



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I have been thinking about the death of that unfortunate lady, Mrs Nina Wang, and the horrible publicity that is enveloping her very spirit, day after day. She passed away after losing her battle with cancer, you know. All of her money could not save her. I feel such empathy with her suffering, leading to her death. Little, thus far, has been said about her in a very positive vein except that she left behind an empire with a cash value of about \$HK100 billion. Now, people are fighting over that fortune. I do not want to get embroiled in the matter of who is entitled to what, but it seems to me that it is a very ugly situation. And it is getting uglier as the days wear on. It is said that one should say nothing of the dead lest it be good. This is because the dead cannot defend themselves. The fight for the money of Mrs Nina Wang () reminds me of the statement of Mr Max Weber (1864 - 1920), a German economist and social historian, who is credited as having penned: 'The impulse to acquisition, pursuit of gain, of money ... has in itself nothing to do with capitalism ... One may say that it has been common to all sorts and conditions of men at all times and in all cultures of the earth.' The headlong pursuit for more and more money is, in and of itself, a fruitless exercise, other than the ability of money to be exchanged for something else. In Hongkong, money is equated with power. It follows that the more money that one has, the more power will follow in its wake. It is said that Mr Tony Chan Chun Chuen (), who claims that Mrs Nina Wang left her entire estate to him, has, already, about \$HK2 billion in the bank. How many motor cars, luxury boats, private aeroplanes, and so on, can he enjoy in the remaining years that he has on this earth? How many bottles of the most expensive wines can one drink before one's doctor warns to stop overindulging. How many women can a man service in one night before his heart gives out? Millions! Billions! Trillions! Mere words! Nothing more! What do those words mean when one lies down on that final bed? Death may be beautiful, it is said, but dying is not. One is a long time dead, but one is alive only for a few short years. One should treasure those years of life and not scatter them in the fields of time as does a farmer when sowing grain. I have said to you, My Dear Grandchild, on a number of occasions, that fortune favours fools. Let this nonsense in the fight for the financial empire of Mrs Nina Wang be a lesson to us, all: Fools find greater fools to admire him. Whoever wins the battle for the \$HK100 billion will not be more happy than the child who first tastes a one-inch square of milk chocolate. The money will make nobody happier, healthier, wiser, more beautiful, or more alluring to the opposite sex. In short, the battle for Mrs Nina Wang's tens of billions of Hongkong dollars will give birth to an empty victory – except for the legal eagles who will bank tens of millions of dollars for themselves ... and laugh at their good fortune.

This is a relatively short letter, this week, because I think that I have said it all except, perhaps, to add that superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only.

Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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