

“台北愛之船”——不會寫小說的律師不是好哈佛高材生

From:美華美國華人 撰文:天邊



中文尋根夏令營是怎樣的經歷？海外長大的孩子們青春躁動，放飛自我，在暑期的台北收穫了認同、友情和愛情。硅谷女律師的首部小說即將出版。

當爸爸媽媽告訴 Ever Wong 已經給她報了名去台灣學中文，這個在美國長大，

將要上大學的 18 歲女孩就知道，暑假怕是要在嚴格而枯燥的學習中度過，沒得玩了。她不得不從心理上做好準備。

跟 Ever 年紀相近，黑眼睛黃皮膚的少男少女們，帶著父母的期望和一顆顆好奇而躁動的心，從美國、澳洲、歐洲飛到台北的劍潭青年活動中心。這個夏天，他們將有怎樣的奇遇？

夏令營有一個別稱叫愛之船(Loveboat)。Ever 很快就發現了“船上”的奧秘——脫離了虎媽虎爸的管轄，這個暑假，絕對可以玩出新花樣！室友 Sophie 因為有親友來過這里，一見到 Ever 就迫不及待，很老道地透露給 Ever 好多不為外人所知的冒險故事。零看管，可以任性，難怪孩子們對這個夏令營讚不絕口！

白天上課、學習，參觀，在忙忙碌碌中過去。到了夜晚，老師睜眼閉眼，小夥伴們翻牆出外去夜總會，上芭蕾舞課，談情說愛……夜生活豐富多彩無休無止。可是很快，聽父母話一心要學醫卻暗地迷戀跳舞的 Ever 陷入四角戀，在她和性感壞男孩 Xavier、即將去耶魯大學的英俊神童 Rick 和對男孩着迷的時尚室友 Sophie 之間，上演了一場意想不到的青春鬧劇，讓 Ever 終身難忘。

這就是 HarperCollins Publishers (哈珀·柯林斯出版集團) 即將推出的小說《Loveboat, Taipei》(以下稱《台北愛之船》)，講述的故事。小說的創作靈感來源於作者本人高中時代曾經參加過，享譽西方華裔移民圈的台北中文暑期班。

作者 Abigail Hing Wen，邢立美，出生在美國西弗吉尼亞州一個華裔移民家庭：父親來自印尼，母親來自菲律賓，祖父母是移居海外的山東人和福建人。

Abigail 在俄亥俄州長大。在世人眼中，她是一個成功的亞裔二代：從小聰明勤奮，1995 年高中時代獲得總統學者獎；哈佛本科，哥倫比亞法學院法學博士；執業律師，曾在蘇利文·克倫威爾律師事務所工作，後在華盛頓國會山參議院和眾議院，為聯邦法官工作。Abigail 還獲

得了佛蒙特美術學院的寫作藝術碩士學位，是位多才多藝的女士。目前她任英特爾公司的企業律師，專職人工智能部門，經常在人工智能與風投國際會議上發表演講。Abigail 住在硅谷，閒暇時間，喜歡跟丈夫和兩個兒子徒步，也常跟一百多人的大家庭聚會，像小說里的女主角一樣，她非常着迷音樂和舞蹈。

上個世紀的六七十年代開始，很多華人移民西方，他們希望子女學會中文並瞭解中華文化，尋根夏令營應運而生。主辦方的目的是宣傳傳統文化，吸引海外華子女瞭



Ray Hing and Barbara Hing 夫婦在克利夫蘭華人社區是很有影響力的人，Ray 早年當過克利夫蘭華美協會主席，他的太太 Barbara Hing 也任過克利夫蘭婦女聯誼會主席。尤其他們教子有方，兒女們都很優秀，今天我們給讀者推薦的 Hing 家大女兒 Abigail Hing Wen，她是 1995 年 Solon Ohio 高中畢業，因各方面表現突出，獲得了美國高中最高榮譽的總統獎，後上哈佛就讀，女兒哈佛畢業後一直努力學習和工作。

伊利華報感謝 Ray 提供他女兒的優秀作品與本報讀者分享，節日來臨之際，本報祝福他們全家人幸福快樂健康平安！伊利華報編輯部

解和支持台灣。沒想到，這個暑期項目竟成為孩子們尋求身份認同，交友和戀愛的好地方。慢慢地，父母爭相送孩子去那裏，不僅能學到中文，還有望找到同宗同族的另一半，豈不是兩全其美的好事？愛之船這個別稱就是這樣來的。

到了劍潭，這些海外長大的孩子們第一次意識到，原來世界各地都有跟自己同一膚色，同樣背景，同樣經歷了身份困惑的同齡人，之前的抵觸情緒馬上就消失了，並暗自慶幸。

小說採用誇張和漫畫式的風格，充滿了戲劇性的狂歡情節——瘋狂的約會，攝人魂魄的美照，中文課堂

的熱鬧。作者在字里行間觸及了海外華裔關注的熱點議題——比如最首要的，努力調和移民父母的期望與個人的願望，其次還有二代移民在身份認同方面的困惑和掙扎等。作者期待，這部發自內心的娛樂性小說能帶著讀者坐一趟浪漫和自我發現的過山車。她正在努力做宣傳，希望能進入《紐約時報》暢銷書榜。如果小說能在 12 月 31 日前預售出五千冊精裝本，就有望拍成電影。小說將於 2020 年 1 月 7 日出版發行。

“新鮮，有趣，發自內心，讀起來愛不釋手，在你最不期待的地方找到你的同類”——Kelly Loy Gilbert，獲得威廉·C·莫里斯獎的作家。

“關於身為移民二代，關於性別和性意識，關於身份和家庭構成，要說的太多了。Ever 在定義自己的探索中，在這個想要定義她的世界中，具有多重身份，她是那麼美麗。”——國家圖書獎長篇小說《失落的男孩》的作者 Anne Ursu。

長期以來，亞裔美國人給人以刻板單調的印象，鮮有在藝術作品中作為真實、豐滿的人物出現。而亞裔孩子很難在影視作品中看到自己的形象代表。《台北愛之船》作者 Abigail 創作這篇小說，希望改變大眾對亞裔美國人的看法，讓人們看到這個群體的堅強和領導力，他們的受人尊敬之處。

記得一位媽媽分享她讀大學的女兒看了電影《瘋狂亞洲富豪》之後的感想：“這就是我長这么大一直等待的電影。我很喜歡看浪漫喜劇電影，但是以前看的大多數是由白人演繹的美國浪漫喜劇，即使喜歡，但總覺得那演的不是我自己的故事……我流淚了，並不是因為電影本身多傷感，而是我第一次感同身受地將自己帶入電影里……電影探討了歸屬和家庭的內心矛盾，這些正是我生活中所經歷的一切。這部電影真的改變了我的生活，看了之後我真心想為今天所擁有一切開心而滿足。”

有評論家說，《台北愛之船》是青年版本的《瘋狂亞洲富豪》，簡·奧斯汀式的社交生活與《愛樂之城》碰撞，因美國長大的亞裔孩子六十年代參加台北文化交流項目而獲得靈感，所寫成的一個移民女孩成長的靈動故事，交織了家庭關係的複雜、對身份的發現過程和對愛情的渴求。

近年來，海外華人二代越來越多地打入文學藝術領域，在各個行業展露才華。預祝 Abigail 的小說能走上暢銷榜，並走上銀幕。作者期望大家在 12 月 30 日前在 Amazon 或前往本地書店預訂精裝版，在新年伊始隨她坐一回浪漫驚奇的過山車，體驗移民二代的成長歷程。



Abigail 獲得總統學者獎，在白宮受到克林頓總統接見。(圖片由 Abigail 提供)

在舊金山的楊安澤募捐會上，Abigail 與楊安澤互相贈書。(圖片由 Abigail 提供)

For years, I kept my writing a secret from my family.

I am a dreamer. Out of necessity, my parents are practical people.

My dad left Indonesia for the United States at thirteen. As the eldest son of a poor family, he was sent to find a better life for his six siblings, a charge he's taken seriously his entire life. My mom's father had taken his college money and left China to start a cement company in the Philippines. My maternal grandparents passed away when my mom was only seventeen, and she soon fled for the United States in search of a better life as well.

Our childhoods couldn't have been more different. Not only had they grown up in different countries and cultures, they came from business families. My parents had read perhaps one of the English and American novels my sister and I discovered in our school libraries. They were even less familiar with the games we played and the television shows we watched. They were focused on vitamins, dental appointments, car insurance—or at least, it seemed that way to me.

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER ADVERTISEMENT

As a result, I shared more of myself—favorite books, crushes, hopes—with my friends than I did them. While I admired Laura Ingalls and dreamed about writing stories like her, I never shared that with anyone, let alone my family.

My parents wanted me to go into politics and give the community a voice. In their spare time, they were local community activists who went to bat for underdogs around them. I remember them meeting with my high school administrators, not for me or my siblings, but for an immigrant boy in trouble. They helped translate across cultures.

As for me, I tried to fulfill their dream. I interned for a US Senator and worked for a Presidential exploratory campaign. I went to law



VIA HARPERCOLLINS

Confessions of an Undercover Novelist

Abigail Hing Wen on Difficult Family Conversations

By Abigail Hing Wen December 16, 2019

school and started down the path to becoming a professor. But while on maternity leave, I did something I had never done before.

I began to write a novel.

I wrote while I breastfed, and I wrote instead of sleeping, and, when my husband and I moved from DC to California to be closer to family, I stayed under the radar a few years to raise my boys and continue

to write. I found critique partners and kept writing, more novels, getting feedback and getting rejected, never telling my parents what I was so busy doing with my limited spare time.

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER ADVERTISEMENT

But several years into my secret writing habit, my siblings accidentally outed me. One day my mom and dad asked me with wrinkled-brow confusion, “Achi,” which means “big sister” in Hokkien, “Are you writing a book? About what?”

I printed out my novel and gave it to my dad. I redacted the intimate scenes for good measure. And I gave him a practical reason to read it: “Can you check the Mandarin?”

I played it down. It was my heart, and I couldn't share it. Not with them. Not yet. I had enrolled in an MFA program in writing, a degree that would cost more than I'd made in my first years out of college. That math, to them, would simply be irresponsible.

When I returned home from the Vermont College of Fine Arts, my mom picked me up from the airport. I wasn't expecting her—I hadn't

even wanted her to know I was traveling for a writing program. But she'd found out somehow.

As we pulled from the curb, she said exactly what I'd feared, “You shouldn't waste so much money.”

But a few weeks later, she surprised me. She'd come over to drop off a pot of Adobo chicken, my favorite Filipino dish.

“I told my dad I would write a book about our family,” she said. “Maybe you'll write it instead.”

That was the end of that conversation, but it was also a beginning. She was a storyteller, too—I'd grown up entertained by her tales of her twelve brothers and sisters, her rags-to-riches father, never fully appreciating what it meant to her to lose the protection and love of her parents at such a young age, and how far she'd come in her own fight for gender equality.

That moment brought it home for me. It gave me a surprising window into a part of her I hadn't known existed. It made me a little less guarded about my own aspirations.

After I sold my first novel, *Loveboat, Taipei*, I went to my parents' house for our holiday dinner. They'd gotten wind of the book deal from my brother.

My mom hugged me, her face glowing.

“You got a million dollars?” she exclaimed.

“Um, no, Mom.” I pulled back slightly. “I didn't get a million dollars.”

“Oh,” she said, crestfallen.

At an earlier time, I might've felt let down, but this time, I laughed. Her aspirations for me in writing, it seemed, were even greater than my own.

They wanted to read my novel, of course. But my book had a girl with big dreams. It had romance: four love triangles. It even had sex and I still had yet to watch a kissing scene on television

with my dad without him changing the channel.

But it felt like the right thing to do. I printed out my novel and gave it to my dad. I redacted the intimate scenes for good measure. And I gave him a practical reason to read it: “Can you check the Mandarin?”

He read the book in a few days, gave me feedback on the Mandarin, and translated the story for my mom. We haven't spoken about its themes in depth—the topics are still delicate ones between us. But they're my biggest supporters now. Their practical business advice is coming in handy as I go to launch.

Best of all, my book continues to unlock more stories from their lives. My dad as a college student, it turns out, used to drive two hours to buy Chinese groceries, then resold them at cost to his fellow classmates, just so they could all have a taste of home. In his own ways, I'm discovering, he's a dreamer, too. They both had to be, to have taken the chances they took on America. Maybe in the same way I hid behind the practical “Can you check the Mandarin?” they've hidden behind the practicality of vitamins and dental appointments.

I'm no longer writing in secret. I'm talking to them about my ideas, even picking their brains for their experiences in Asia. I'm no longer dreaming alone.

And now, armed with their practicality, hand in hand, maybe we'll be able to fulfill some dreams together.

Loveboat, Taipei is available January 7, 2020 from HarperCollins, and can be preordered at Barnes & Noble, Amazon, Target and local bookstores.

