Many Cities above McDonald

Helen is seated near a round wooden table under the spotlight. She has a double cheese burger with the number #1225. Barista writes it on the sticker of the cowhide bag. She took her name board off her suit. For the past 8 years, she had been working as a foreign data analyzer in a famous company with headquarter in Shanghai. Her iPhone wallpaper is her family photo with her parents and elder brother, who live in United States. She is looking forward to coming back.

5 meters away from her is a group of high school students. They wear their Shenzhen school uniforms, with laptops in their hands. They were discussing math problems. Cindy is the captain of the group, now writing her solution on a notebook math contest coach gave her. She has prepared the contest for 2 years. This year will be her 3rd try before applying to college. For them, Shanghai is made up of theorems, functions, and their efforts.

Helen leaves after finishing eating for catching up airline- Lao Zhang holding a package of vegetable and meat and his grandson with schoolbag come in. He is confused in how to control his phone to order food. His grandson is impatient, takes Lao Zhou’s phone and orders in too quick speed to make him observed the whole process well. They sit near the door and the grandson turns pleasant getting a comic card he expected in his Kid’s Meal. Lao Zhang has been moving to Shanghai since 2013, when his son found job here. For him, Shanghai is still an unfamiliar place, suitable to the youngers rather than him. He should live in Jiangnan, where he grew up and got married. His wife slept there forever.

Lucy checks up her email every 5 minutes. She just graduated from university with her PhD diploma and is looking for job. It is said that the company will give out the reply in an hour. Yet she hasn’t received any offers. She expects Shanghai be her corner stone

David puts his laptop on the table and orders a cup of hot chocolate. He looked at his formal dismissal letter, which is got 1 week ago. He looked at his WeChat, his wife sent him a message, notice him to be careful on the way to company. His son just entered one of the best middle schools in Shanghai and he does not dare to talk to them. He has been pretending to work here for 3 days, with a suit. He rests and turns to look at Lucy. He envies these young people, who have more opportunities. The package of McNugget is blue, green and pink, with cartoons on it. He does not know what it means, maybe only fragile fantasy, just like his lost job. Smoke of cigarettes rise, like David’s mood, grey and breathless. Shanghai is filled with smoke. He cannot breath under the watchful eye of tall buildings in Lujiazui.