

Colours

—Yi Huang

Ow... Owww... Owwwww! Owww...

Consciousness oozes painfully into your head, a faint, diffuse ache swelling into intense, throbbing agony. You make the mistake of opening your eyes and recoil as they are lanced by morning sunlight. Shrinking back into the shadows, the bright spots recede from your vision to reveal a large soap bubble looming ominously above your face. You quickly shut your eyes just in time before it pops, splattering you with industrial grade detergent that, worryingly, stings a little. Wiping it away with your sleeve, you decide the world isn't worth being awake for and go back to sleep.

However, your snooze is interrupted by insistent beeping as your phone argues with your short-term memory over whether or not you turned it off last night. Even in your groggy state, you imagine hushed whispers and giggles mocking your ring-tone. You fumble about and find your mobile nestling cosily under you, and discover another message from yesterday's mysterious private number. It reads: "oh lizzie, im so sorry, if you read my message yesterday, i really didnt mean it, please dont be mad at me". You abandon all hope of forgetting about your headache.

Looking around, carefully avoiding being speared by the sunlight piercing the shutters, you see that you are lying in the corner of the Irish pub while a cleaner mops the floor next to you. He wishes you good morning in a thick Irish accent, and explains that with all the laddies and lasses in lab coats who kept coming in last night, everyone was too busy serving drinks to kick you out, and so you'd been allowed to stay the night. He then informs you that it is now no longer night, and that you should promptly leave, which you think a good idea.

As you shuffle out into the street, slowly growing accustomed to the unnaturally bright sunlight, you are greeted by a kaleidoscope of swirling colours, and instinctively cover your face to protect yourself from a full-scale assault by a flotilla of stinging detergent bubbles. Hearing more vaguely mocking sounds from behind, you peek out between your fingers and discover the source of your distress—the wind has blown a rather colourful flier into your face. Peeling it off, you see an advertisement for a circus troupe with a cast of colourful characters that seems to be hiding a message.

- Ms. W, an expert at covering up skeletons in the closet.
- Mr. B, a very stout man giving off an all-consuming sense of gravity.
- Mr. R, an unfortunate business man whose business seems to always run at a loss.
- Mr. S, who is strongly associated with the motion pictures.
- Mrs. Y, a woman capable of recalling numerous business telephone numbers.
- Mr. P, who is prone to the occasional hallucination in periods of inebriation.
- Ms G, a young lady who cleans up the backstage Actors' restrooms.
- Ms B, whose family has had a notorious past linked with a megalomaniacal dictator.