

THIRTY-SEVEN WAITING ROOMS: MY YEARS OF CHRONIC PAIN

願受傷後能重新活一遍： 記 37 個醫療代號，我的漫漫青春

While other young people spent their twenties enjoying nights out with friends, Chiu Tzu Yu spent them in hospital and clinic waiting rooms. Her struggle with chronic pain cost her friendships, love, and her hopes for a happy future, but gradually, through all the waiting, Chiu Tzu Yu learned to become whole again.

At seventeen, Chiu Tzu Yu envisioned a future of dating, love, hard work, and, eventually, a stable family life. Her teenage worries were the usual ones: fashion choices, and obsessing over the perceived flaws in her features. Then, what started as subtle pain in her right hip while riding her bicycle, grew to the point that it destroyed her hopes for the future.

She tried everything: public hospitals, private clinics, Chinese herbs, Western medicine – even prayer and fortune tellers. The only diagnosis she ever received was “inflammation of unknown origin”, but what might that unknown origin be? Was it “frozen hip” syndrome? Or was her constitution, in the language of Chinese medicine, excessively damp and cold? Or might it be the karma of some past error returning to haunt her?

Her pain tormented her like a phantom. Every time she made some progress, her renewed confidence was quickly undermined by yet another round of pain. Slowly, her lack of mobility eroded her social life and friendships. Young men who initially expressed romantic interest



Category: Self-help

Publisher: Titan

Date: 10/2019

Rights contact:

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Pages: 256

Length: 84,093 characters

(approx. 55,000 words in English)

slowly distanced themselves. Even her family members began turning against her, saying her pain was just an excuse to avoid the responsibilities of a dutiful daughter.

Thirty-seven waiting rooms form the backdrop to these twelve years of sickness and renewal, the steady rhythm of a life ruled by pain. Chiu Tzu Yu's naïve confidence that "this too shall pass" slowly yields to despair, hooking readers by their emotional core, and leading them through the darkness to that beating heart which, despite the suffering, still brims with passion for a sunlit tomorrow.

Chiu Tzu Yu 邱子瑜

Chiu Tzu Yu is a journalism graduate of National Chengchi University now studying psychological counseling at National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences. She has worked in economic journalism, website editing, and public relations. After writing numerous stories about others, she turned her pen to the struggle with pain that dominated the formative years of her life. Having sought and found the healing she needed, her hope is that she will one day have the power to heal others.