

西夏旅館・蝴蝶書

Taiwan Dreams Episode I : Dream Hotel

The way you read determines your fate.

Hotel Xixia, written by Luo Yi-chun, the most prominent Taiwanese novelist of this generation, is a historical epic. It uses history as a metaphor, addressing the complex interlocked history between Taiwan and China.

Taiwan Dreams Episode I: Dream Hotel is the first part of director/playwright Wei Ying-chuan's *Taiwan Dreams* project, and the grandest of her works to date.

Employing the concept of "theatre of verisimilitude," Wei invited more than 10 artists to conduct a unique theatrical conversation with literature, presents a mad fantasy about the trauma and reconciliation of the foreign, the metamorphosed and the half-blooded, which reflects the big mystery of national and personal identity.

Scene-by-scene Synopsis

Book of Yang: Hotel Xixia

1. Luo Yi-chun, Storyteller

Luo Yi-chun, the storyteller of the Helan Mountain Club at Hotel Xixia, introduces the written language of the Xixia Dynasty to the audience, and gives hints for the first puzzle from the Xixia Writing Arts Festival's word puzzle game.

2. Word Puzzle 1: "I"

Projections. In Tu Ni-ke's dream, someone has shot him. The shooter is another Tu Ni-ke. The blood spatters transform into writing: the word "I." The writing flutters, like butterfly wings.

3. Room 1949, Part I

Tu Ni-ke startles awake from the shooting nightmare in Room 1949 of the Xixia Hotel. He shadows his sleepwalking wife Bi-hai. He discovers clues hinting at Bi-hai's unfaithfulness. The two begin arguing.

4. Tu Ni-ke Kills His Wife

Projections. Tu Ni-ke dreams that the other Tu Ni-ke is killing his wife.

5. Room 1949, Part II

Tu Ni-ke startles awake from the wife-killing nightmare in Room 1949 of the Hotel Xixia. He receives a phone call; the other speaker's voice is both unfamiliar and seemingly recognizable.

Tu Ni-ke misses the first word puzzle.

6. Yuan-hao Kills His Wife

For the anniversary celebration of the Hotel Xixia, they put on a show called *Yuan-hao Kills His Wife*. The hint for the second word puzzle is given.

7. Word Puzzle 2: "Father"

Tu Ni-ke runs into an old friend of his father's, Fan Chong-yian, who is the owner of the hotel. Tu Ni-ke gives the correct answer to the second word puzzle. Fan talks about the youthful exploits of Tu Ni-ke's father, Tu Han-ming, and gives the hint for the third word puzzle.

8. Arrested

Fan reminisces about Tu Han-ming's arrest in the 1970s, which was due to Han-ming's writing on the history of Xixia.

9. Cyclops Ulceration

After being released from prison, Tu Han-ming became mad. He believed that the ulceration at his knee, which looked like a face with one eye, to be Yeli Renrong, the creator of the Xixia written language. One day, he met Wu Nian-hua, a Taiwanese girl. Han-ming, Fan Chong-yian and Wu became entangled in a bizarre love triangle.

10. Word Puzzle 3: "Ming"

Fan explains the epistemology of the character “ming.” He tells Tu Ni-ke that Tu Han-ming, his long absent father, has been living under the radar at Hotel Xixia the whole time. Tu Ni-ke solves the third world puzzle.

(Intermission)

11. Ming Izakaya¹

Fan treats Tu Ni-ke to a meal at Ming Izakaya. The attendants at the tavern, Tai-li the Madam, Chia-ling and Chia-huei, gear the subject of conversation towards names and destinies. They give the hints to the fourth word puzzle.

12. Word Puzzle 4: “Name”²

Tu Ni-ke is blindfolded; he begins the quest to find his father. Chia-huei tells Tu Ni-ke about the abnormal conduct of his wife Bi-hai, who has been roaming the hotel shopping center. Tu Ni-ke solves the fourth puzzle.

13. Grandma Mei-lan

Grandma Mei-lan reads from Tu Han-ming’s manuscript, a book called *The Two-Hundred-year Empire, Dissipated like Smoke*. It is a book about the history of Xixia. Grandma Mei-lan talks about the sacking of Xingqing City, the capitol of Xixia, by the Mongolians, as well as Xixia’s last ruler Li Xian’s dream before he died. She gives the hints for the fifth word puzzle.

14. The Sheep Play

Some sheep act out the Tu family’s flight from harm. In 1949, Tu Ni-ke’s grandfather Tu Chien-kuo was a railway official working for the Nationalist party. He took his new wife Hu Ching, new born son, and his firstborn, 15-year-old Tu Han-ming, and fled Ningxia, traversing Tibet and making for Calcutta. Father and son, already locked into an uneasy relationship with each other, each had a dream during their flight. Tu Han-ming dreamed of the last of the Xixia cavalry, while Tu Chien-kuo dreamed that Han-ming and Hu Ching were flirting with each other.

¹ An izakaya is a Japanese drinking establishment. It’s a place for casual after-work drinking.

² In Chinese, the word for “name” is pronounced *ming*.

15. Word Puzzle 5: “Dream”

Tu Ni-ke solves the fifth puzzle. Grandma Mei-lan hands him the sixth word puzzle, which was entrusted to her by Tu Han-ming. Tu Ni-ke does not understand the meaning of his father’s legacy, which turns out to be a blank page in an envelope. He pushes on to look for his father.

16. The Theatre of Shadows

The cherry blossom sheep guides Tu Ni-ke towards the banquet hall at Xingqing City, to request assistance from An Ching-Tsang, master of illusions. They pass by the Theatre of Shadows, where Tu Ni-ke catches sight of the other “him”, and cannot hold back a yelp. The Hotel Xixia melts away in the echoes of Ni-ke’s outburst.

Book of Ying: Butterfly Hotel

1. Book of Ying

Luo Yi-chun, the storyteller of the Jade Mountain Club at Butterfly Hotel, announces and explains the story index of the Book of Ying.

2. Yellow Room, Part I

Tu Ni-ke awakens from a dream-within-a-dream, and discovers that he is in the Yellow Room at the Butterfly Hotel. Chia-ling gives him the room key for the Green Room. He begins the quest to look for his mother.

3. Green Room

Tu Ni-ke goes to the Green Room, and runs into Fan Chong-yian, who now insists that he is “Auntie Fan”. Ni-ke finds out from Fan that the hotel staff is rehearsing a play about Ni-ke’s mother in the Taiwan Red Room. He gains the room key to the Taiwan Red Room from Fan.

4. Taiwan Red Room

Tu Ni-ke goes to the Taiwan Red Room to see the story of his mother, Pan Tzu-tung. He accidentally interrupts the rehearsal, and gains an invite to the Butterfly Ball in the Cyan Room.

5. Cyan Room

Tu Ni-ke meets Grandma Mei-lan and a flock of butterflies. He is forced to join them for a meditation, and makes the decision to return to the Hotel Xixia.

6. China Red Room/ Banquet Hall at Xingqing City/ Word Puzzle 6: ■

Tu Ni-ke returns to the banquet hall at Xingqing City inside the Hotel Xixia, and keeps looking for his father. An Ching-Tsang, master of illusions, describes the love story of Tu Han-ming and Hong Xiao-lan in Calcutta. An gives the hints for the sixth word puzzle. Tu Ni-ke solves the sixth puzzle, finds his father's secrets, and descends into pain and darkness.

(Intermission)

7 Blue Room

Wearing a butterfly costume, Chia-ling leads Tu Ni-ke back to the Butterfly Hotel. Tu Ni-ke sinks into memories in the Blue Room, and recounts three past memories he shared with Bi-hai. The first one was in 1998, the night of the Taipei City Mayor election, when the two first met. The second one was the night of the presidential election in 2000, when they got engaged. The third one was in 2004, the evening of the presidential election, when the two were fighting.

8 Yellow Room: Part II

Tu Ni-ke startles awake from a wife-killing nightmare in the Yellow Room. He receives a call from My Buddha Spa, offering him the "Double-headed Buddha" treatment. Tu Ni-ke is given "healing treatment" by each of the aromatherapists in turn. He receives the room key to the White Room.

9 White Room

Tu Ni-ke goes to the White Room to receive treatment number 7. He joins the crowd in a game of "Kill the Emperor."

10. Father's Book of Ying/ Word Puzzle 7: "Love"

Tu Ni-ke startles awake from a nightmare. He is in Room 1949. He sees his father, Tu Han-ming, who is creating more Xixia writing. Han-ming explains the real meaning of the Butterfly Book, and exposes the hoax that is the Xixia Writing Arts Festival. Tu Ni-ke solves the seventh word puzzle.

11. Mother's Book of Ying/ Word Puzzle 7: "○"

Tu Ni-ke startles awake from a nightmare in the Yellow Room. He sees his mother, Pan Tzu-tung, drawing a circle. His mother explains that the circle means the same thing as his father's seventh word puzzle. Luo Yi-chun delivers a gold hatbox. Tu Ni-ke watches as his mother opens the box, and morphs into his wife, Bi-hai.

12. The Storyteller's Book of Ying

Tu Ni-ke plays a game of Tangram with the room keys, but no matter how hard he tries, there is a piece missing. Luo Yi-chun delivers the lost Taiwan Red Room card, and Ni-ke is finally able to patch together the image of a home.

13. The Wife's Book of Ying

Bi-hai talks about her future, and gives blessing to everyone.

14. My Book of Ying

Projections. The pages of the Butterfly Book flap and flutter, turning into butterflies making for the sea.

15. Your Book of Ying

Your Book of Ying?

16. Spring

The spring breeze caresses Formosa. The actors introduce themselves.

P.S. This is the performance text, the director's version. Therefore, it deviates from the original play in the Butterfly Book in many places. In this exchange between the director and the playwright, each had specific details that he/she hoped to interpret in different ways.

Presented by Creative Society, Red Society Films

Produced by Huei-Na Lee ,YC Wei

Directed/ Written/ Curated by YC Wei

Original Text by Yi-chun Luo

Starring: Tzu-yi Mo, Yi-Lan Chao, An-chen Chiu, Hao-hsiang Hsu, Mei Joying,
Tsai-yi Huang, Yi-hsiu Lee, Chun-hui Hsieh, Daniel Wang, An-ru Chu, Ting-fang
Liu, Tai-hao Tsuei, Deng-jyun Yang, Wen-Chun Lai

Band: SeaHorse Music(Hao-hsiang Hsu, Yen-kai Chiu, Jhong-han Lin, Chia-chi
Chuang)

Stage Design by Austin Wang

Visual Image Design by Hung-i Chen, Shauba Chang

Music Design by Chien-chi Chen, Hao-hsiang Hsu@ SeaHorse Music

Sound Design by Dennis Tsao , Yi-syun Wang

Lighting Design by Nuo-Hsing Huang Arronax

Costume Design by YIRI ARTS STUDIO , Cetus, Chin-yun Kuo

Photography by YC Wei, Hung-i Chen, You-wei Chen, Chien-Che Tang

Installation/ Graphic Design by Tzi-chin Huang

Fabric Installation by Ba-hui Chao

Live Projection by Kuo-hao Li

Choreography by Yen-fang YU

Associate Director: Daniel Wang

Assistant Director: Chien-Che Tang

Viedo: Red Society Films, Storyland Design Studio

Image Support: Waterfall