



It happened one Christmas

THE UNEXAMINED LIFE

By Alvin Pang

He wanted to give up something for Christmas, after his scare at the doctor's.

Smoking, drinking, fatty foods: He'd never acquired a taste for these. It had to be something of real significance, a reminder of all there was to lose in life.

Books? But he had not finished one in years. Music and movies? They bored him, mostly. He already took public transport. Recycled. Exercised. Did his own chores. Spent prudently. Voted predictably. Avoided stress. Sought moderation in all things.

He asked his wife. You worry too much about the future, she said.

He gave up, and surrendered nothing.



FOUND THINGS

By Aaron Lee



All the lost things that were found are here in this place. Most are not visible to the eye: innocence, mind, temper, way. Of those that can be seen, one is a tree, the other an oar. Lost from where I was, they are somewhere else. And after all this time, no one thinks of them. If the place were anywhere but here, then they continue to be lost, and not thought of. But now they are where I was, and where the eyes of my heart are, not yet here, but soon to be found, in this place.

CHRISTMAS SNOW

By Verena Tay



Gone again for Christmas? They need me in Shanghai. We need you here. I'll call, every day. You won't, even if it snows here!

At Orchard Road, she does last-minute Christmas shopping, with Xinyi in tow. The sky is as black as her mood. He hasn't called for days.

Mama, mama! What now, Xinyi? Will it snow here in Singapore? If you wish real hard, perhaps.

In silence, Xinyi stares at the sky. Mama, Mama, look! What? It's snowing! She drags Xinyi under shelter. It isn't snow. It is hail. Her phone rings. Is it him? No. It's her mother.

PRAGUE

By Cyril Wong



We thronged the square, huddled around sheets of music like children around a fire to build a wobbly architecture of voices. I imagined the saviour reborn among us, projecting smoky notes, pierced hands tucked into his pockets; or maybe Kafka and his bullying father – but arm in arm, singing without irony about peace and light. After the last page, silence fell: a more convincing music, fuller and unflinching. And we began to separate, to miss the warm bodies of strangers with whom we had tried to stay in key, in time, sucking in the same cold air to finish line after line after breathless line.

33 ROSE STREET, LONDON

By Wena Poon



The distance between Hong Kong and London is 5,983 miles.

"We came all this way for Louis Vuitton?" asked Julian.

"It's cheaper," said Laura. Inside Prada, Julian said desperately, "I need to go out for a smoke."

"You smoke?" Bond Street was packed with Christmas shoppers. A girl carried a ridiculous backpack in the shape of a stuffed white rabbit. He followed her. She darted from alley to alley. Just when he thought he would reach a dead end, he came unexpectedly upon a tiny, ancient pub.

His cellphone buzzed angrily in his pocket. He turned it off.

Bookends

Magdalen Ng

Professional dancer Nonoko Tanaka has not been home for three months.

Since September, the 22-year-old joined the Singapore Dance Theatre as a full-time member and is busy practising for Swan Lake, which is being staged at the Esplanade Theatre.

"I'll be going home for a while after Swan Lake and I'm really looking forward to it," says Tanaka, who is from Kagoshima Prefecture at the south-western tip of Kyushu island.

She started dancing at the age of three and trained at England's The Hammond School and the Dutch National Ballet Academy in Amsterdam.

The petite ballerina also enjoys watching movies and will watch one or two movies every weekend. "I particularly like The Last Samurai for its plot."

What are you reading now?

Addicted To Ballet by Tamiyo Kusakari, a Japanese dancer for the Maki Asami Ballet Company in Tokyo.

This book is about her life and how she started her dance career. She's really a beautiful dancer and I have come to respect her a lot.

Another Japanese book that I just read is One Person, Don't Be Afraid. I can't remember who the author is.

This book is about staying alive in this society especially when one is alone in a different place far away from home. It is never easy to adapt and I am

reading it because it makes me stronger when I think about my family in Japan.



PHOTO: SINGAPORE DANCE THEATRE

If your house were burning down, which book would you save?

I will definitely save 1Q84 (left) by Haruki Murakami because he is my favourite author.

bestsellers

Fiction

- (1) The Lost Symbol by Dan Brown
- (2) My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult
- (3) The Book Of Tomorrow by Cecelia Ahern
- (7) I, Alex Cross by James Patterson
- (5) The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger
- (4) True Blue by David Baldacci
- (10) Pirate Latitudes by Michael Crichton
- (6) Under The Dome by Stephen King
- (9) Nine Dragons by Michael Connelly
- (-) Twenties Girl by Sophie Kinsella

Non-fiction

- (1) Have A Little Faith by Mitch Albom
- (2) What The Dog Saw And Other Adventures by Malcolm Gladwell
- (5) Men In White by Sonny Yap, Richard Lim and Leong Weng Kam
- (3) Superfreakonomics by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner
- (6) Chronicle Of Singapore 1959-2009 by Peter Lim
- (7) Connected by Nicholas Christakis
- (4) Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

- (8) Six Pixels Of Separation by Mitch Joel
- (9) This Is My Story by Kasandra Kong
- (10) Start Up Nation by Dan Senor

Children's

- (1) Diary Of A Wimpy Kid #4: Dog Days by Jeff Kinney
- (4) The Twilight Saga: New Moon by Stephenie Meyer
- (2) Mr Midnight Special Edition #2: Santa's Claws by James Lee
- (6) Singing Sensation by Geronimo Stilton
- (8) The Twilight Saga: Twilight by Stephenie Meyer
- (-) The Twilight Saga: Eclipse by Stephenie Meyer
- (-) The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn by Stephenie Meyer
- (3) Pokemon Adventures #31 by Satoshi Yamamoto
- (-) Mr Mystery #14: The Mystery Of The Clueless Corpse by James Lee
- (10) Thea Stilton And The Mountain Of Fire by Thea Stilton

This is LifeStyle's compilation of the bestseller lists from Books Kinokuniya, Borders, MPH, Page One VivoCity, Popular and Times bookstores. The numbers in brackets are the previous week's positions.

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