

Zhang Ailing's Old Life: Flea's Disease and the Mystery of Avoiding the World

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Keywords: The Mystery of Flea Avoidance Zhang Ailing

Abstract: From 1983 to 1988, Eileen Chang lived in a motel near Los Angeles as a vagrant with flea bite. There are many speculations and speculations about Eileen Chang's flea disease. On the basis of studying the letters written by Eileen Chang to different objects in different periods, this paper confirms that Eileen Chang did suffer from flea biting disease, and further infers the reasons why Eileen Chang stayed away from the world behind closed doors in her later years. First, suffering for various diseases, no energy to communicate with the outside world; second, elegant and independent, character. Of course, the most important thing is to calm down and concentrate on writing.

1. Introduction

Some people say that it is not very difficult to enter Eileen Chang's novel world after 1943, but it is as difficult as climbing into the world of Eileen Chang's life after 1972. That's true. After receiving a visit from Taiwan scholar Crystal in 1971, Eileen Chang hardly received any outside visits. She lived in seclusion until her death. Zhang Ailing's mystery of avoiding the world has become one of the topics that people are keen to talk about and discuss. It has also caused speculations by scholars and friends around Zhang Ailing. In recent years, with the large number of letters written by Zhang Ailing to different objects in different periods, it provides some powerful evidence for people to solve Zhang Ailing's "mystery of the world." This article forms its own academic views on the basis of the study of the published Zhang Ailing letter, in order to solve the mystery of Zhang Ailing's later years.

2. The "Flea Disease" that encountered in her later years

From November 1983 to February 1988, Eileen Chang began her five-year migration and flea-avoiding years at the age of 63. During this period, she moved almost every day, changing her apartment every week on average. She lives almost all over the valley north of Los Angeles, downtown and suburban motels. A few months before her death, she also called Lin to tell her that her skin disease, the bite of her throat, was recurring, so that she couldn't wear even her clothes, and she often caught a cold.

As for Zhang Ailing's flea bite since 1983, Song Qi, a friend of Zhang Ailing, reported in her letter to Crystal: "As for Zhang Ailing, she moved last year (1984) and was infected with fleas. In order to save money, she bought a second-hand refrigerator. Fleas breed from the bottom of the box, making her desperate. She even shaved her hair. She washed her hair every day. Later, she had to wear plastic clothes. Take it off and throw it away again. It's in a terrible mess. Tea and rice are unintentional, and there's no time..." At that time, in her letter to Song Qi, Zhang Ailing described the flea disaster with her usual "Zhang Ailing's brush strokes" delicately, profoundly and logically: "Now these fleas come from the insulation under the old refrigerator bought in November 1983 (heat insulation devices, mostly sponge texture). Light brown, unlike the black fleas introduced by the last batch of Kingsley's old neighbors, is suspected to be a Central and South American breed. When it gets smaller, it's like long and slender hay scraps. There's only one kind of mildew (black reptile) in China that's so small. Before moving to give up the second new refrigerator in the autumn of 1984, I asked the company that I bought, saying that there is a shallow basin under the refrigerator, and fleas can go in. As early as 1983, I wanted to live in a hospital for a day or two and

disinfected thoroughly. Do not accept. I am going to be hospitalized now, unless the doctor introduces it, and the doctor is suspicious of a lace in my bonnet (a silk satin on the woman's hat, metaphor, suggesting that it is purely false). Two days ago, I told him that recent developments are more like the most typical sexual fantasy. Only the psychiatrist has the patience to listen to the patient. The specimens sent are taken for testing to see if the animal tissue (organism in the animal body) is heard in two weeks [1]. ”

For Eileen Chang's flea bite disease, Crystal thinks it is more likely to be a mental illness, suspecting that her flea disease comes from the heart, is "those who are refused outside the apartment wall by her" (not unjustified cases). It was not clear that the bag did not include Tang Wenbiao, but turned into tens of millions of fleas, biting her. In fact, in her letter to Xia Zhiqing in 1976, Eileen Chang clearly expressed her attitude toward Tang Wenbiao: "Of course, Tang Wenbiao's "miscellaneous" won't give me a copy, and I'm not curious at all. Let him scold it [2]." Don't say that Tang Wenbiao swears that she doesn't count, that is, Hu Lancheng said that she was one of his shackles in public after her return, and she is also indifferent. Zhang Ailing's principle of doing things is that no matter what she hears about her, she only laughs and goes with it. So the speculation of crystal is not true.

According to Lin Shitong's understanding, although Eileen Chang's flea bite disease may be a skin disease, it may be more like a psychological illusion of Eileen Chang. Although Lin Shiling is the most "close" person in the relationship between Zhang Ailing and his later years, the letter from Zhang Ailing, which is currently published, basically does not involve the scorpion bite illness from 1984 to 1988. Therefore, Lin Shitong's speculation, despite its credible side, lacks strong evidence.

Lin Xingqian believes that fleas are the medium through which she avoids the world, while avoidance is the medium through which she can heal herself. The two are mutually causal. It is easy to say that on the surface it is evasion/flea avoidance, but in fact it is self-psychological healing. It's related to her experience of being beaten and imprisoned by her father when she was a teenager [3]. Obviously, Lin Xingqian's speculations have more subjective delusions. The problem is that after 1989, Zhang Ailing still lived a life of avoidance. Since then, in her letter to Xia Zhiqing, Aunt, Lin Shitong, Song Qi, etc., she still complained about various diseases, but apparently the complaint is no longer a bite. Why did Zhang Ailing use the scorpion as a refuge medium between 1983 and 1988, but she did not have to resort to this medium since she avoided the world? It is precisely because Lin Xingqian over-explained Zhang Ailing's nephew biting the disease, so he mistakenly thought that this was just the "fantasy of the blind."

In fact, Eileen Chang did suffer from severe flea bite from 1983 to 1988. As early as 1937, 17-year-old Eileen Chang expressed her distress in *A Dream of Genius*: "When there is no one to connect with others, I am full of the joy of life. But I can't overcome this little biting annoyance in a day. Life is a gorgeous robe, full of lice." For a long time, the researchers of Eileen Chang extended it to a desolate feeling of Eileen Chang about life and times, but ignored the true message: although life is beautiful, the bite of lice that can not be overcome makes me distressed. In *Return to the Front*, written after her visit to Taiwan in 1961, Eileen Chang once again mentioned her worries about fleas. Thus, from 1983 to 1988, Eileen Chang was disturbed by fleas and even suffered the most serious illness, although at first even doctors believed that it was purely psychological illusion. The author recently found that in her letter to Sima Xin from 1987 to 1988, Zhang Ailing talked about the process of recovery. In May 1986, Sima Xin introduced a doctor. X in her short message to Zhang Ailing. Zhang Ailing called immediately. Although Dr. X didn't speak much, he impressed me deeply. He felt that he was a very good doctor and admired him to the extreme. It is recognized that the skin is particularly sensitive. Flashes probably disappeared two years ago. After applying the medicine, it worked very well. We have found a house to settle down. In a letter written to her aunt in 1989, Zhang Ailing also talked about the scorpion's suffering: "...check the body and find an infestation - 'a proteus organism', I can't ask anything. Take the medicine. It's just fine. It may have been for two years in a hotel, and I didn't want to do it with my skin disease. I thought it was a flea that became almost invisible and lived for another two years." It can be seen that in 1983 By 1988, Zhang Ailing did have a very serious scorpion bite. Since the doctor could

not confirm the diagnosis and the condition was not effectively controlled, in order to cut off the source of the disease, she had to keep moving. Later, the doctor introduced by Sima Xin cured her skin disease, and she settled down and gradually restored contact with the outside world.

3. Reasons for seclusion in her later years

The author speculates that the reason why Eileen Chang lived in seclusion in her later years is simply that she suffered from various diseases and did not have the energy to communicate with the outside world. The second reason is that she was graceful and solitary.

According to Zhang Zijing, Zhang Ailing's younger brother, Zhang Ailing suffered from constipation when she was a teenager. She often took ENO fruit salt. If she wanted to excrete it freely, she had to resort to enema. In 1961, when Wang Zhenhe and Zhang Ailing were gathering in Hualien, Zhang's gastrointestinal disease was committed. At that time, Wang Zhenhe's uncle took Zhang to the hospital by bicycle for treatment and medication. In 1976, Eileen Chang appealed against the replication of ulcers in a letter to Xia Zhiqing. In her letter to her aunt in 1989, Eileen Chang talked about the sudden failure of Egyptian herbal medicine after 50 years and went to see a doctor. Doctors have always regarded it as a drug addiction and would not accept it if they did not give up (as a result, she had to change the way she cooked the medicine herself). She also suffered from an old "cold" illness. She had to lie in bed for a few days without eating, because she vomited after eating, but she was very thirsty and often had a cold for several months. In 1962, Eileen Chang bled from an ulcer during her writing in Hong Kong. She often had to consult a doctor for an injection to curb her illness. "Possibility of suffering from a high cholesterol disease" after 1971. From 1984 to 1988, in order to avoid the scorpion, he was swaying between hotels. In 1989, the letter to her aunt told her about her physical distress: Although the skin disease was good, "the cholesterol is still too high, although the meat and eggs have already been quit....The street was hit by a Central and South American youth in March. To, fell below the shoulder bones, humerus fraction... As the doctor said, doing gymnastics and spa treatment all day long, tired.... The right arm is not very useful, you have to do more gymnastics exercises. The skin suddenly spreads to the 'broken arm' It's too bad to scare the dead, wait for the arm to go to the doctor. There are also problems with the eyes, for months, to see." The physical pain does take up a lot of time for Zhang Ailing, "The daily homework takes up There are too many hours. The rest of the time has been limited, and the whites have been ruined for four years. It is an amazing waste at this stage. I don't have time to do things, life is not on track, and I am in a hurry." Just a few months before his death, Zhang Ailing's letter to Xia Zhiqing was still the most talked about for various diseases: "It's not fatal, it takes time and energy to be above, and it's not good. I have to do some rest for a long time. In the past, I have been suffering from a cold for more than a year... Well, I am only busy with remediation. I have to go to the teeth for more than two years. I am still in a state of emergency... [5]" It can be seen that Zhang Ailing, who suffered for various diseases in her later years, did not have the energy and could not find time to interact with the outside world.

Far from becoming famous, Eileen Chang confessed her graceful and solitary character in "A Dream of Genius": "In the absence of people, I am full of the joy of life [4]." Although Zhang Ailing was once very popular after she became famous, some people pointed out that she had a mixed temper and a lonely personality at that time. In her letter to Yu Lihua in 1968, Eileen Chang also revealed her unwillingness to deal with the world: "It is unlikely that I will go to Taiwan. Taiwan has many benefits that I don't need, such as scenery, service, and beauty. I need to be private, single-family, easy to buy, no servants, people who live here are extremely simple, Hong Kong and Taiwan are difficult... from school to the present. In addition to the period of flight, I have been used to this kind of life, and I am still accustomed to tightening. Loneliness is a state of mind. In Taiwan, if you look for more people, there are only a lot of offended people..." It can be seen that Zhang Ailing's old age is also a character.

4. Conclusion

Of course, the reason why Eileen Chang lived in seclusion in her later years is not only physical reasons, but also personality reasons. The most important reason is to calm down and concentrate on writing. On July 2, 1966, in a letter to Liu Shaoming, she wrote: "For writing, I live in isolation... But no matter how carefully I take care of myself, I still lose weight. This is the result of uncertainty and anxiety." In her later years, she repeatedly expressed the same will to her friends: "...All day is a time war, derailed work needs to be immersed in it, there must be lazy Yu Yu. In this case, even the rare communication has become A burden. I have to write a letter for a few days, repeated drafts, copy and rewrite... It's my friend who would rather write something with less pitiful time instead of writing letter....."

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