

DTWW 28-30

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Romance, Adventure and danger!

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28 Vincy's (first) visit

It had taken many months of planning but a schedule had been agreed and with continuing emails as I write I am anxious and Vincy tells me she is excited by the prospect of a 10 day visit to Dursley. The weather in England has not been heart warming and I know Vincy fears the cold although I am confident it won't be that bad and have organized a few extras.

Four days to go I receive an Email confirming Vincy has packed her suitcase got a lock on it and English pounds. We are both looking forward to the visit though the weather is a concern at the moment.

The days passed quickly although work was a dredge. Daily Email communications and as Vincy arrived at Dubai a text her flight was on time I saw it on the internet. On the days building up to Christmas I had to endure (sorry enjoy) various Christmas kisses till News year eve a special one!

One of my colleagues and I am sure we are fond of each other despite not getting on at times. I always believed this was due to a misunderstanding and it would change as slowly it did. Anyway before she was due to finish I passed by her desk and started chatting we had done before but this was the first time actually at her desk for some months. At the conclusion I stretched out her my arm to her seated position around her shoulder to give her a hug. Much to my surprise as I was not intending to give her a kiss she gave me a long peck on the cheek which was unforced and pleasant. I left and returned to my desk knowing another step forward had been made and we did not speak to each other prior to Xmas day.

December 25th Pick Up Vincy

I was still eager as I believe Vincy was. Being very trusting as she openly admitted she was sure I was coming to collect her. Vibes had been good to me all during the previous six months or more and although I feared an elaborate joke it never materialised nor did I really expect it too.

The Snow we in the UK endured the week up to Christmas was still on the ground when I awoke in the morning and we knew the Blackpool game would be called off just as Fulham was a week earlier. I received a midnight apologetic text from Vincy to say she had arrived at Dubai. During the night I tracked her flights all ok though due a few minutes late to arrive but nothing to worry about.

I had to drive carefully leaving my sloping estate as the snow and freezing conditions were still to cause problems. With me I took a blanket as Vincy expressed concern about the cold and some food. Nothing hot and I knew she would probable eat on the plane however I wouldn't and if the conditions had been better we could easily stop en route.

Cam Pitch a slippy and dangerous hill that runs parallel with my estate and passes the house had to be carefully negotiated before speeding up towards the A38.

The lights at Hilltop changed to red as I approached and then as usual the annoying quick reverse change to green with no car appearing from the side road.

A text en route and I stopped before joining the motorway to read thinking it may be Vincy. Just in case but no an ex girl friend to wish me a merry Xmas. I quickly replied and continue on. The motorway was much busier than I expected travelling carefully in the conditions. The light was good and the roads appeared to be safe but one slip and my main concern collecting the long dark haired Chinese girl who felt able to visit me. Except for a petrol stop coming back I did not pull in as a full tank prepared the previous day meant I could easily get there and back without hassle.

I was late arriving and I as I drove into the car park I saw what I immediately realized was Vincy's plane as it slowed down engines running and witnessed it lowered itself from the sky onto the runway clear in the blue sky landing beyond my sight. Minutes later as I was parking up a text pleading for me to wait for Vincy I

quickly replied though despite expecting a long wait as she debarked collected her luggage and went through customs. Despite my invite I still expected a phone call and long wait this was not to be.

I strolled into arrivals and found myself among a small group awaiting passengers it seemed no more than 30 minutes when strolling through looking around with heavy suitcase and back pack long flowing black locks was the Vincy vision. We greeted with a hug no kiss forced or other wise as with a cold and having suffering badly the night before I did not want to infect her.

I led the way out of the Arrivals lounge at Birmingham International airport into the cold mid day air. It was Vincy's first sight of the snow and she could feel the cold plus the slippery surface underneath as she dragged the large and heavy suitcase carrying on her back a back pack. I took her hand to guide her along waiting patiently as she buttoned up her coat tightly and put on her gloves. The car was a short walk away and her first sight of my dirty grey Fiesta no response as I lifted her large suitcase into the boot unlocked the car so she could get in the passenger seat.

After acquiring the much needed ticket to leave I proceeded to drive out slowly at first with little conversation as I needed to concentrate on the road ahead which was unfamiliar. Vincy held on tightly to her back pack something that remained close to her for the whole 10 day trip. In my haste I had forgotten the goodies I had brought along and mentioned it during the drive. As intended I stopped for something although Vincy having eaten on the flight eat like a bird. Also it was only cold food in the cold freezing day that I was able to offer. During the drive back we chatted constantly and got reacquainted face to face I pointed out things on route as I could without taking my hands of the wheel or eyes away from the road. A short toilet stop where Vincy removed her bag and I hid it under a blanket. It was locked in my car unobtrusive as we attended to a call of nature and met again giving my visitor an opportunity to browse around the WH Smith store on Christmas day in a crowded Service station.

The rest of the journey was much the same taking longer than I expected I drove carefully in the snow the conversation being a pleasant distraction although I had to drive with care.

Unlike her last visit when we met the Immigration officer a Manchester United supporter was short and brief with her. The country side as we passed gave Vincy something to gaze at and enjoy. An inquisitive question that I would answer if I could although when driving it is impossible to take your eyes off the road for any length of time without resulting in an accident.

Junction 13 of the M5 were I came off the normally busy motorway Vincy having seen the sign and then I proceeded onto the parallel running A38. We will be driving here a lot I advised her "I don't know" she responded not realizing what I meant "I don't remember" she added as she was later to do on numerous times. Through the village of Cambridge and left at the roundabout heading as the sign said to Dursley. "we won't go through Dursley" I pointed out Cam is first as Vincy was to realize upon sight of the sign. Over the motorway we crossed and railway lines past Millwood garage on the right brightly lit up and into the high street. A few Xmas lights were visible and at the bottom of Cam Pitch I pointed out Tesco to the left as I rose through the tunnel of trees. My estate is on the left as we passed through the green lights on the pedestrian crossing and around the top turning left into the drive then left round the crescent where so many cars parked on the left hand side made the road a one side track. The Father Christmas above the door way on the right as I passed to right pass the shop and in the now dark with no one not even Blackie to greet us Vincy got her first eye view from the outside of her home for the next ten days.

It was freezing outside the snow was compact and it was beginning to get dark as I introduced Vincy to her new surroundings. She showed no emotion or shock as I guided her to her room letting her strong arms carrying the heavy case up the 13 steps.

After attending to my car it was time to exchange Christmas presents with from me a small variety of Liverpool related gifts presents and items from my tours abroad. Vincy was more generous than me having spent much more and would have to struggle to get some of the Liverpool gifts. A Pillow and double duvet set (which I confess was a similar idea not carried out I had for her) a superb camera complete with memory stick tripod and picture card she was later to show me how to use. My gifts were insignificant in comparison a sign of how different the two sexes view and how much effort is put in. Vincy is a delightful girl. A deserved cuddle to show my appreciation before we sat down to watch some Tele.

Vincy did not enjoy British TV much the news channels was all that interested her as she could follow the

clear English otherwise it was a no no!

After her shower I managed to tempt her into assisting me with the evening meal a mixture of bubble and squeak with Coleslaw, Potato salad with Turkey slices. I offered water and she eventually settled for Coffee as cold was not good prior to yoghurt as a desert.

Vincy was a tremendous asset in the Kitchen better than I deserve she has pointed out that â The worst moment ..... I suddenly think of the horrible kitchen I saw on the first day !!â Like a trooper she was up to the task I pointed out things I as a mere male failed to notice. My pots pans and plates have never been cleaner even though it was impossible for her to completely clean them. I shall start to replace some.

It was dark and cold that night my house was warm perhaps over done as the heating was left on all day due to the freezing temperatures and need to avoid burst pipes a problem not common in HK where they consider 10 degrees or less cold maybe freezing. I did not notice the moon or count stars as I took Vincyâs gloved hand to assist her when she needed care. A slope at the end of my road needed to be treated with care as the freezing ice and kids sliding down it made it treacherous. I pointed out Blackies home before progressing on the road through Fairmead estate with Vincyâs hand in mine.

Some of the houses were lit up with Christmas decorations others dark and gloomy with very few fellow walkers I took her to a local church which we could not enter then down through the alley way that separated cottages from the Berkeley Inn pub.

Across the road the Chinese chippie and its lights glisten while the temptation of the dominant Tesco store and its nature reserve behind was a short stroll away across an Ice packed car park that hand in hand we carefully crossed. It was not good for the kind of photo that Vincy wanted to take however I had another idea and only a short stroll away Cam sports field covered in the white stuff was appropriate. A snow covered recreation field followed by her first picture adjacent to the sign.

The white carpet covered field made a perfect background with the trees a further distance away. It was the evening not completely dark however the sun had set and the light was dim.

During the walk home we acquired a follower a small fluffy light brown feline followed us along the pathway that separates Woodview road from Fairmead estate. Looking in each house and climbing every wall to lead us in then passing us as we proceeded up to Winterbotham road round the Crescent and down past the Summerhayes stores. We allowed it to enter my house and played with it giving it some left over Beef meet slices.

He or she was very affectionate to both of us knowing I was boss it played us against one another always trying to curry affection with me. I warned it sternly much to Vincyâs amusement it was only my number two guest and gave it a blanket to settle down on its own chair. It was happy although still wanted food the cold making it hungry I left the second delightful creature downstairs for the night as we eventually retired for the night.

#### December 26th Blackpool versus Liverpool

It was Eight Oâclock that we were due to leave my abode and ahead for the Golden Valley roundabout and the Eastville bus that would take us too Bloomfield road for Vincyâs first ever away Liverpool match. We knew it was a waste of time the match was going to be postponed it could simply have been cancelled the day before my hope was we would arrive at the Lancashire town so Vincy could see something of the place! Guest number two was very demanding when I found it curled up as I had left it the night previously. The good thing was no message or pony was left behind a good sign however I still was going to throw it out to do some business and if it returned before we left would leave the feline in my shed with some food and a box for extra warmth.

The snow outside was white and it was freezing as the feline pleaded with me not to throw it out. I was determined and threw it onto the ground a distance away giving me time to shut the door behind it. I returned to advise Vincy and I was later to see it running away from me followed by crossing quickly in the distant snow a parallel road. It was cold and mean but had to be done. Later it was to return and found itself carried into my shed much warmer than outside with food which it devoured in next to no time.

I left it there.

Meanwhile my guest number one rose showered etc and come down to enjoy a Cereal breakfast which she was later to get used to. I had no back up plan in mind should the inevitable happen but no matter.

As usual I had prepared something for the return journey the plan being assuming a miracle happened and the game went ahead we were to eat in Blackpool and on the return journey have the usual drink roll and fruit.

Vincy may still feel the cold but did not show it.

After brekkie I reviewed the car ensuring the covers removed and reversed out in preparation. With bags and everything I needed in the car just before eight thirty I left with Vincy joining me her precious bag on her back she settled into the front seat and with some assistance clicked her seat belt into place reversing out was no problem though I eased my way up the estate and gingerly as I progressed down Cam Pitch. The clear road was deceptive as the tunnel of trees prevented any warmth getting through and one piece of ice could prove fatal. Vincy knew and had been warned that the Blackpool match would be postponed and the first day was to be a disappointment.

The trip to the stop progressed with ease and despite the early day with snow covered fields the only viewable item she looked through the car window even as I was ending the journey arriving at the Thistle hotel roundabout before turning past and along Enderdale road where I was to park my car.

In purple warm coat and glove covered hands I extended my hand to in twine with hers as we walked to the pick up point. I chatted with Craig on arrival Vincy showing no signs of the cold and enjoyed the view taking a few pictures and asking me (a big mistake) to take a picture of her in coat standing in the snow. Useless I am though I managed to take one that appears on her Face book page.

Eventually the coach arrive I deliberately got a place early in the queue grabbing her and guiding in to her first ever meeting with Yvonne. We got a place half way back ensuring Vincy had a window seat so despite the gloom it was possible for her to view as we travelled along.

On route Vincy was able to enjoy or endure the white snow covered fields as the coach travelled quickly on route I was able to point out two Football grounds firstly West Bromwich Albion its floodlights visible aided by the fact it is the highest league ground in the country. Later after joining the M6 Walsall s Fellows Park standing out among the hotel and further down the RAC head quarters.

Meeting and exchanging words with Yvonne for the first time was a momentous moment although due to her duties Yvonne did not have much time to chat. Vincy was excited as she had purchased a small gift she was later to present as we departed.

It came as no surprise the match was postponed a huge disappointment for Vincy and personal for me as I so desired to show her Blackpool!

When asked how she felt Vincy responded with â : Very disappointed with the cancellation of the Blackpool game, I've never been to Liverpool away game, I've never been to Blackpool, I looked for a revenge of our lost in the home tie. Therefore, it was very disappointed for me.â

The coach stopped off at Hilton Park services for a break and it was all I could do to purchase a coffee in a queue headed by fellow disappointed supporters. They chatted a little with Vincy when I introduced her and it was good to chat enjoy our Cappuccino even though we both would prefer to be in the Lancaster town.

I felt the fellow supporters could have been more chatty perhaps they did not want to play gooseberry or overwhelm our guest Vincy I am pleased in fact was delighted she states â I felt good when meeting all the Liverpool supporters, they all gave me smile even I didn't know them or meet them before. They were so nice.â

After a chat I arranged an alternative visit to Cheltenham for a meal and chance to view the match shown live at lunchtime on sky. As we left the coach Kerry wished us well and before departing Vincy was able to present a delighted Yvonne with her gift.

Cheltenham and another simple meal was to follow of which Vincy said â About Cheltenham, it's a beautiful place, quite lively. The food in that bar was nice, the environment was comfortable. You always cook me reasonable meal, I got no complaint and I enjoy sitting in the dinning room and waiting for the food from Kevin !!â

Outside Cheltenhamâ s most prominent central hotel the Queens hotel situated at the head of the Promenade

a majestic building full of tradition and old style mystic. Many years prior the North Gloucestershire Individual chess championships had been held in its grand setting.

The square across from it was no longer green but remained a carpet of snow with a few ornaments peeking up from it. The unseen chess board minus pieces which if left out would disappear would remain out of sight for days to come.

Hand in hand treading carefully on the icy pavements frozen from the below freezing temperatures we proceeded admiring the architecture that housed the council offices across behind the trees. Further down in the pedestrian area some ugly sculptures that made Vincy laugh in faint amusement.

Progressing slowly dodging the shoppers we headed up the high street bumping into Rich Rayner a fellow red who had given the Blackpool match a miss. We chatted and he smiled at Vincy enquiring if she was enjoying her visit. I was pleased he spoke to her and shyly she responded.

We carried on carefully and after asking further directions where entering the stairs into Tailors.

Inside as Vincy declared was a quaint setting with big screen and Television sets all showing the live game.

We settled down in the corner for a chat sat by a roaring tradition fire very rarely scene in the modern era.

In the relaxed surroundings with snow covered pavements outside we where warm and cosy the match was almost a distraction not very exciting but as best I could it made up a little for the disappointment. Vincy generously paid for the meal I felt embarrassed as she had paid £19 for a trip to Hilton Park not a great return however the meal we each enjoyed was sumptuous.

With no three O'clock games shown live â legally in the UK we went for a stroll first through the Regent Arcade shopping area suitable adorned with Christmas decorations and hordes of shoppers. The clock and bell chimed in for ever blowing bubbles on the hour although I missed it only hearing it in the distance although on the quarter past we where passing.

In a quiet snow covered area we discovered a church entry barred due to the inclement weather as we had to tread carefully in the traditional scene. Vincy despite her aversion with grave stones in pictures of churches she was able to take a couple of stunning sets plus I managed to include her presence in one. The snow was falling from the trees as the day got warmer I was able to point this out to my Hong Kong guest.

With little else to show in the centre of town we concluded by completing a transaction before I drove us home to the warmth and comfort in Dursley. Vincy was to proclaim she never remembered routes or where she was and that night our visitor was back invited in for some food and rest in comfort. I would only throw her out in the morning despite the cold and resistance so it could relieve itself and continued to welcome it back fully expecting it to become a permanent resident after Vincy had left.

Guest number One was attended too as I continued to point out and when Blackie paid a visit that evening there was nearly fisty cuffs. Well a few hissing at each other so I kept them apart until Vincy's new found friend departed annoyed that I had one female human plus a rival feline guest.

I believe I cooked a Quiche in the oven that night as required by guest number one. It was a good lesson and showed that it didn't really take that long to Oven bake these items. Years of laziness and predominantly living alone Vincy was good for me despite it appearing bossy she was clearly better than any other girlfriend! I concluded the meal with a muller rice although it is actually a yoghurt Vincy having declined a mince pie which I should have warmed up.

We settled down to watch a bit of Television although Vincy was soon upstairs on her laptop uploading the day's pictures and playing games.

We retired to our separate beds that night with the potential excitement of a day in the university city of Oxford to come.

December 27th Oxford

I had only once been to the centre of Oxford many years prior to visit a chess congress which at the time was organized by an Acquaintance from the Cheltenham area. My memory of that day where distant so I went with an open mind and was eager to keep my promise to Vincy a trip to Oxford matching her stay in Cambridge punting down the River in April.

We did not have to go early as an Afternoon walking tour was my plan which included many of the city centre

sights and in the shorter days I considered to be the best option. There were bus tours etc but it would give Vincy the chance of a stroll hand in hand with me a necessity in the slippery snow covered pavement we were to encounter.

I rose early that bank holiday morning no work to go to although I had to deal with house guest number two who was screaming for something to eat. A naughty cat it had jumped up on a window ledge in the night and knocked down some books from the shelf, it was not popular as it attempted to use affection and call out "no no please don't throw me out".

I was having none of it eventually throwing it out in the warming day light despite the snow on the ground telling it to do a pokies when I would feed it and let it back in. It ran off and was later to be witnessed crossing a road not far away prior to eventually returning luckily before Vincy and myself set off. Although it was cold the shed at the back of my garden offered more comfort and warmth than outside in the bitter chill and snow covered lawn. I tempted it with some past its use by date meat and water a box with a blanket for warmth and left it locked in again for the day. This also meant Vincy and I would not be disturbed over breakfast.

This may have been the first time that we cuddle Vincy seeking to "steal my heat" as the warmth of two close bodies transferred there was certainly some affection towards me which I appreciated. In fact I welcomed with open arms for she is a lovely girl had travelled thousands of miles was to endure some hardship for which I never heard one word of complaint. Yvonne was especially delighted to meet her and Tony Audley would also feel the same way.

The route I chose to take involved going almost in a circle motion around Dursley if followed on a map, joining the M5 before turning off and taking the Cirencester road which afforded great views of the snow covered hills that were ahead.

Skipping off via the back of Cheltenham although missing it, the Salmons Spring public house the Air balloon roundabout and century post on another roundabout were all passed by.

Heading towards the Cotswold village/town of Stow on the Wold and passing through snow covered villages prior to taking the A40 which was to take us into the heart of Oxfordshire.

The early part involved passing under a tunnel of trees prior to the open country side which in finer summer days would provide unbeatable views of the Gloucestershire and Oxford country side. As we got nearer to Oxford the traffic got busier and I joked with my passenger that those heading in new she was visiting.

The pear tree roundabout is a night mare to negotiate busy always and unnerving at least it was in day light and my turning was the first followed by a short drive to the lights and a right turn into the snow covered park and ride car park. I found a place to park in fact the choice was good but avoiding puddles and snow was a hazard that remained.

We got out gingerly hand in hand headed to the bus and found a seat on top ensuring Vincy enjoyed reasonable views as we passed into the city.

It was cold and icy underfoot and Oxford is a strange but welcoming place. After checking the pick up point and having stupidly forgot my map I looked around for a street name and spotted Broad Street where I knew the Tourist Information place would be. Hand in hand we strolled towards it met at the closed door by an elderly lady Head scarf covering her face and with Russian/Estonian accent. She gave us free advice as she would to every passer by and advised us to return in 30 minutes for the planned walking tour. To us and every interested party she pointed to a notice in the window of prices and I noticed a big badge with "Official Oxford Tour guide" she wore prominently on her lapel.

The snow was icy and across the way was a magnificent building in front of which stood a giant Christmas tree. From our window spot in an Oxford Café we were able to people watch numerous tourists of Oriental appearance and many different languages could be heard as we enjoyed a slice of cake each and coffee. I didn't realise Vincy liked to try different things had I wanted we could have shared each others cake.

Oxford was a vibrant city that day full of tourists' students and shoppers' street entertainers include a happy three piece band with smiling faces and full of enthusiasm as they played Jazz music.

Eventually a group of about ten or more set off with the guide who introduced her self and chatted endlessly through out. Her accent didn't always make for easy understanding especially to the Spanish and non

English speaking group members. The snow made walking difficult although the young lad from Spain took to it bravely like a duck to water whilst I was holding on to dear Vincy for life watching every small step and attempting to ensure the safest route.

Vincy had some interesting thoughts on Oxford â The snow in Oxford is great, as the tour guide said; it's the first time in many years Oxford is covered with such heavy snow. So, it would be proud for me to see such scene. I do enjoy all the scene covered with snow, amazing. I still remember that when we talked about the trip back in June, I intended to have a white Christmas in UK, it came true ! There's nothing disappointed me at Oxford apart from the very cold wind.â

It was cold and we were to cuddle up so she could again â steal my heatâ as I was a good heater Vincy affectionately said.

We were to go through the heart of Oxford and its university buildings with the architecture pointed out many of Gothic origin just like Barcelona. On a safer day keeping up for all the group would have made the walk easier however adversity does bring a group closer together.

I remember a few facts learnt the carvings depicted University professors and officials the Bodleian Library outside which we had a photo taken was a rotunda shape building surrounded today by snow.

Oxford University has no set Campus however there was one way to tell a University building the entrance all had a tower with clock and flag. The unusual pebbled pavements were sometimes easier other times difficult to negotiate but it made for a fascinating adventure.

I cannot recall every sight we saw but vividly remember the â Bridge of Sighâ a false imitation and â St Mary the Virgin Churchâ before concluding with a visit via some narrow streets to a quaint bar with warm stove and fascinating posters.

It was to be the conclusion of our walking tour although our guide took us to the National History Museum mistakenly thinking it was open. It was a magnificent building with discarded trees outside and Vincy took a number of photos borrowing my camera she had bought me. I was able to ask the young Spanish to take a picture of us in front of the building an excuse to chat and find out more as Vincy wandered round inquisitively while our guide said her goodbyes and skirted off.

It was almost like she was escaping although I concluded that it may be just her way for she was enthusiastic about the city and loved to tease the young boy. We watched her cross the road not turning her head with amazed looks as we split up with no good byes. Vincy and myself were the final group members to depart treading carefully as we headed back to the City centre.

Treading carefully we went for a stroll in the centre I thought we could find the church tower and climb up but no. The main street was packed and the three piece band continued to play on so much that I stopped to admire them although Vincy did not share my feelings. We walked under the Oxford lights until we discovered sandwich bar to enjoy a coffee and sandwich. It was getting towards dusk the light was getting dimmer and we walked hand in hand first back to the bus stop then on returning to the park and ride into my car which I was soon to drive home.

It was in the next few minutes at the Pear tree roundabout one I disliked due to it being busy even today and in the dark that a disaster happened. It however brought Vincy the uncomplaining companion and myself together closer. As I drove round seeking my turning I hit or went over something on my passenger front wheel. It frightened Vincy and scared me as I could not see what I had hit or driven over in the dark. I feared damage to my wing and as I slowed down the car taking me to the left putting my flashing indicators on. I could find no where on the busy A40 to pull over although if I had travelled further maybe so I stopped where I could and went to investigate. I had punctured my tyre impossible to drive so I explained to Vincy and called the AA out.

While we waited outside shivering me providing what warmth I could Vincy squeezed me tightly I hugged as I could concerned about her and this disaster. She is such a nice thoughtful person uncomplaining did I deserve this good fortune! A car stopped to possible pull us over but it was not possible.

â It was little frustrating while waiting for the AA man, but it was a good feeling being hold by you under the cold weather on the road. I enjoyed it !â Vincy

I have waited much longer for the AA to come so although the welcome arrival was not instant it was as quick as I could expect. One problem followed a special nut on the car tyre I was not aware of and I could not trace



the nut realise I was supposed to. I could not remember having one any way after signing a form the patrol man was able to overcome this problem and eventually I had a spare tyre on the front to drive carefully home with. Before he went I had to recall him as my battery had gone due to the time spent with flashing light it was soon resolved and slowly with great care I was on the move.

Cars passed me annoyed at the slow speed which in the dark and with tracking and inappropriate tyres I decided safety was most important. It was a bit like wearing odd shoes. I took Vincy through the delightful village of Bibury which another day when lit up has a magnificent setting especially the river and the trout farm. The narrow and winding B roads are not very pleasant and Vincy thought the dark unlit English roads were a major hazard that would not exist in Hong Kong. I concurred and it was good to get into Cirencester then onto Tetbury.

â The dark roads in UK do scare me as it won't happen in HK, but I can trust you as you should have experience in such situation in UK. â again a quote from the helpful Vincy Chan

The steep windy road from which the bright lights of Dursley can be seen was almost a relief although I still took great care driving through my home town. It was to be Vincy's one and only voyage through the Historic Market town and in the black she could see nothing. Eventually I turned right onto the drive (a road) and past the shop into my home where a cat was waiting for us. Sadly then I choose to give Vincy some bad news. I had not paid anything for my surprise trip to Cadbury World however I would have to cancel it as for safety reasons I needed to ensure my tyres were fixed. The thought of driving at speed up the motorway on uneven tyres worried me and the AA patrol man advised me to get things sorted. Particularly then tracking and that was what I did.

December 28th (Plan A) Cadbury world

Plan A had been a surprise trip to the Chocolate factory at Bournville in Birmingham. I had been outside it twice as it is near a canal walk and new it would excite Vincy as well as myself. She loves chocolate like most girls and unfortunately it is very expensive in her home country.

Vincy has said

â I didn't know you would take me to chocolate factory before the trip, therefore, not really that disappointed. It would be great if you take us there in April as I think both me and my son would love to visit. I think you would like too. (The chocolate you gave me nearly finished, you can imagine that I love chocolate so much) I found that there is a place with ice cream in the Chester website as well, you may also consider about it.â

I had resorted to plan B after my tyres were sorted a trip to Cheltenham for their fixture with Bradford city followed by a meal in Stroud. I contacted my friend Andy D for advice and hoped he would be at the pub to join us.

The cat was still a guest so I kicked her out early allowing her back later for a feed before depositing in her shed nursery complete with food and water plus again a cosy box.

Vincy was still in bed so I bought her a morning coffee something she was unsure of I may have given her a kiss can't remember however that morning she did have the opportunity to hand wash some clothes plus while I was away wash her hair shower and indulge in her favourite pastime of playing games on face book. I enjoy Face book but have a different aspect my main interest being to place my pictures on it.

I was away an hour and returned a happy bunny to begin arranging the rest of the day. If I recall correctly I got Vincy to make sandwiches as a bonding idea. She was not keen but true to form was making the best sarnies (sandwiches) I had that week. Some fruit cold drink which did not entirely meet with Vincy's approval and a small chocolate bar each. It was to be an enjoyable experience.

I decided to take Vincy in via the back route similar to the way we went to Oxford as the Charlton Kings area is most attractive although with the snow low mist and freezing cold of that day stopping to enjoy the great scenery I have enjoyed where to be saved for a future date.

The clock tower at the edge of the golf course is a monument to behold and we passed Barrington lodge home of my Friend David Nicholas as we progressed. I decided to take Vincy to the Prestbury race course starting point of the Cheltenham Marathon. The car park was empty with the exception of a van or two. As always

itâ s harder to decide where to park when choice is greatest I soon settled on a spot that afforded views either side.

A reluctant Vincy got out of the car and we progressed around hand in hand treading carefully. It was slippery under foot and it was sad that due to warning notices I couldnâ t take her to the paddock area with its Horse sculptures and Queen Mother head sculpture in the paddock. We where able to go to one side of the course where views of the hills in the background and course could be enjoyed. I was able to point out to my guest the beginning of the marathon route. Despite the cold and slippery surface we stayed out taking a walk to the other side from where we could admire the Grand stand and an alternative views of the course. It was a great photo opportunity to take a picture of Vincy at the Cheltenham racecourse. Probable very few people from her home land had stood where she was.

I asked her to compare it with those in Hong Kong she has responded

â A: There are two Race courses in HK, I think if only compare the size of the race course itself, both ones in HK are probably bigger. I am not sure. One of the race courses in HK will open to public on non-racing dates, there is a park inside the race course that people can bring their dogs inside.â

Inside the warmth of the car although there was no wind just a bleak empty car park and snow we enjoyed the perfect sandwiches and liquid refreshment. I was a lucozade lover while Evian water was for Vincy. Soon we where to move on to Cromwell Road and the stroll to Whaddon Road or the Abbey Business stadium as it is now called.

The car park was pretty full and the outside was much the same as I recalled. My most recent visit involved parking there and taking a coach to Doncaster. I wrongly thought we wouldnâ t get a seat so went in the side where we took some pictures inside and out. Vincy was wrapped up and it was an eye opener for her. Anfield, the Nou Camp and even Blackburnâ s ground were better than this little ground rebuilt and much changed from my last visit for a league cup encounter with Norwich as a league ground.

In the days of non league football the fans used to change ends and an elderly gent would act as ball boy. The pitch had been well cleared of snow the remainder surrounding the pitch under cover forming a snow wall. They could have built a snowman I joked to one fan who was to laugh. Later when I was taking a picture of the lovely Vincy he attempted to get in doing a V sign. â Very funnyâ I said to his amusement not taking that particular one.

Along the side sat a family I saw at Chesterfield one of the number acted as ball boy although it was clear by the type of faces that unfortunately three of the number had disabilities.

Nearest ourselves was the home Cheltenham bench with the seven substituteâ s and manager who was to be very animated during the match and quite assistant.

The home fans were vocal across the pitch from us with a small group and flag as they where closest to the visiting and less vocal Bradford supporters seated behind the goal in what used to be the shed where the majority of home supporters would stand sing and shelter under the shallow cover.

For Vincy â It was a good experience to visit a lower league game, a smaller ground, smaller crowd. But they also support their team very much. Different feeling of standing throughout the match as well although it would be a bit tired ! Would like to visit other grounds in future as well. (Need Kevin's help again ! )â I will be pleased to help her achieve that goal.

From Cheltenham website

Cheltenham Town delivered probably the best performance of the season to bury Bradford and record a sensational 4-0 victory. Jeff Goulding and Marlon Pack put the Robins 2-0 up at the break before Goulding added another and Thomas finished the rout in the second half. It was a poor performance from Bradford City but the Robins were outstanding this afternoon and deserve all their plaudits A special mention must go to the ground staff and supporters that took time out to help clear the snow and frost covers from the pitch, pathways and terracing over the last few days to enable this memorable victory to go ahead.

31 GOAL: Deserved goal for Cheltenham Town and it came courtesy of Jeff Goulding's deflected strike. The ball was lifted into the area and Thomas managed to scramble the ball out to an unmarked Jeff Goulding. His

strike was firm but a deflection off Kiernan sent Pidgeley the wrong way and gave Cheltenham the lead. 35 GOAL: Marlon Pack scores his first goal for Cheltenham Town with a thumping 20 yard strike past Pidgeley. Doherty could only head a long ball clear into the path of Pack and the young midfielder made no mistake with a thumping drive.

Half Time: Robins 2-0 Bradford

67 GOAL: Andrew's corner found the head of Riley but Pidgeley made a phenomenal save to deny Cheltenham a third but his save fell directly to Thomas who pumped the ball back into the mass of bodies and Goulding was on hand to bury his second of the afternoon and put Cheltenham 3-0 up. 76 GOAL: Cheltenham are wonderful this afternoon! Awful pass from Oliver straight into the path of Smikle who set off on the attack. His ball found Goulding who, in turn, found Wesley Thomas and the striker curled a lovely effort in past Pidgeley to make it 4-0 Cheltenham. Tenth goal of the season for Thomas.

Full Time: Robins 4-0 Bradford Attendance: 2,666 (237 from Bradford)

Stroud

It was a short stroll back to my car we left virtual on the final whistle much to my surprise (I expected Vincy to wait) and hand in hand I guided my beautiful companion through the Whaddon Road car park amongst the cars and fellow fans. We had both enjoyed the experience and Vincy took numerous pictures on my camera. The path way was still icy so we needed to tread with great care in the dark December night as it was now almost five Oâ clock UK time and despite the daylight hours getting longer the effect was minute.

As I drove off past the former home of my friend David Nicholas we were silent and happy. With a table booked for seven I drove slowly considering my next move. Stopping in a shell garage on route before progressing out of Cheltenham past the GCHQ and onto the Motorway M5!

I decided to come off at an early exit and head through Stonehouse then take the by pass into Stroud. As we still had time to enjoy I took a route via the College and leisure centre. In the dark this was not attractive even the Stratford Leisure Park a delight to walk with its forest of trees, a large lake and the River Painswick running through it.

We stopped off at a MacDonaldâ s for a coffee explaining we had plenty of time It was crowded and Vincy with her feminine ways was unsure what to drink. I was patient understanding this was her way and eventually by a window we sat and enjoyed the view.

Moving on again pointing out Merrywalks House where I used to work Vincy struck me as disinterested perhaps she had other things on her mind any way we were soon arriving at the â Prince of Walesâ pub and restaurant thanks to guidance from Andy. In the dark we stumbled in and introduced ourselves prior to being led to a table. I was eager to work out who was Angela the first guess was correct I changed my mind for a moment and then was corrected. With some friendly banter stating I should have brought my LFC credit card to pay.

We had an enjoyable meal â Can we shareâ was the call from across the table I was willing to comply. It was an unusual and unnatural idea to me but I was to get used to it and see its benefits as my attractive companion loved to do this. Vincy thought â I didnâ t like sharingâ however she was not correct although my body language may have given that impression. I am happy to share again if this means cooking together washing up whatever as well as eating it is all good to me.

After our meal we retired to watch the Man U game in the bar cheering on the Birmingham opposition much to the disgust of our publican host. I texted my absent friend Andy who was not coming out. Shame as I would have loved to introduce Vincy to him. I was only happy to comply with Vincyâ s request to leave early before the final whistle as like her I had no great interest in the game. We were both delighted to hear the final outcome a draw Birmingham salvaging a point, as we returned home to look after a disgruntled guest number two for what was to be our last night together.

December 29th Liverpool versus Wolverhampton Wanderers

Wednesday December 29th 2010 at last a definite Liverpool game to take Vincy too. It would be on for sure although as we thundered up the motorway in some Fog I was a little concerned.

The snow was receding and that morning was to be the last for guest number two. Pleading as it did I eventually left it in the middle of my now green front lawn where it was contented. It soon ran off never to be

seen again except possible for a long distance sighting. I had posted pictures of it asking if anyone new who owned it in the net. I guess and sincerely hope the feline found its home since has never returned to its temporary one.

For Breakfast I introduced my guest to Weetabix and the different ways we consumed it. There was the conventional way with milk (or water) and alternative plain with butter or and jam spread over it. My guest volunteered to wash again before showering washing her long locks and returning to her games. I think I joined her using my computer prior to a spot of lunch before I drove us to the Golden valley.

I didn't introduce her to Craig though he had seen her on the Blackpool coach, Vincy was fascinated by the snow and scenery so took some more pictures for the album. At last the coach arrived and we boarded soon heading north at a rate of knots. Again Vincy was able to look out from her window seat while I snoozed. I can't recall anything eventful about the journey up we passed through Birmingham and encountered some heavy traffic due to an accident later. Arriving later than normal the coach came to a halt outside the Supporters club where many of our fellow travellers frequented.

On this trip we didn't go in too the disappointment of Yvonne and John Moreton who had saved us a seat. I took Vincy for a stroll she was inquisitive when passing a chippie I frequented as the girls behind the counter spoke her mother tongue. I didn't come across any familiar faces as we strolled around the Club shop and I took her around to the route back just in case. I figured it was best to be safe than sorry. Strolling along the main stand a large group had gathered and Vincy wondered why 'For the team coaches' I informed her 'can we wait' she asked and of course I was only happy to oblige although the vantage point was not great she was to get faint glimpses of her heroes. We chatted to supporters around a few Americans and a couple of lads from the Indian continent they had been to Melwood and on the tour this was the day they had longed for even more so a much desired victory.

In the dark and amongst the hordes even I struggled to get a good view and even though she didn't show it I expect Vincy was very disappointed although worse was to come. A visit to a local chippie where we shared a bag of chips and a bottle of water before I met Russel by the Shankly statute and we entered the hollowed Kop stand through gates B at the side. I said good bye to Russell and after waiting a while in the hope of Vincy being introduced to Tony we moved on round and up to row 61 at the back of the Kop grandstand. It was a new experience for Vincy sitting in the seat normally occupied by myself having to stand a long way back. She was thrilled just to be back at Anfield with tickets and trip arranged for her. The big flag that folds out and travels upwards and across delighted her as she stretched her arm out to touch and pass round insisting I took her photo not once but twice. It was a great moment for the Hong Kong girl how many of her fellow citizens could say they have been in the Centenary stand and on the Kop under this banner.

#### Report from the Guardian

Liverpool 0

Wolverhampton Wanderers 1 - 0 Ward, S 56

Team news: Wolves drop Matt Jarvis for Dave Edwards, while Liverpool have Steven Gerrard back for the first time in six weeks.

Liverpool: Reina, Johnson, Kyrgiakos, Skrtel, Konchesky, Kuyt, Gerrard, Lucas, Meireles, Torres, Ngog.

Subs: Jones, Agger, Aurelio, Cole, Maxi, Babel, Poulsen.

Wolverhampton: Hennessey, Zubar, Stearman, Berra, Elokobi,

Foley, Milijas, Hunt, Jarvis, Ward, Ebanks-Blake. Subs: Hahnemann, Edwards, Fletcher, David Jones, Bent, Mujangi Bia, Bath. Referee: Peter Walton (Northamptonshire)

A minute's applause The game will be preceded with a show of respect for Avi Cohen, the former Liverpool defender who died in a road accident this week, and Bill Jones, another former player who passed away this week at 89.

7 mins What a chance for Liverpool - and what a chance for Raul Meireles to get his first goal for the club. Fernando Torres reacted quickly after Liverpool won a free-kick inside the Wolves half, lofting the ball immediately across the Wolves area to Meirele, who snuck in behind Elokobi on the right side of the area before darting in towards the penalty spot with the ball. Hennessey was out quickly, though, and just about managed to push his effort away.

16 mins Liverpool finally emerge from their own halves and Steven Gerrard pummels a ferociously firm cross over from the right that swings past Hennessey and across to the far side of the six-yard box. Ngog is rushing in at the back post, but the ball is put behind for a corner ... which comes to nothing.

29 mins From a free-kick on the half-way line, Gerrard plays Torres in with a 40-yard through ball ... And then the referee pulls the play back because he took it too quickly.

45 mins We'll get the unofficial Premier League standard 1 minute of first-half injury time.

47 mins The corner is plucked out of the air by Reina, who launches it away for a Liverpool counter that runs out of steam midway inside the Wolves half. Replays show that Kyrgiakos was doing a fine imitation of his opponents' previous shirt-tugging at set-pieces - he had Stearman's shirt up round the defender's head.

GOAL! Liverpool 0-1 Wolves (Ward, 56 mins) It's been coming, though even by tonight's standards the defending that preceded this goal was shambolic. Liverpool twice failed to clear a bouncing ball outside the area, before allowing Ward to run onto the simplest of through-balls from Ebanks-Blake and slot home from 10 yards out. A tidy enough finish, but still.

60 mins Ryan Babel is warming up on the sidelines. 62 mins Ryan Babel is now on for Liverpool, with Ngog the man making way. The substitution draws a very angry reaction from the home crowd too - who presumably would have preferred to see a defensive player taken off instead.

64 mins So, so nearly 2-0 to Wolves, and if Liverpool do wind up getting anything from this game they will have Glen Johnson to thank. Jarvis was clean through, no more than 10 yards from goal, and his shot would surely have beaten Reina had it not been knocked behind by the defender's desperate sliding challenge.

65 mins A sarcastic chant of "Hodgson for England" is ringing round Anfield. Babel looks to scamper away down the left but finds his route to goal blocked.

73 mins Liverpool are making another change here - Meireles coming off to be replaced by Joe Cole. It looks like Gerrard will move out right, with Cole taking up residence in the middle.

74 mins Curiously, Hodgson waits not even 60 seconds before making another change (if he was going to do that, why not make them both at the same time?), taking Konchesky off for Fabio Aurelio.

80 mins Where is the inspiration coming from for Wolves? Neither of Cole or Babel has really had the desired impact as yet, and Liverpool continue to putter around aimlessly around the halfway line.

GOA - Oh wait, no it isn't (88 mins) Anfield erupts as Skrtel wheels away in celebration after diverting Gerrard's free-kick into Hennessey's net, but he turns to see the linesman's flag is up for offside.

90 mins We will have four minutes of added time.

Peep! Peep! Peeeeeep! The final whistle is met with another huge round of boos at Anfield, as Liverpool lose to Wolves for the first time in 27 years. Mick McCarthy's side fully deserve the three points, having shown more energy, more desire, but most damningly for Liverpool also a good deal more craft than their hosts.

They move back ahead of West Ham at the bottom of the table. Liverpool remain three points off the relegation zone and now just five points separate them from last place. They managed just three shots on target tonight. Heaven knows where they go from here.

After every match the trip home is an endurance first we have to find the coach an easy task nowadays but not always so. On this occasion first Vincy and myself had to get off the disappointed Kop. With boos ringing in our ears and calls for â Daglishâ I took her hand to guide her onto the stair way. I have a tactic I use into the gangway and then act as a shield just like a defender to allow the ball out of play.

I guided Vincy down to the bottom just as I would with Chris with good reason my favourite Steward blonde, glasses and always a smile even in defeat was there. Stood in antlers I took a photo which did not come out very good in the dark Kop. Maybe on another day!

Anyway after taking the opportunity for a toilet stop we reconvened taking Vincy down the side street and into the hordes of fellow disappointed reds. Through the alley way dark and dim emerging onto the pathway that separated the Stanley Park football pitches. Ahead was the coaches not many as usual for a mid week fixture but enough. In the dark but with sufficient light to see each coach did I recognise the voice behind a cockney chirpie one as I turned round but did not speak yes it was little Alison who I knew from my European travels.

Soon we were boarding and back in our seats on board and waiting the numbers to tally and the coach departing. I set my alarm and there was an exchange of touching holding hands secretly comforting each other

for it was disappointment shared. Vincy had witnessed a shocking home defeat and for me knowing how far she had travelled I would have grieved deeply if I could show the emotion. Sleeping may not be easy but we managed some and it was not long on a reasonable quick journey that we were debarking at the roundabout adjacent to the Thistle hotel. Vincy saying her good byes to Yvonne before into the New day we returned to my dirty grey car for the drive home.

See you Saturday I said to Craig and then we were away driving onto the motorway. On one trip maybe this I diverted off the motorway early to show Vincy some great Christmas lights. I was fortunate enough to witness some fascinating displays and the efforts of home owners near Whitminster deserved extraordinary credit. Our Christmas cat visitor was not waiting for us although Blackie was maybe having scared his enemy away. Soon tired as it was early in the morning we were snoring away dreaming of our trip that day to Melwood.

#### December 30th & 31st Melwood

The journey up to Melwood was a pleasant one leaving Dursley after a late breakfast or a Brunch as I taught my honoured guest. We stopped only once for a breather and may be to share a cake before moving on. Around Runcorn or Warrington Vincy noticed the smoke from the factory chimneys puffing out on the non working day polluting the blue sky mixed in with white puffy clouds. It wouldn't happen in Hong Kong she exclaimed very much in disgust at what we in the UK were doing to the air around a lowly populated and predominantly industrialised area of the country. Carbon oxide into the air the greenhouse affect she was right in her statement even though prior to that I hadn't given it much thought.

The stag and Rainbow pub next to the Premier inn was well known to me I had passed it on the coach on numerous occasions and it came highly recommended to me. Despite a cheeky balding and elderly Evertonian on the desk who was to work hard he was there at just gone three and that evening. We also saw him sat at the desk just before eight o'clock in the morning. He was a larger than life character probable over weight but a joy to know. His scouse accent was difficult for Vincy to understand but his assistance was most welcome. We headed for our room and then agreed to go for a stroll as the evening drew in and the night got darker. Heading away from where we had come holding hands in a parallel line past the Library which we popped in to, an opportunity to use the internet. In and out then on a bit further till only houses where in front of us a long uninteresting row of them so we turned back crossing to the other side for a brightly lit house which I just had to photo.

Opposite our hotel was a major pub I had seen numerous times and what I was later to confirm Mill lane en route to Melwood. It was getting near dusk and dark as we turned back returning to our hotel to get ready for a meal at the newly opened Boot Room in the heart of the Kop grandstand.

The sky was black and if we had looked up to see the moon light and count the stars before we entered the restaurant our evening would have been extra romantic. It turned out the Museum and café shared the same entrance as we climbed the stairs a Hillsborough tribute mosaic on the wall and at the entrance a Christmas tree and Boot room loge. This was a must for our picture and camera at the ready we proceeded to snap away. A lady guided us to a select table for a couple Tv on showing the disaster from the night before we were separated from couples on adjacent tables though the central empty section was in full view. Our waiter also called Kevin was an excellent and dependable servant offering a choice of wine although we were both to elect for soft drinks. He kindly took a photo of my lovely companion in the Boot room table it was great and if we had windows surely we would have been able to look upon the hallowed turf that is Anfield. I asked Vincy

Q: How did you feel in the empty "boot room" restaurant sharing three meals with me.

A: The boot room was empty just because it was not a match day and it was actually a week day, not many people will travel to Anfield for the dinner. As I told you, I enjoy sharing foods so that I can try different variety of food. If I can only eat one type, then I need to wait for the next chance to try other type. Probably only girls like sharing food, or as you say, couples do sharing as well. I think the waiters just thought that we were couple, so they didn't feel surprise that we shared our food together. Now, I am sure that you like sharing food with me, don't you?

The answer to her question is yes it was a beneficial experience unexpected and one that has grown on me. Our meal was served admirable as the soft music created an ambiance with the sparsely filled restaurant. With extra larger plates provided we shared and enjoyed although I had to endure the pieces of garlic bread (which I like) as Vincy dislikes both that and onions. She likes to see pepper served with her salads and she insisted on some being shaken over it although I would never complain it is not my ideal of a perfect mix.

No need for sweet we managed successfully the three delicious dishes chosen and a couple of soft drinks kindly paid for by my companion. What a lucky person I was a more attractive at tentative caring person I could not wish for and certainly will not discover on this earth.

I drove back slowly and carefully to our hotel that night my passenger was my concern passion and desire. It was familiar but the dark and busy Liverpool roads unnerve me. I tried not to show and was delighted to find my way safely into the car park parking under a light. We took a few photos of our hotel from the outside in the think dark with some limited lighting to guide us holding hands into the foyer. Up the stairs and finding our way into the room me to watch some television and later shower while Vincy would also shower before we retired. She was to give me a big comforting hug that night for had she wished I would have slept on the floor. She expressed no concern that night and we shared a passionate embrace either side of our sleep.

Q: Our first trip to Melwood Where you apprehensive (concerned or have fears) about this stay.

Vincy A: â I might not 100% catch the meaning of this question. Just try to express my feeling here. When I proposed a visit to Melwood, I proposed to stay in Liverpool for 1 night so that we can get to Melwood early in the morning. I knew that we needed to stay in a hotel room together, but it seems no better option, it would be too expensive to book two single rooms. I also told you that I can trust people easily. Therefore, I didn't have much concern to sleep with you. In fact, I felt safe with you sleeping beside me.â

The trip to Melwood was to be one of the highlights for both of us. Vincy had been before not staying long while I had only passed by it once in the bus. I had worked out how to drive to the area and although I certainly would never consider going by myself it was an adventure that thrilled me.

Vincy has said â There were full of best moments, seems all moments were best to me. Melwood was my highlight, to stay with you all the time also a best moment for me. I did enjoy the whole trip.â

Q: Finally Melwood itself did you feel good being among the crowd staying all day only being able to wave at some players. Who do you wish had stopped but didn't&





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