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*from *Love's Executioner* by Irvin D. Yalom

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ended up in Groningen, and you taught me to thank the bus driver. *Fang-Fang Guo* and *Quan Sun*, together with *Patrick*, we had a nice dinner at the most popular Italian place in town. I heard that the guys had a nice dinner in London by themselves. Good luck to both of you! See you in London or Dublin. *Qi-Hong Chen*, thanks for your patient listening, generous support and sharing of your stories. Good luck with your new job in Beijing. *Daria*, nice to get to know you in the Dutch class. It is so interesting that we have a lot of similar peaceful family experiences, which both support us and hinder us in some way: we both decided to fight against the uncomfortable feelings until we learned to accept it. I enjoy the talks with you and I feel being supported. *Jan* and *Ciska*, I had great fun on our IJsselmeer trip on your boat. Thanks also go to *Marget*, *Ming-De Pang*, *Guan-Qun Ma* and *Yi-Qing Peng*.

Those boats appeared in the last six years and bobbed resonantly with mine: Jin Xu, big thanks for so generously sharing your experience with me, where I learned a lot of things which can directly apply to the situation I encountered myself. You are an amazing cook and a hiking enthusiast. The chicken mushroom soup you made stick to my mind and our trip together is yet to come. All the best in Eindhoven! *Shushu*, since the first time we met in a McDonald's near Yali middle school in Changsha our journey has spread widely all over the world: Beijing, Paris, Groningen, Aachen and Amsterdam. You struck me as a playful physicist, and the more I know you the more I find that you are such an experimenter of life. Thanks for taking care of me, showing me around, always encouraging me and introducing your friends to me such as *Di*, whose enthusiasm about food and music is really infectious. *Rossella*, what a coincidence that you started living on Amethyststraat in Groningen and *Ettore* moved to Luxembourg while *Patrick* and I were also located at just these two places. I am so grateful to get to know you at the end of my stay in Groningen. You are such an adventurer and a lover of life, from Mongolia to Colombia and to the small island in the Pacific Ocean. It was so fascinating to picture you sitting in a Mongolian house or staring at the Milky Way in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. I am so happy about all the nice things we did together. I remember your big smiling face when we were giggling on the bike, the jazz nights we went together at *Tollak's* performance, our flammkuchen dinner in the valley of Luxembourg, your big jumps at the big Christmas circle at Acló. I was happy that *Ettore* fell in love with pomelo at first bite. You and *Ettore* were the best hosts for our Padova trip: The blood-orange moon, the patented pizza, the tasty bigoli and jujube trees. I am knocking on wood for your new start in Milan and the future for both of you. *Hao-Dong Wang*, thanks for being such nice company and for the support you provided all the way. Things were not trivial for you in the last few years, but you made it! I was happy to have dinner with you and your parents together with *Patrick* at my favorite burger place. All the best in London! *Anna*, you and *Riccardo* also seem to have gotten into this burger place. You motivated me to do Dayenne's body balance every Tuesday, which provided

me a lot of support in the last period of my PhD. I was happy that we spent a girl weekend in Gdansk and did the bike trip to Sopot. The unsalted cottage cheese with raspberry was very tasty! Good luck for the back-to-back defences of you and *Riccardo* in October. Soft mozzarella was never a thing in the group together with *Selim*, *Maria*, *Eduardo* and *Natasha*. *Xin-Hui Wu*, you are the sunshine in my life when sky is grey. Thanks for cheering me up for the pink girl run. You have verbally introduced me to so many Korean food, so our plan to Korea plan is yet to come. *Jing Li*, such a coincidence that we have the same name and studied at the same university for our Bachelor's in Changsha! I am so grateful for our lunch talk, which is almost like therapy for me every day in the end of my PhD. You are a person who is so much at ease. I really admire your attitude towards the difficulties of life and the spirit of enjoying the moment. I am happy to share things with you. All the best with finishing and the most splendid is yet to come! *Ping*, you are so talented with technical and practical things and I took great benefit from your well explanation. In daily life, you often surprisingly pointed out truth in a super sharp way, which seemed so effortless for you. This made me laugh a lot, because the truth is often the funniest joke. I could not remember how many times I was not able to stop laughing in our girl chat together with *Crystal*. I wish you, *Gang* and our newcomer *Zhi-Lan* all the best! Our golden trio will meet somewhere every year as planned. *Crystal (Sisi)*, you are such a calm and kind person. I was so many times amazed by you being at ease, which I really admire. You are such a caring person who always generously provide help and support, which I appreciate a lot. Thank you for all the company and good luck with finishing! *Zheng Cheng*, you told me many stories from your favorite science fiction during our dinners, which might have inspired you to be such a passionate astrophysicist. I was also amazed by your enthusiasm about games, the story behind it and most impressively the game demo you made. Good luck finding a right place to create your story and game. *Shan-Shan*, I am happy to know you: I can share a lot of feelings of Changsha girls living in the Netherlands with you. I enjoy listening to your Changsha dialect, which I am only able to understand but not really speak. It was my pleasure to be the witness of your and *Jan's* wedding ceremony. I enjoyed both the wedding banquet in Changsha and the party in Schijndel. Your dad made an amazing Changsha noodle as breakfast. What a luxury! Big congrats with delivering *Louise* into this world just after *Patrick* and I visited you! I am looking forward to see her soon! *Kriti*, you often bring out the best in me as a person. We had so much to talk about on every conference we met, because of similar experiences and struggles. Thank you for always pointing things out in the most clear and gentle way. Our trip to Montreux and Vevey after the GRC conference was lovely and the view was astonishing. I am happy to see you find new balance in life. You are my conference buddy and also my PhD and life buddy. I am looking forward to visit our trip to India or China with or without special reasons.

All the best to you and *Sander! Fros*, I lost a backpack, but I gained you as a friend. It was a wonderful experience for me having your Dutch courses. Maybe we share quite something of our characters. I can easily relate to you. I like your attitude towards life, appreciating the small things or accidental events. Thanks for all your patience and enthusiasm for listening to my stories. I wrote "*meeting Fros*" in my calendar book for every Thursday instead of "Dutch course". Thanks for the lovely dinners at your lovely place together with *Frans. Beate*, I enjoyed the time we spent in Bonn and Amsterdam. I remember the nice view of the autumn leaves on the way when we drove back from Luxembourg to Bonn together with *Patrick and Jan*. I felt so cozy in Bonn surrounded by your book collection and the music of *Bill Evans. Tjitte and Cilia*, you are like family to me. *Cilia*, I enjoyed all your visits, big hugs and the nice Christmas I spent in Sneek. *Tjitte*, thanks for being my company in Groningen for a long time, for having a lot of fun and standing in the dark with me.

亲爱的爸爸妈妈，感谢你们教育我要努力做一个诚恳的人。远离长沙在荷兰生活的日子里，我逐渐意识到这也许是让我能有幸认识这些有趣朋友的原因。因为这些朋友，生活在别处还是那么丰富多彩。在你们和爷爷奶奶姥姥姥爷的陪伴下，我在平静美好的中南大学校园里长大。这份平和成了我性格里觉得安全和被支持的源头，同时也孕育了我强烈的好奇心，驱使我去探险，去旅行，去经历不一样的事情。感谢你们没有反对我去做我不熟悉，你们也不熟悉的事情。你们成长过程中由于大时代背景所经历的苦涩也许使得你们那么尽力的给了我最大的宠爱和和睦的家庭环境。但生活的苦涩和不如意就是生活的一部分，直到我独自生活的这六年我才慢慢学着如何面对这些困难：从最开始的和困难做斗争，到害怕面对，再到学会接受这些不舒适并和它们和平的相处。正是因为这些不舒适才显得所有的美好的人和事那么可贵。最后，我还想特别谢谢爷爷：在我还是个小女孩的时候，因为你的宠爱，不厌其烦的回答我没完没了的为什么和给我讲的各种有趣好玩的故事，让我开始学会了非常自然的进入对人和故事好奇的聊天状态。也许是因为这种从孩童时期开始的习惯，让我认识了那么多有趣的人听了那么多有趣的故事，生命也不知不觉变得更加有趣多彩。

Papa and Mama, thanks for raising me by teaching me to be sincere and honest. Later when I left home and started living by myself in Groningen, I realized that this might be the magic magnet for me to get to know the people I feel so comfortable with. Together with them, I had colorful and splendid experiences. I am happy to have grown up inside the peaceful campus of the Central South University, together

with you, grandpas and grandmas. This peacefulness has made me feel safe and supported and provided the driving force for me to make "impulsive" decisions and to go on adventures. Maybe due to the difficult experiences you had when you were growing up, you provided me with comfort, attention and love. But of course every coin has its flip side: I had very little experience in dealing with cold, loneliness, confrontation and in getting by without confirmation, which made me struggle a lot when I had to deal with "uncomfortable" feelings by myself: I started by fighting against it, which left me afraid of it, until I learned to accept it and live with it. *Fei-Fei*, you are a member of our family since you were a little puppy ten years ago from Grandmother's place. Thanks for bringing us so many joy and being the companion of *Papa* and *Mama* while I am studying aboard. Having you was such a coincidence. But I guess life was composed of many coincidental events such as meeting and leaving, which I would like to embrace. We will always miss you girl. Last but not least, special thanks to *Grandpa* who always patiently told me stories when I was a little girl. You spoiled me so much and I always craved more and more stories. This became the starting point of my interest in people and their stories. This has been such a treasure, to expand my outlook by getting to know people and talking to them.

Finally, I want to give my thanks to my two paranymphs, with whom I felt so comfortable and content: *Nathalie*, I am happy I got to know you during our Lindy-hop lesson, which is so much different from the classical Chinese dancing I practiced. Enjoying the swinging and spinning together every Monday evening became one of my most relaxing routines: I love the freedom it brings us and the magic it has to make us live at the moment. Embrace it! I feel lucky for your pupils that they have such a super juf! I got touched by the innocence of your kids at the Queen's show you made. Enjoy the innocence as long as it lasts. What a treasure!

Patrick, thanks for being such a good buddy to share my life experience. I cherish all the moments we giggled or struggled. We did so many mental gymnastics, kitchen experiments and made so many trouvailles. Thanks for all your patience, curiosity and love. It was great fun and you are shining to me! I want to share a quote we saw and liked at a museum in Luxembourg, which is a caption of a series of X-ray photos of two people kissing: "*Being together, learning oneself*". And let's experience the journey.

Jing Liu
Amsterdam
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