything else fails!"

Kong smiles: "Don't worry, I know there are tall glasses in the living room."

Evie sighs with relief: "Thank goodness, saved by the gong ... Kong ... whatever."

Kong comments with a serious face: "Indeed, no alcohol needed nor recommended!"

Ya returns from her phone. "Mum will get the garnishing part and save the evening!"

Evie copies Kong's serious face. "Laura is an excellent mother, that's for sure! One who can focus on the essential and go easy on the rest."

Ya explains: "They had just got into the car after leaving the mall."

Evie displays a fitting grin: "Hey, that's positive. Then they were right at the spot, and will be here in no time!"

Indeed, not long after, I hear a car engine stop outside. Well inside, Laura throws a small package at me: "Julia, here are the umbrellas. The female staff I asked for directions insisted they had none. Then the woman smiled, 'but we have some in the pet supply section, especially for mice'. She showed me all the way to them in the paper ware section, and we had a good laugh. I guess she was so ready to call it a day."

Yina walks to each of us, shaking our hand. Kong is the last one. "Kong, guess what I have made today!"

"Making a guess is easy. Picking the right answer is more difficult."

He makes a brief pause and the young girl nods. Then he continues. "You've been creative ... you've been painting with water colours ... the colours didn't turn out quite how you wanted them to ... thin yellow clouds in a blue sky ... the colours turn green where they meet."

She nods again and Kong continues. "But maybe there is a shiver of green or the yellow cloud is not just yellow. The cloud is water vapor or ice crystals, and both are clear. The clouds and the sky are painted by the light of the Sun. Let's have a talk at bedtime, and I'll show you."

Yina jumps up. Soon she will find an answer as well as a solution on how to paint that sky.

Ya walks up to Kong and whispers: "How did you know about her painting?"

"I am very observant, have an excellent memory and also an eye in my heart."

"Can you tell me how you did this specific thing when you say goodnight?"

"I can and I will."

Now I have my back to Kong, so only Evie sees my tears of joy for the entity I have known forever.

After a wonderful dinner and some heavy virgin Piña Coladas, we talk, share stories, sing and play. At bedtime we take turn in saying goodnight to the girls. Kong, having things to explain, is the last one.

EQ: "You added vanilla ice creme to the Piña Colada recipe this time?"

"I did that to make it more creamy now that we didn't have frozen coconut cream and pineapple chunks, thus needed more water ice."

The next morning, Evie and I show up at Ting and Cheng's home. Their home is not at their warehouse as they had in Hong Kong. They want to separate their spare time from work. We will stay with them Thursday and Friday, so we have the weekend when we get back to London.

Ting opens, and we step into yet another Chinese home.

The two white Shandong or Lion Cats, Chip & Chap, come forth to investigate the new arrivals. They look much like Snow, completely white and with long fur and blue eyes.

Soon after, the four of us sit in the kitchen talking over the plan for the next two days. Evie and I are

especially interested in how they see and feel ... experience running a commercial firm, and also how they work with customers.

Evie starts out: "What I would like to know more than anything is how this way of working ... actually, way of living, involves your lives. So, more from the human side than the business side."

Cheng finds the perfect place to start: "When Ting moved in with me and became a part of my life, which was this business at the time, it forced me to reconsider how everything would work from that moment."

Ting gives us her point of view from that time: "It was easy to see that Cheng's life was, as he said, his business or vice versa. I realised that for me to be part of his life, I must be part of his business."

Cheng nods: "Indeed, we had many talks. Along the way, I came to the same conclusion as Ting, so I decided to legally share the business with her."

Ting's face becomes serious: "It took me some time to accept that Cheng was clear that I was not taking him for his business."

While speaking, Cheng's face slowly change from being serious into a smile: "Yes, it took me some time, but as I said, if you had taken me for the money, I wouldn't have given you my business or myself. I had no doubt, though."

Ting brings us back on the business track: "Because I knew nothing about his business, I asked him to place me where I could help the most."

Cheng talks about his thoughts on how to best accommodate Ting in the business work: "I knew that Ting was, and still is, a hard worker ... so I wanted to cut down on her working hours from the mall, but still make her work give her satisfaction. This way, I could also cut down on my own time, because I wanted to spend time with her."

Ting remembers that time: "After much ping-pong, we could synchronise the two of us into one business ... plan."

Cheng moves the conversation forward in time: "When we moved from Hong Kong to Ireland to be close to Ju-long and his family, we moved away from most of our suppliers and closer to many of our customers. This caused another flip in the business plan, and we had to rethink most of it again."

Ting smiles: "Luckily, we had, and still have, Carl and Anna ... and now Jo-Ann plus others to support us."

Cheng smiles and looks at me. "In his own subtle way, Kong is also helping. You do too, Julia. I'm sure you also have your 'fingers' deep into Kong & Co."

"No comments."

He laughs: "No comments needed."

Ting continues the subject: "There is also a fairly large Chinese population here in Dublin ... in Ireland, really. We help each other out."

Evie looks thoughtful: "The Chinese way."

She makes a brief pause before continuing. I realized I joined a family with quite a few members

who are not, at least to some extent, Chinese ... Carl, Jo-Ann ... Only us three! And Mei and Ju came in to compensate!"

"Well, that's one way to see it. Even not genetically Chinese, you're very much Chinese in your ... heart. So are Carl and Jo-Ann."

Ting smiles and brings forth her wisdom: "So it's not so much about ethnicity after all. I hope the two of you will share a bit of your life, too."

Evie answers for both of us. "Sure, when we sit around the campfire!"

She had seen the fireplace when we walked into the kitchen as we came in.

When we have a framework to ... work from, we drive to the warehouse.

At the warehouse, which also contains packing facilities and an office, we receive a brief introduction before joining Ting and Cheng in their daily tasks. I see Cheng uses a paper notebook. This reminds me of Luzi, and she is actually a generation younger. He also has two letter trays labelled 'In' and 'Out'. It is mostly for consignment notes for the shippers.

He knows papers take up much space, so they scan everything to different folders on a NAS Network Attached Storage. It is easy to pick them from here to add them as vouchers in the account. The challenge with scanning documents is, that the file should have an easy recognisable name. This is an obvious task for an AI administrator. They have an image recognition system which can detect known

forms, company names, phone numbers and invoice numbers and such things.

During a break, we talk about Cheng's business travels, and Cheng explains: "The client visits haven't changed, though they are further apart and I start out from Dublin rather than Hong Kong.

"The supplier visits has changed. Especially in Asia. We use much more video meetings, which is no problem with old customers. With new suppliers it is much about reputation and if the new one is known by one or more of my current customers."

Evie wants to hear Ting's prospect: "Ting, I understand you're not taking part in this travel."

"I can't really offer much. I might see some opportunities or products, but it will double the traveling costs, which are not low. Cheng will also be quicker on his own and I can run the business here. I attend some of the video meetings which I mostly enjoy."

Cheng tells us his experience: "It surely provides a different dynamic when Ting is part of it because we mostly talk with men. There are women, and this is much different and more pleasant in a way."

I encourage Cheng to continue: "How has the net income been after Ting joined the business?"

"There are a lot of plusses and minuses. I don't think we can reduce it to just looking at it from the perspective of what the bottom line is. We must earn two wedges, but we are also two people working. I must say, I can focus on the aspects of the business that bring in the most revenue while Ting

can deal with more mundane, but still necessarily tasks. This is a plus.

“First I thought we could get rid of some of the wares with low return, but then we wouldn’t be any longer a whole-supplier and would risk being pushed out by more capable suppliers. Then we might end up the other way round and offer goods we may lose in the short run. On the other hand, we can import a whole shipping container. Most often we team up with Kong and even Carl. It is difficult to say if it is this that has raised our income. There are simply too many parameters. Adding to this, there is the whole thing around living and operating in a very different environment.”

Ting comments too: “Much more important to me is the huge lift in life quality. My new work is much more rewarding than my old one as an employee in a mall in Hong Kong. I’ll call it freedom. I must also admit that I often felt lonely in my life in Hong Kong and my spare time was more work with my parents. Ju-long was a great help, but it wore me down emotionally that he had to spend his life supporting us, preventing him from living the life he wanted. He lived in a corner of the ... living room in our small apartment. It all changed when Luzi arrived!”

I smile half-jokingly: “I totally take credit for that one, because I chose Ju-long and Luzi to be my up-bringers! With their consensus, of course. This arrangement also came with the monetary solidity from Carl and Ya.”

Evie smiles: “You sure are a clever gal!”

I shrug my shoulders: "You either have it or you don't. In all modesty, I just happen to have it ... Actually chose to have it!"

Cheng laughs: "Still the same Julia as when you were two!"

Ting adds: "Yes, you can only stay serious for a short while!"

Cheng goes on again: "So true, you changed everyone in the family ... s."

"That's why I'm here. To make a change. And big ones!"

Evie laughs: "Indeed. You merely had set foot in my parent's house before you turned them upside down."

"I better specify: I'm here as a midwife, up-bringer and facilitator for the change humanity had Finally brought upon itself!"

In the evening on the two sofas near the 'campfire', Chip and Chap are quick to find rest on Evie and my thighs for some serious petting.

Evie has a question for Cheng: "Cheng, a question you've probably been asked too many times for your liking: No kids?"

"It's all about why the question is asked. I'm happy to answer you. After the divorce ... well, I had enough of relationships. And to me, a family must be based on a stable relationship. In mysterious ways, as the saying goes, through Ting, I have got it all: a wife, children and grandchildren. As we know, genetics are overrated!"

Ting smiles sadly: "And I though, showed up to you with nothing but myself to offer when we first met."

"Even if that was the case ..."

Ting puts her hand on top of Cheng's. "Now it all seems so long ago."

"Indeed. Brighton, Hong Kong with the wedding, you moving in, the business, Kong's return, then Julia and shortly after Li. Now Dublin ... and life moves on."

Ting turns from Cheng to me. "It does. This Christmas, we have all the arrangements all sorted out and nicely presented in a text message."

I smile: "The four grandchildren conspired, and that was what came out. You must only show up in Hastings. We'll be eleven, and so fill up the igloo."

Evie addresses our hosts: "Now it's time for you to ask the questions!"

Ting starts out: "Grandparents are always interested in the youngest generation's plans."

Evie is the first to answer: "It is very much a choice of what level to answer from. On a strict human level and telling the short version, we'll complete our time at the academy in 2028, then move to China to start a life there. You know about Julia's school, which is also my school, so that will be the first part of that life."

I continue: "We more or less plan as we go. We activate some crucial points, but in between them, we follow the direction of less resistance. If we sense a

‘disturbance in the force’, we reevaluate the points and fine-tune their position in our lives’ landscape.”

Cheng shares some thoughts: “Because you can outline your life for this incarnation so clearly, it makes sense to live the way you laid it out. I like the landscape analogy. I see that it differs from human wishful planning. Planning a whole life tires you up with a specific focus and no need for a landscape, rather than a scanning radar for new opportunities.”

Ting has been thinking about something too: “I wonder why you call it a school. It’s clearly not just a ten-year basic educational institution.”

Evie answers: “We want to stay clear of a biased understanding of the many expressions for ‘higher’ educational institutions. In our internal discussions, we always return to the concept, school.”

I haven’t looked into this in relation to Sarah before: “Interestingly, sensing into the concept of ‘basic education’, my first sitter, Sarah will ground the new concept and we’ll implement this as a ‘first entry’ to our school.”

Cheng turns deep: “You truly swim in the expanded awareness of your life ... rather than ‘the world’.”

Evie makes a few tiny claps with her hands: “You impress me with your deep understanding of how things are, though Cheng doesn’t quite understand it!”

I specify what she means: “Yes, the viewpoint or focus being your life rather than the world!”

"Indeed, I don't fully understand it, but it felt ... right, to say it that way."

I smile as I hear him hesitate using the word, right. "You can say, resonated with me, rather than the word right."

Ting sense into the difference. "It comes from a totally different place."

She makes a brief pause, then continues. "Everything in the sentence I just said felt strange."

Evie raises an eyebrow: "Because?"

"The concept, comes from, and the world, place, didn't resonate."

Evie gives Ting a thumbs up: "Because the truth of you is not in a place, and so can't come from a place."

Cheng has a comment: "Initially I had a question about your relation, but you have already answered by telling you'll move to China and build the school together."

I comment back: "Evie and my relation is somewhat similar to Anna and Jo-Ann's. It's not about our gender. You can say it's 'above' that. An extremely large indication that it is the same with you two is the minuscule change of two unrelated humans living on Hong Kong Island meeting in a Chinese grocery shop in Brighton, UK, within a time span of perhaps fifteen minutes."

Evie turns to Cheng: "So Cheng, meeting Ting would have happened no matter what human vessel she had used."

Ting answers: "Yes, that hint wasn't wasted on us. The moment we found out, we both lived on the island, even in the same area ..."

Cheng smiles as he recalls the meeting: "I know Luzi can acknowledge we acted like old friends meeting after some time apart."

"We all know it was more than 'like', and so you were ... and you are!"

The next morning, which is Friday, we are up early to make the most out of our last day in Dublin before flying back to London late in the afternoon.

At the warehouse, we talk about different aspects of Ting and Chang's business. It is nice to experience Cheng can see that each of us is the centre of our individual life. "Running a business comes very much down to acting with people. As in everything in life, one uses gut-feelings and experiences."

He shows us his black paper note book. "I keep track on deals and agreements. Sometimes I send an e-mail on how I understand the agreement we have made. It depends on the person. This way, we can clear up misunderstandings beforehand."

Ting is aware of the human tools too: "The same thing goes when selecting goods, amounts, and fixing prices. First the experience and a last check to see if it feels right."

Evie has a practical question: "Cheng, taking notes in your book ... how can you keep order in all these notes?"

"Things are mostly noted down in a time-line manner, so I search via my memory of time. I write directly related notes and updates with the original note. I know it's not ideal, especially not now that Ting may need to use them. I know there are programs to transcribe notes to standard text, but I somewhat am not there ... yet. I would need to carry a tablet, because a smartphone will be too small for my old eyes. Audio notes has its limits too, and are very dependent on the noise level in the surroundings."

Evie wants to find a better way to give Ting the updated information: "So, the best way for Ting to get your notes without asking you, is if you add them to the customer and supplier database. That isn't ideal either, because it gives you more work and you must keep the data updated. Maybe more parties are involved, and so you get even more work out of it."

Ting agrees with Evie: "I also think it's the best solution, but again, not ideal."

Cheng can see a feasible solution: "We already have a note section on every record in the database. If we could find a way to have two records open concurrently for easy copy and paste data between them."

I see, I can look into that: "Your database undoubtedly saves changes and makes backups automatically, but it must also temporarily save the open records while you work on the text. Let me spend some time on figuring these things out. I'll just need a bit of information."

We also spend time studying product quality. During our walk in the storage area, we see a section with some of Kong & Co's artwork, many with a photo of the creator, either a face or a work situation. Without saying anything, I point out the tiny 3D copy of Evie's baby dragon, Xiu, to her. She smiles and nods. The photo of her as the creator at on each plastic bag, smiles back at us.

Cheng starts saying: "Naturally, there is a relation between quality and price. To support most costumers, we must be able to deliver the whole quality range from: 'how little can I settle for?' to: 'only the best is good enough'."

Ting gives us further information about how they do things: "We do our best, though it's not our business, to encourage people who shops at the low end, to get the highest quality they can afford. A higher quality will usually get them more satisfied customers and the rumours will spread. We always add a little something extra in our deliveries. This may be an example of a product with a higher quality than the one they ordered."

Cheng has his own saying: "Give your customers more than they expect and it gives them an excellent reason to return."

Late in the afternoon, Cheng and Ting drive us to the airport for our flight back to London. We know Li won't be at the apartment, though it makes no difference. Evie will stay here until sometime on Sunday, where she will go to her dorm at Clare-dale House. Then we will meet again on Monday morning at the Academy.