

# A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO RIDE-SHARING 鐵道共乘旅遊手冊

Berlin to Munich, ten hours, four changes. Four strangers meet to ride together, a special discount ticket, and so begins a journey both carefully planned and fully unexpected.

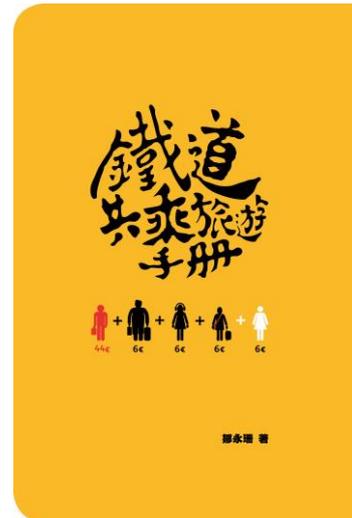
Chiang Chang-Ching has been living in Germany for nine years, the eternal student. He is the one to place the original advert, a search for companions, a young man meticulous in his consideration of all options. Christine is a retired music teacher who never puts down her book, the whole journey. She prefers to read words, rather than exchange them with others. Michael hails from the former East Germany, his heart as big as his rotund form, retired from mending the minds of others. Stony silence is not part of his plan for this trip. Anna-Marie is a local university student. No news is bigger than the updates posted by friends on social media.

Conversation comes and goes. Things are said that make some roll their eyes. But by the time the train glides into their final station, four strangers are reluctant to part ways. What happened on that train ride to change an arrangement of convenience into a lasting bond?

After hearing a friend describe just such an experience of ride-sharing with strangers, Tsou Yung-Shan's interest was piqued. The idea wouldn't leave her, and so she turned her characteristically precise and restrained prose to one of life's small moments, the seemingly insignificant situations we can all find ourselves in that has the power to change our lives. Designing every detail in the book's production, from the words to the binding and cover, this is not just a novel, but an artwork that makes physical the sometimes mysterious movings of the human heart.

## Tsou Yung-Shan 鄒永珊

Tsou Yung-Shan graduated from National Taiwan University before moving to Germany in 2001 to pursue a graduate degree in art, where she now lives and works as an artist. Her work is characterised by the dialogue between image and language, between content and the process of writing. She has also drawn



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inspiration from the gulf between the German language and her mother tongue,  
using its more precise grammar to stretch the subtleties of Chinese.

# A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO RIDE-SHARING

By Tsou Yung-Shan. Translated by Michelle M. Wu.

They meet on the train, shake hands and introduce themselves to each other. Chiang Chang-Ching tells them that he is Chiang Ching and they call Chiang Chang-Ching Ching. Together, they embark upon their journey.

On October 27, Chiang Chang-Ching made a telephone call to confirm a meeting in Munich for November 6—he planned to travel to Munich from Berlin. He sat at his desk chewing the tip of his pencil and swiveling his chair as he scrutinised various airline websites on his computer screen.

His travel plans were made in a hurry, the appointment being only ten days away. Flights to Munich were already too expensive. He could still manage to get train tickets at a discount though, and traveling by train was more pleasant than taking the long-distance bus. Chiang Chang-Ching clicked his mouse to access Deutsche Bahn's website.

After some browsing, he discovered that all the discounted direct express tickets for November 6 were sold out. He would have to leave a day earlier. But November 5 was a Monday, and the cheaper weekend deals wouldn't be available. He would have to choose a different kind.

The Deutsche Bahn had started to offer a type of discounted ticket during weekdays called the Das Quer-durchs-Land-Ticket. At a price of 44 euros, the holder of the ticket could enjoy one-day unlimited travel on regional trains to any destination in Germany from Monday to Friday. The ticket permits ride-sharing of up to five people, with each additional passenger paying a supplement of 6 euros.

Chiang Chang-Ching had never purchased this type of ticket before, so he read the terms and conditions carefully. The Deutsche Bahn website posted a list detailing the amount each had to pay; if five people shared the ticket, then each would only have to pay 13 euros and 60 cents. This discount convinced Chiang Chang-Ching to find four people to share the cost—it occurred to him that he could try Germany's popular ride-sharing website. Who knows, he might be able to find groups looking for passengers, and that would save him the trouble of buying the ticket along with all the associated hassles. He typed 'Mitfahrgelegenheit' into his search engine and entered the first site that came up. A bunch of pop-up advertisements appeared on the screen, each blasting its own music. Chiang Chang-Ching clicked away the ads one by one, and stood up to go to the restroom, failing to notice that a pop-up advertisement for weight-loss with no sound effects was still open under the main window.

Returning to his desk, Chiang Chang-Ching lit a cigarette, holding it in his left hand as he continued to surf the Internet. A pop-up advertisement for a dating website appeared on the screen. Chiang Chang-Ching clicked it away without a second glance, as if playing Whac-A-Mole, and concentrated on the ride-sharing website.

Chiang Chang-Ching noticed that after the Das Quer-durchs-Land-Ticket was launched, many classified ads looking for ride-sharing travel companions were posted, yet none met his requirements. He decided he would post

his own in order to find four people quickly and purchase the ticket.

First, he had to figure out how to place his ad on the website. He realised that he had to register. Glancing at the blanks that had to be filled, he deliberated, placed his cigarette into the ashtray by the monitor, took out his passport and studied it, his head bent.

His name on the passport was Chiang, Chang-Ching. An English spelling of the Chinese characters. Written out like that, all three words sounded so similar. He figured that no one would suspect anything if he omitted the 'Chang' from his name. People might have an easier time pronouncing his name.

He typed out his username: Chiang, Ching. It looked authentic in every way. Chiang Chang-Ching grinned at the monitor. However, when it came to filling out his email address and telephone number, he did so honestly.

After completing the registration, Chiang Chang-Ching logged in again and posted the train number, cost of the ticket per person, contact details and a deadline for answering the ad. He double-checked to make sure that there were no mistakes, and posted it. He checked the time. It was three-fifty in the afternoon. He still had time to get ready for the trip ahead. He remembered the cigarette that he had just been smoking, and discovered that it was already burnt out. He took a deep breath. Then he checked his email, replied to some, and logged in to Facebook to see if there were any interesting postings. After watching a video clip shared by a friend, he checked the time again, and it was already twenty-eight minutes past five. He closed the window and saw the weight-loss ad hiding underneath it. He clicked it away.

He put on his coat and shoes and went to the university library to do some research.

Chiang Chang-Ching thought he would have to wait a few days to get replies, but the day after he posted the ad, a message arrived in formal German from a woman informing him that she was interested in ride-sharing, signed Christine. Since she was the first to respond, he thought this was a good omen and decided to count her in as a travel mate without further consideration.

Three days passed, and no one else contacted Chiang Chang-Ching. But on the evening of November 1 several email and cellphone messages arrived, taking the number of candidates over three. Chiang Chang-Ching was relieved. Yet despite being happy that there were people available to share the cost of the ticket, he also started to worry about which three to pick.

He first filtered out those who didn't seem to be very sure and had just asked him a few questions. Then he went about confirming with those he selected. In order to make sure that nothing went wrong, even if the other person didn't reply, he would send them letter to thank them for responding to his ad. He also double checked with those whom he considered candidates for ride-sharing.

Other than Christine, the first to reply, the three others Chiang Chang-Ching selected were a man whose son responded on his behalf and two other women. One was called Anna-Marie. She contacted him via a casual, rather informal, SMS. She too was quick to reply, confirming all the details in two or three messages, asking whether there were any kids in tow. The other woman seemed to be from an English-speaking country, because her name was spelled Catherine. She contacted him via email. In her first contact she used very formal German, but in the messages to follow she wrote in English. From the details in her letters Chiang Chang-Ching surmised that she was American.

Chiang Chang-Ching was especially curious about Catherine. Not only because she was the only person who

communicated with him in English, but also because she kept asking him where they were going to meet, how they were going to recognise and identify each other, and how they were going to pay for the ticket. Chiang Chang-Ching wasn't very confident about his English, but he did his best to respond to her inquiries, detailing how they were to meet up and to pay for the ticket, even describing his looks and what he was going to wear. After replying to Catherine's email, he sent messages to the other three passengers and asked them for a final confirmation. Then he asked the man for his name.

Chiang Chang-Ching waited to hear back from his four travel companions. Anna-Marie sent him a message again on the afternoon of November 2, not to confirm the arrangement, but to ask him whether he would allow her to sign her name on the ticket, to make her the main passenger. Her travel destination was Passau, and she was to continue eastward from Munich. This type of ticket could not be transferred, hence the special request. Chiang Chang-Ching wanted to hold on to the ticket for accounting purposes, yet Anna-Marie kept texting him. Chiang Chang-Ching didn't want to complicate things, so he agreed.

Later Christine and Catherine both replied and confirmed. The man also sent a message to Chiang Chang-Ching, giving his name as Michael Schmidt. So it was finally settled, a party of five.

Now with all five on board, Chiang Chang-Ching initially planned to book the ticket on the Internet, to get the whole thing over and done with. But he realised that many restrictions applied to Internet booking—apart from ID verification, the ticket wasn't as flexible as claimed in the advertising. In order to make it possible for Anna-Marie to hold on to the ticket as she traveled onwards, Chiang Chang-Ching would have to purchase it at the train station. Since he didn't want to be in too much of a hurry on the day of departure, he went that day to the nearest train station.

Chiang Chang-Ching located the Traveler's Service Centre at the train station. There were automatic vending machines inside and outside. There were also a number of people pacing back and forth close to the vending machines. Chiang Chang-Ching walked in, and saw two dark-skinned men with scraps of paper in their hands looking around. He bypassed them, stopped before a vending machine behind them, and started to operate the machine. Just as he selected the departure date, he heard the man behind him say in accented German that it was for tomorrow, and he could feel the two men leave.

He continued with his errand, paying no attention to the two men, when a young German girl came up to him and asked politely whether he was going to Stuttgart. Chiang Chang-Ching shook his head and the girl thanked him and left quietly.

Chiang Chang-Ching put the newly purchased ticket away carefully into his wallet. Then, just as he was about to leave, a middle-aged man approached the vending machine next to his. The young girl approached the man and asked the same question. The man shook his head and the girl left.

On the evening of November 4, another message arrived asking if there were any available seats. Chiang Chang-Ching said no and once more checked with the others: they were to leave tomorrow on November 5; the train was scheduled to leave at nine thirty-two in the morning. Chiang Chang-Ching asked his travel companions to meet him at the railway platform at the main Berlin Railway Station at nine o'clock.

Prior to departure, Chiang Chang-Ching found many things to be in a mess. He played music from his computer as he packed for Munich, and quickly lost track of time. At one in the morning his telephone started

ringing. Chiang Chang-Ching picked up the phone. Once he put down the receiver again, he found himself to be a very foul mood and didn't feel like packing anymore. He tidied up the documents on his desk, washed up and fell into bed.

A while later he woke up freezing cold. He got out of bed, turned up the heat to maximum, then adjusted it down again. Back in bed, he tried to fall asleep but couldn't; he tossed and turned, got up, and stared at his computer. His friends in Taiwan had started to update their Facebook statuses, posting pictures of food, newborn babies and the latest happenings in their lives. His user name was tagged in a wedding picture of one of his elementary school classmates. Uninterested, Chiang Chang-Ching started to nod off, so he climbed back into bed. Before turning off his computer he noted the time. It was already five in the morning.

The alarm clock rang at seven thirty. Chiang Chang-Ching struggled to open his eyes. He hurt all over. There were rumours all over the Internet claiming that the world was going to end that year. To him, mornings after a terrible night of insomnia were just such apocalyptic events. They had just switched back to winter time, and he felt particularly tired. He fell back into bed, just to get a few minutes of shut-eye, but actually fell asleep. He flexed his shin muscles subconsciously and suddenly felt sharp cramps. The pain woke him up properly now. He fumbled around to find his eyeglasses, checked his cellphone for the time and discovered that it was already seven fifty-three. He jumped out of bed with his right leg still hurting and his mind confused. He sat on his bed for a moment to get his bearings. When the pain subsided he limped into the bathroom.

It was a good thing that Chiang Chang-Ching had already laid out his clothes and packed the night before. He still had a little time to make his sleep-deprived self appear presentable. In the bathroom he put on a black shirt. Wearing only boxer shorts, his exposed bare legs looked pathetic under the florescent light. The cold made Chiang Chang-Ching sneeze, and goose bumps appeared on his legs. He quickly pulled on his trousers. Then with his hips pressing against the sink, he leaned towards the mirror and tried to put on his contact lenses. His eyes were very dry after the long night and he had a hard time making the contact lens fit on his eyes. The friction caused him to tear up, and his vision became a blur. It took him a while to see clearly again.

Next he applied shaving cream around his mouth and started to shave. In his hurry, his hand slipped and left a nick close to his Adam's apple. Chiang Chang-Ching hastily grabbed a towel and tried to stop the bleeding by applying pressure to the wound. With his other hand he searched the medicine cabinet for a Band-Aid to cover it.

Then he put his coat on, got his briefcase and wound a scarf around his neck. With his overnight bag in hand, he surveyed his apartment, turned off the heating and the gas. At eight sixteen, he rushed out of the door.

Chiang Chang-Ching ran all the way to Gesundbrunnen to catch the train. Eight twenty-nine. There was a delay, and a crowd was waiting on the platform. Moving through the people, he walked over to his habitual waiting spot, and kept his eye on the train schedule. The display indicated that the train would arrive in two minutes. Eight thirty-six. More people arrived and joined the waiting. Some started to sigh. Some started to smoke, even though smoking was prohibited. The fumes of their exhalations tumbled into the morning fog.

Two drunks arrived at the scene. The of alcohol stench amplified their presence. The crowd yielded. Chiang Chang-Ching tried to keep his distance. Each carried a bottle of cheap booze and mumbled nonsense, oblivious to the people around them. After drinking up, they threw their empty bottles onto the tracks. The sound of the broken glass had a muted quality, even less conspicuous than the rustling of an old lady's shopping bags. A train rolled into

the station, but it was going in the opposite direction. After the coming and going, few people were left.

A tall, thin man wearing a long grey coat appeared further along the empty platform. He walked with a stoop, wandering around the platform with a faded booklet in his hand, mumbling; his voice became louder and louder, and the intonation of his mumbling differed from everyday speech. It seemed as if he was reciting his own poetry. This poetry recital drowned out the ranting of the two drunks. They turned towards the man and started to holler, ordering him to stop uttering words that no one could understand. Out of defiance, the man increased the volume of his recitation. One of the drunks gave him the middle finger and howled hysterically. A train pulled into the station, stopping between the two platforms, as if to mediate and bring about a ceasefire. The drunk that had showed his middle finger continued to curse and cuss, but his companion gave him a nudge and told him to shut up and board the train. This wasn't Chiang Chang-Ching's train, so he stayed where he was. He saw the two drunks get on the train, and observed how the commuters scowled and tolerated the presence of the drunks. Just before the doors closed, a heavy-built young man and his bicycle boarded by the same door as the two drunks, and they were forced to stand with their faces pressed against the glass screen, staring at the young man who was half a head taller than them. They had been forced into a corner. The doors beeped and closed. Nothing else in the car could be observed.

When the train left, Chiang Chang-Ching observed that the poet on the other side of the platform had no one left to compete with. He seemed perplexed and didn't continue with his recital. He returned to mumbling instead, and Chiang Chang-Ching could no longer hear him. The man turned around, stooped lower and left the platform with his arms by his side. The booklet in his hand appeared even more faded. When the man disappeared from his field of vision, Chiang Chang-Ching looked towards his side of the platform and saw his train arrive. Eight forty-two. Chiang Chang-Ching boarded the train.

Chiang Chang-Ching had to transfer at S+U Friedrichstrasse. He took the escalator from the underground level to the ground floor, but there were many people crowded on to it, and the left side was blocked as well. Chiang Chang-Ching looked around him but he was trapped. Fortunately for him his train arrived just as he reached the overpass level, and he was able to board just in time.

Many of the passengers on this route were tourists. They were dressed smartly and casually, often dragging suitcases or carrying backpacks. They wore an air of excitement and seemed to be less bogged down by the wear and tear of everyday routine. Chiang Chang-Ching stood by the door, and right across him, he caught sight of a pretty boy. Their eyes met and he smiled at him. The train pulled into the main station where there was construction going on. Steel bars protruded from the ground underneath the overpass, and orange colored nets covered the construction site. The train pulled into the glass arch of the train shed.

At eight fifty-five, Chiang Chang-Ching arrived at the meeting spot, platform 3 at the underground level of Berlin Central. There are no ticket gates in Germany, nor is it necessary to purchase a ticket to enter the platform level, so they agreed to meet at zone D of the platform, close to the last car of the train. There were more people standing close to the escalator, so Chiang Chang-Ching walked towards the corner closer to the tunnel. Gusts of cold wind kept sweeping down onto the platform, and the temperature there was noticeably cooler. Chiang Chang-Ching was right in the path of the wind, and he hunched his shoulders. At eye level he saw the lights that were parallel to the tracks.

As he stood waiting, he tidied the outfit he had described to his travel companions to enable easy recognition: a grey suit under a well-cut woolen coat in charcoal gray. He was also wearing black leather gloves and shiny black leather shoes. A black cashmere scarf was wound around his neck, a black corduroy flat cap sat on his head and a black leather briefcase hung from his shoulder. When he left home that morning it was snowing, but by the time he got on the train the snowflakes had melted, decorating his cap and shoulders with tiny droplets of water.

Chiang Chang-Ching removed one glove and stuffed it into his pocket. He then took off his cap and shook the water from it. He unwound his scarf and shook it out too, splashing water droplets onto his cheeks. He wanted to wipe them, but his gloved hand only managed to spread the water droplets more evenly across his face. He took off his other glove and put it into his pocket, then wiped his face again with the back of his hand. When his fingers swept past his lips he had a sudden urge to smoke, but smoking was banned in the train station. He smacked his lips, folded his arms in front of his chest, and chewed a fingernail instead. He glanced at the clock. It was eight fifty-six.

At eight fifty-eight, a petite lady with gray hair came walking towards zone D. She wore a light brown down coat, carried a burgundy red leather purse and dragged a dark green suitcase. She looked around with an air of uncertainty. They met each other's gaze and both hesitated. Chiang Chang-Ching broke the ice, 'Hello, I am Mr Chiang, are you here to meet me?'

The grey-haired lady studied Chiang Chang-Ching with a cautious and guarded look, her slate eyes seemed to hide something; her scrutiny of Chiang Chang-Ching lasted an embarrassingly long time. Chiang Chang-Ching almost expected her to say that he was talking to the wrong person, but then she spoke, 'Meyer.' She had a Bavarian accent, and hardly opened her lips when she talked. They formed a thin line and her voice was feeble, void of emotion. Chiang Chang-Ching attempted to introduce himself, 'I am Chiang Ching, nice to meet you, Ms Meyer... You are, Christine?' The grey-haired lady nodded.

Relieved, Chiang Chang-Ching smiled politely but was momentarily at a loss for words. He small talked about the snow, and commented on the bad weather. Christine continued to observe Chiang Chang-Ching and didn't respond to his chitchat. Chiang Chang-Ching told her that he was expecting three more people, and that they should wait a little longer. Christine just turned around to look at him.

The train had not yet arrived, and there were few people waiting. Eight tracks cut across four platforms, the dominant color silver grey, giving the platforms a cold and distant feel. Christine kept looking straight ahead. Chiang Chang-Ching followed her gaze, and then looked down at the tracks. An announcement about arriving trains came over the speakers and Chiang Chang-Ching took out his cellphone to check the time. Nine o'clock. A sonorous voice from behind them greeted, 'Good morning.' They both turned around.

An older man slightly taller than Chiang Chang-Ching and of heavier build, with a prominent beer belly and a silver grey beard, stood smiling behind them. An average-looking man whose ruddy complexion reminded people of Santa Claus. Yet his beret and East German military jacket were rather unusual. The old man laughed cheerfully. He stood beside Chiang Chang-Ching, put down his luggage, took off his beret and shook hands with them.

'Schmidt.' His accent differed from Christine's. It sounded like someone from Saxony; he shook hands with Christine, and Christine told him her last name. Mr Schmidt asked, 'And your first name?'

'Christine.'

'And may I call you by your first name?' Christine nodded. Schmidt laughed and extended his hand to Chiang

Chang-Ching. It was big and solid, and his handshake was firm enough to hurt Chiang Chang-Ching's fingers. Chiang Chang-Ching frowned.

'You must be Chiang Ching, right? May I call you Ching?' Mr Schmidt tried to pronounce his name correctly, but he accentuated the wrong syllable. Chiang Chang-Ching nodded anyway.

'Of course, Mr Schmidt.'

'About your name,' Mr Schmidt revealed a pensive look, 'it's the same as Chiang Ching, from the Gang of Four.'

Chiang Chang-Ching was surprised that Mr Schmidt would make this association, and smiled awkwardly, 'No, it just has the same pronunciation. And I am actually from Taiwan.'

'Oh, really?' Mr. Schmidt's eyeballs flicked from left to right as he registered what was said. Chuckling, he continued, 'I have heard that Chinese words have many tones, and they all mean something different. I find this to be very interesting. Would you be able to give me a brief explanation later?'

'Of course, no problem.' But Chiang Chang-Ching replied in an absentminded tone, as if he wasn't really paying attention. Mr Schmidt didn't pursue the topic, and turned instead to Christine. This gave Chiang Chang-Ching a chance to take in Mr Schmidt's uncoordinated attire: under his East German military jacket he wore a checkered shirt with bold, contrasting colors, and a very ordinary pair of khaki trousers. He had on a pair of white Nike trainers and a slender black belt reined in his protruding beer belly. The national emblem of the former East Germany was pinned to his beret. Mr Schmidt discovered that Chiang Chang-Ching was eyeing him, so he gave him a naughty wink. Chiang Chang-Ching quickly looked away. At that moment, a tall and slender blonde wearing sunglasses came walking towards them, waving as she approached.

The girl was still panting when she reached them. She pushed up the huge sunglasses that had hidden half her face, and adjusted her tea-colored scarf and black hoodie. She apologized for being late, and briefly introduced herself as Anna-Marie. She put her light gray satchel on the floor, gathered her hair into a ponytail, and rolled up her sleeves, shaking hands with all three people. Chiang Chang-Ching looked up at the clock again. It was already ten minutes past nine. Catherine was nowhere in sight. This made Chiang Chang-Ching uneasy to the extent that he had trouble following what the others were talking about. He even forgot to tell Anna-Marie his name when they shook hands.

A train rolled into the platform, making some noise, but it wasn't theirs. That one left, and then their train popped up on the electronic display on the platform. Catherine still hadn't arrived. He looked around about him and walked towards the escalator. Even though it was November, there were beads of perspiration on his forehead, and his palms were wet.

One minute passed, or perhaps it was only thirty seconds. His cellphone rang. He answered it with a hello. A female voice with an American accent spoke a stream of muddled German. Chiang Chang-Ching couldn't decipher what she was saying, so he said hello again. At the other end of the line, the voice said hurriedly, 'I am waiting for you on the platform but why can't I see you.' It took Chiang Chang-Ching two seconds to realise that it was Catherine.

Trying to contain his anxiety, he asked Catherine in German where she was, and walked towards his travel companions. The reception was bad, but Chiang Chang-Ching heard Catherine say that she was at Berlin East. Chiang Chang-Ching gasped.

He explained to Catherine that the train would travel south directly from Berlin Central and that it would not pass through Berlin East, so she had to hurry up. Chiang Chang-Ching heard a boy's voice close to Catherine, but he couldn't decipher what was being said, except that they were speaking in English. Chiang Chang-Ching felt feverish and told Catherine in German to take the S-Bahn. The train was leaving in twenty minutes and she just might make it in time. Mr Schmidt gave Chiang Chang-Ching an inquisitive look. Chiang Chang-Ching explained the situation to the three others and asked them whether they wanted to board the train first. They said they would wait for Catherine.

Five minutes before departure, Catherine finally called to say that she had arrived at the central station and asked them where they were. The S-Bahn station was located on the second floor, and they were on the underground level. The elevator moved slowly. Chiang Chang-Ching didn't know if she could make it on time. The announcement for the train came on the loudspeakers, and the air started to move, the rising chill made him sneeze. He told the others to board the train, giving them his bag, while he waited on the platform. Passengers boarding and alighting blocked his vision. Finally, he caught sight of a young woman with a cellphone in her hand. There was a boy by her side.

Catherine had just gotten out of the elevator and had her back to Chiang Chang-Ching; she had yet to figure out where she was. There was quite a distance between her and their train. Chiang Chang-Ching told her down the phone that they were on platform 4. He ran towards the last car of the train in an attempt to fetch her; he extended his arm and waved at her. The boy who was with her noticed him first, directing her to look his way. She finally saw him, and started to run towards him; the train started to beep, doors started to close, and the train started to move away from the platform. In a panic, Chiang Chang-Ching jumped on to the car closest to him, just as the doors were closing. He noticed a green button, pushed it, and the doors opened. He looked out and saw Catherine standing on the platform. She was frozen on the spot and at a loss about what to do because the doors had already closed and the train was moving away. Instead of speaking into his cellphone, Chiang Chang-Ching shouted at Catherine, asking her to push the green button. Catherine was skeptical, but she pushed the button anyway. To her surprise the last door actually opened; but she hesitated. She didn't have the nerve to jump onto a moving train. The train didn't stop for her either, as it continued to accelerate and leave the platform. Chiang Chang-Ching's doors closed before him.

Chiang Chang-Ching saw Catherine standing helplessly on the platform. He put his hands on the door, and felt upset. His forehead was damp with perspiration. He lifted his hand in an attempt to tidy his hair, disheveled from the running, and discovered that his cellphone was still connected to Catherine's. He could hear static on the other end. He wanted to say something to her, but she hung up before he could say anything. Chiang Chang-Ching sighed and tried to tame the few strands of hair that had gone astray. He then took a few deep breaths and went in search of his other travel companions. He saw Mr Schmidt waiting for him in the next car. The seats beside the aisle where Mr Schmidt stood were filled with suitcases and a bicycle. Mr Schmidt pointed to the stairs and said, 'We found seats on the upper level, follow me please.'