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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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A quick reopening, a surge in infections, and a U.S. recovery at risk

ROCK HILL, S.C. (Reuters) - When Texas reopened bars for the Memorial Day weekend last month, cooped-up millennials and Gen Zers took full advantage, flouting social distancing rules to pack clubs and pushing their credit card spending in the next two weeks back to 2019 levels.

FILE PHOTO: Handlebar bouncer, Mando Cuadros, sprays down a guest's hands with hand sanitizer on the first night that bars reopen after they were shut down to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Austin, Texas, U.S., May 22, 2020. Picture taken May 22, 2020. REUTERS/Nuri Vallbona/File Photo
That brief fling with a more fulsome economic reopening, replicated in southern states like Florida and South Carolina, has boomeranged in a resurgence of novel coronavirus cases that is now changing the nature of the pandemic and likely to test the strength of any broader economic rebound.

The reports of widening outbreaks in places like Florida and Texas have noted that it is now younger adults who are getting infected with COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus. That could temper the death rate since young adults are less likely to die from the disease, but could also upend the country's patchwork economic reopening.

Already fitful, the situation may become murkier as some localities backtrack on reopening plans, stores re-shutter, and Americans sort themselves into those willing to risk more exposure and those still abiding by health guidelines.

It's a recipe, economists and epidemiologists warn, for a muted recovery that could turn recent good news into little more than a head fake. A recent drop in daily deaths may also prove fleeting. Hospitalizations are increasing in Texas, and health experts warn that the spread of the virus among those at lower risk of serious illness, like young adults, will eventually spill over to those more at risk of serious complications.

"There is an inevitable mixing," said Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security. "You will likely see an uptick in deaths."

And that dynamic could prove poisonous to any economic recovery.

"If you add in the risk-tolerant going maskless to indoor parties, then the virus will be prevalent ... and the risk-averse will still be afraid to go back to shopping," said James Stock, a Harvard University economics professor. "Thus, the recession lengthens and maybe deepens."

Stock, along with other researchers, has proposed ways to balance reopening the economy with measures to control the spread of the virus. Yet there's little sense of national agreement on any sort of system like that, or what happens if COVID-19 begins to spread more uncontrollably.

DIFFERENT TRAJECTORY



Top economists are struggling with what the recent surge in cases might mean.

Does it show, as Evercore ISI Vice Chairman Krishna Guha recently noted, the fragility of the U.S. market if people are scared to cross state lines? Or, as suggested by St. Louis Federal Reserve President James Bullard, are varying judgments about risk and risk management among different people, firms and regions simply how the recovery will proceed to some new balance?

Republican-governed states, particularly in the South, were hesitant to crack down early in the pandemic and were quicker to relax restrictions. They are now seeing record growth in COVID-19 cases, and their residents have been singled out for quarantines imposed by states, including New York, that were hardest hit early in the crisis but have made the most progress in suppressing the virus.

West Virginia Governor Jim Justice, a Republican, has cautioned against travel to Myrtle Beach, after cases in his state were linked to infections at the popular South Carolina resort, and some quick-to-reopen politicians have changed tack.

Within the course of a week, Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican, went from just encouraging people to "stay home" to issuing an edict on Friday that shut down bars, scaled back restaurants' capacity, and curbed other activities.

Authorities in Florida also announced on Friday that bars in the state must immediately stop serving alcohol on premises. Speaking to the Florida Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic said if significant

numbers of people returned to public life without following health rules, it would put the economy "on a different kind of trajectory."

"Even though it won't be everyone at once, people might just throw up their hands, say 'you know what, it is not worth it,'" Bostic said. "I will just do my take-out. I will do Netflix instead of going to the movies."

SLOWER PHASE

There have been positive surprises. U.S. employment unexpectedly rose in May and retail sales rebounded sharply from a historic collapse.

But that may prove a false dawn if states where activity was rebounding more quickly prove to have given the pandemic a new foothold.

JPMorgan economist Jesse Edgerton has charted a rough correlation between rising visits to restaurants in some states and growth of infections two weeks later.

"Even if we move into a new normal where young people were willing to go out and spend again, there will be a drag from older people staying home - not traveling, not going to restaurants," Edgerton said. In addition "we don't know for sure if the people who are going back out and spending now are going to keep doing that."

An Oxford Economics "recovery tracker" combining 20 economic, health and social metrics began growing steadily in early April but flattened in June. It may slow further if cases continue growing, said Gregory Daco, Oxford's chief U.S. economist.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

06/26/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY



Bill Gates' s Worry And Hope

Microsoft founder Bill Gates said yesterday that the current coronavirus picture is both globally and in the U.S. bleaker than he would have ever expected.

He said the fact that people are still dying in the U.S. today shows that the country is not even doing close to enough to fight the pandemic. The U.S. hasn't had the leadership messages or coordination that we would expect to fight the virus.

About two months ago when Gates talked about the pandemic, the virus death toll in America stood at 63,000 with more than one million cases

recorded. Today, this figure has doubled. There are now 2.4 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in U.S. and more than 122,000 people have died.

Gates attributed the rise in numbers to a lack of testing and contact tracing as well as lack of mask wearing.

Gates dismissed the White House's claim that an increase in case numbers is a direct result of increase in testing calling it, "completely false."

He also expressed disappointment with what he called a lack of leadership to tackle this virus globally which has led to countries such as India and Brazil

bearing the brunt of this disease. But he still hopes that the U.S. will step up and help get the tools out, particularly the vaccine, to everyone in the world.

We continually are seeing a sad picture from the senior nursing homes all over the country. Many of them resemble "staying in jail" centers. They house and care for our parents, grandparents and brothers and sisters. We sincerely urge the federal and local governments to organize a national emergency task force, including medical security personnel, to go to the many areas that need help.

Sadly these days, the

politicians just care about their votes and just don't care about the people who are still suffering .

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has already donated \$100 million dollars to help the research for a vaccine. His commitment and vision truly represents our American spirit.



Southern News Group Chairman / CEO Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center Chairman of International District Houston Texas



Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

Dr Fauci: 'We're Now Seeing A Disturbing Surge Of Infections' In Parts Of The U.S.



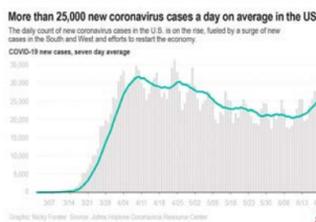
Key Points

Dr. Anthony Fauci and other health experts testified before a House committee on the administration's coronavirus response. Their testimony came at a critical time when at least 25 US states are seeing a rise in reported coronavirus cases compared to the previous week.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

During a congressional testimony, Dr. Anthony Fauci, America's top infectious disease expert, warned that there had been a "disturbing surge of infections". Fauci told the House panel on Tuesday that the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been a "mixed bag," adding that a new increase in cases is "disturbing." He explained that although some states, like New York, had been handling the virus decline well, others like Florida, Texas and Arizona had seen "troublesome" case spikes, which could be as a result of an "increase of community spread". Over 120,000 people have died of Covid-19 in the United States and there are over 2.3 million cases. "In some respects, we've done very well," Fauci said during an Energy and Commerce Committee hearing, specifically praising the way New York has been containing the worst outbreak in the country to date. "However, in other areas of the country,

we are now seeing a disturbing surge of infections that looks like it's a combination, but one of the things is an increase in community spread. And that's something I'm really quite concerned about," Fauci said. There are now about 30,000 new cases per day in the United States. The number of new cases had leveled off at about 20,000, and stayed there for weeks before rising this past weekend. The rise in the U.S. comes as the Trump administration has sought to paint a rosier picture of the U.S. outlook. Both President Trump and Vice President Pence have inaccurately tried to attribute the increase in cases to more tests being performed. The new spike in the U.S. is being driven in part by worsening outbreaks across the South and Southwest, including in Arizona, Texas, Florida and the Carolinas, even as the situation has greatly improved in once hard-hit states in the Northeast like New York and Massachusetts.



Many of the states now being hit hard were on the more aggressive side in reopening their economies. "Right now, the next couple of weeks are going to be critical in our ability to address those surging that we're seeing in Florida, in Texas, in Arizona, and in other states," Fauci said Tuesday. While cases are spiking, the hospitalization and death rates have not been rising. But contrary to what some administration officials have argued, Fauci said it was too early to draw conclusions. "Deaths always lag considerably behind cases. You're seeing more cases now while the deaths are going down. The concern is if those cases infect people who wind up getting sick and going to the hospital, it is conceivable you may see the deaths going up, so I think it is too early to say because the deaths are going down," Fauci said. Fauci said he understands young people have a "pent up urge to go out," but urged everyone to wear masks, continue to practice physical distancing, and adhere to the guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fauci said even though young people might think they won't get seriously ill from the virus, they could still unknowingly spread it to others. "Even though the overwhelming majority then do well, what you can't forget is if you get infected and spread the infection, even though you do not get sick, you are part of the process of the dynamics of an outbreak," Fauci said. "What you might be propagating, perhaps innocently, is you infect someone, who infects someone, who then infects someone who is vulnerable." Fauci, along with other top health officials, made it clear that he believes the

virus will continue to be a concern well into the fall and coincide with flu season, despite Trump's repeated efforts to downplay the severity of the outbreak. CDC director Robert Redfield urged the public to get a flu shot. "This single act will save lives," he said. Fauci also said he was "cautiously optimistic" that a vaccine would be available by early next year.



Fauci, along with Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn, reassured lawmakers that any potential vaccine will be safe, and the approval will be free from political influence. Asked to give his "unvarnished view" on where the US is in its fight against Covid-19, Dr. Anthony Fauci said that some states are doing well while others are now a problem. "You have a very large country, very heterogeneous, major differences — for example, between the New York metropolitan area and Casper, Wyoming," but it's clear, Fauci said, "we've been hit badly." Fauci gave his advice on addressing these increase in cases. "The way you address that — and I've said this over and over again — is you have to have the manpower, the system, the testing to identify, isolate and contact trace in an effective way so that when you see those increases, you can understand where they are coming from, and you can do something about them," Fauci said. Fauci added, "right now the next couple of weeks are going to be critical in our ability to address those surging that we're seeing in Florida, in Texas and in Arizona." **Related** White House coronavirus task force members say they're committed to increasing testing



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Dr. Robert Redfield, Director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci, Assistant Secretary for Health US Department of Health and Human Services ADM Brett P. Giroir and Commissioner of US Food and Drug Administration Dr. Stephen M. Hahn. Kevin Dietsch/Pool/Getty Images Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Robert Redfield, both members of the White House coronavirus task force, said they are committed to increasing — not slowing down — testing for coronavirus. The comments come as President Trump has come under fire for saying that he told staff to slow down testing for the disease to hide the discovery of more cases. While members of his own administration have said the comments were in jest, Trump insisted today he was not kidding. Asked about the state of testing, Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said he has not been told to slow down on testing. "In fact, we will be doing more testing," he said. "We're going to be doing more testing, not less." Redfield, the director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention same question reiterated Fauci's remarks. "All of us have been and continued to be committed to increasing readily, timely access to testing," he said. (Courtesy https://www.cnn.com/)

Editor's Choice



Emergency services gather at the scene of reported multiple stabbings at West George Street in Glasgow, Scotland. REUTERS/Russell Cheyne



Liverpool fans celebrate winning the Premier League with flares outside Anfield after Chelsea won their match against Manchester City, in Liverpool. REUTERS/Phil Noble



Deer are seen around the grounds of Raby Castle, Britain. REUTERS/Lee Smith



A memorial to George Floyd is lit by morning light one month after his death, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. REUTERS/Nicholas Pfofi



The relatives of a woman killed during a shooting react near a crime scene following an assassination attempt of Mexico City's chief of police Omar Garcia Harfuch, at the upscale neighborhood of Lomas de Chapultepec, in Mexico City. REUTERS/Luis...MORE



A police officer aims a gun before firing at protesters gathered near the Minneapolis Police third precinct after a white police officer was caught on a bystander's video pressing his knee into the neck of African-American man George Floyd



Demonstrators march in support of gay pride and black lives matter movements in New York City. REUTERS/Lucas Jackson



People wearing protective masks make their way during rush hour at Shinagawa station on the first day after the Japanese government lifted the state of emergency in Tokyo, Japan. REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon

Critical Need to Preserve Bed Space For Coronavirus Patients

Gov. Greg Abbott Bans All Elective Surgeries In Four Of Texas' Biggest Counties



Texas Governor Greg Abbott has banned elective surgeries in the state to preserve bed space for coronavirus patients.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

For a second time since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, Texas Governor Greg Abbott has banned elective surgeries to preserve bed space for coronavirus patients. But this time the hold on the nonessential procedures is only in effect for Bexar, Dallas, Harris, and Travis counties.

Gov. Greg Abbott announced Thursday morning he is once again putting a stop to elective surgeries to preserve bed space for coronavirus patients — but this time the prohibition only applies to Bexar, Dallas, Harris and Travis counties, four areas where the number of patients hospitalized with virus is quickly progressing.

Just Tuesday, Abbott stressed that hospital capacity in Texas was “abundant.” A day later, Abbott acknowledged in a TV interview that capacity issues in some parts of the state “may necessitate a localized strategy” instead of a return to statewide action.

Statewide, the number of hospitaliza-

tions has reached record highs for a full two weeks, soaring to 4,739 on Thursday morning and tripling since Memorial Day. On Wednesday, there were 1,320 intensive care unit beds and nearly 13,000 available hospital beds, but with regional disparities.



The Baylor Scott and White Medical Center Hillcrest hospital in Waco on March 25, 2020. (Photo credit: Angela Piazza/ The Texas Tribune)

In hard-hit regions, some hospitals have begun moving coronavirus patients from crowded ICUs to other facilities and local leaders have warned that hospitals could get overwhelmed if the number of

infections keeps climbing. In the greater Houston area, the Texas Medical Center warns that the intensive care units are 30 beds away from filling up to their normal capacity. Hospitals and care facilities would then employ their surge plans to build out additional capacity. Some hospital leaders had also pointed out that treating both patients could become unsustainable: “Should the number of new cases grow too rapidly, it will eventually challenge our ability to treat both COVID-19 and non-COVID 19 patients,” Dr. Marc Boom, head of the Houston Methodist hospital system, wrote in an email Friday.

Some counties could be added to the list if hospitalizations surge in other areas of Texas.

As hospitalizations have jumped in recent weeks, Abbott had suggested one of the first major moves the state could make is to at least partially restore the elective surgeries ban that Texas put in place in late March.

That statewide ban lasted about a month before Abbott eased it, allowing hospitals to resume non-essential procedures under certain conditions, as long as 15% of beds were reserved for coronavirus patients.

Related

Parties - Not Protests - Are Causing Spikes In Coronavirus



A man is confronted by protesters inside the Capitol Hill Organized Protest in Seattle on June 14. (Photo/ Noah Riffe/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

As the U.S. begins to open back up, coronavirus clusters — where multiple people contract COVID-19 at the same event or location — are popping up all over the country. And despite drawing massive crowds, protests against police

violence and racial injustice in Washington state weren't among those clusters. “We did have a rally in Bellingham, which is our county seat, and there was also a protest, and we have not been able to connect a single case to that rally or to the protest, and what we're finding is in large part that's due to the use of masks,” Erika Lautenbach, the director of the Whatcom County Health Department in Washington State, tells NPR's All Things Considered. “Almost everyone at the rally was wearing a mask, and it's really a testament to how effective masks are in preventing the spread of this disease.”

For the clusters that have popped up, Lautenbach says the state has been using contact tracing to learn more about how they're contributing to the spread of the virus. For instance, it found that 14 cases were associated with a party of 100 to 150 people in early June. Subsequently, 15 more cases were associated with the original 14.



“So that one event spread to 29 people and 31 related employers,” Lautenbach says. “Our challenge is to continue to trace as it moves through families, as it moves through workplaces and as it moves through social events as well.” But protests just aren't spreading the disease in the same way, Lautenbach says.

“We're finding that the social events and gatherings, these parties where people aren't wearing masks, are our primary source of infection,” Lautenbach says. “And then the secondary source of infection is workplace settings. There were 31 related employers just associated with that one party because of the number of people that brought that to their workplace. So for us, for a com-

munity our size, that's a pretty massive spread.”

And much of that spread, Lautenbach says, is affecting young people.

“We have seen almost a near flip in the cases that we're experiencing,” Lautenbach says. “So in April of this year, we were really struggling with long-term-care outbreaks. And so about 3 out of 4 people were over the age of 30 and really pretty heavily skewed to 60-plus. And by contrast, in June, we're seeing that now 2 out of 3 people that have contracted this disease are under 29.”



That trend is mirrored in Florida, where the median age for COVID-19 patients dropped from 65 years old in March to 37 in late June. Dr. Cheryl Holder, an associate professor at Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine at Florida International University, says that's partly because young people are getting exposed more.

“It's really basically who gets exposed,” Holder tells Morning Edition. “If you look who is staying in and following the guidelines, [it's] older people who are at risk. The older folks got [the message]; the young people, not so much.”

That's Lautenbach's worry too.

“The concern is that because these younger people are having more mild symptoms, they are going to work sick, they are visiting with their parents and grandparents sick and they're continuing to go to social events where they expose more and more people,” Lautenbach says. “So when we think about that web of spread, that web just grows and grows and grows.” (Courtesy npr.org)

遥控指挥的爱

我是个典型的宅女，整天关上门窝在小屋里。如果不是要去银行取款，我可能一年也出不了一次门。这么说吧，我在租房的小区住了三个月，连对门住没住人都不知道。

这天送老爸上火车，天阴得似乎要哭了。这鬼天气说下雨就下雨，到家时我已经被暴雨砸得晕头转向，原本就有点感冒发烧的我，更是冷得直哆嗦。

我用干毛巾胡乱擦了擦就坐到电脑前，开始工作。我的工作几乎全在网络上，网上接单，交易，对方满意打钱过来。工作了一阵，我感觉显示器在微微晃动，头是越来越沉了。我坚持着又坐了一阵，直到头重脚轻才爬到床上睡觉。

晕乎乎醒来，我感觉口干舌燥，浑身无力，伸手摸了摸额头，天，烫得厉害，发高烧了。我试着探着起来，感觉全身热烘烘、软绵绵的。

不知道过了多久，我感觉人是越来越难受。这时，“砰砰——”一阵剧烈的敲门声，接着还传来了呼喊声：“小龙女，小龙女……”

敲门声使我溃散的精神一紧，稍微清醒了一些，手脚并用可还是挣扎不起来。门外一阵脚步声，不知过了多久，房门被打开了，灯也打开了，我看见一个模模糊糊的人影来到面前。

见有人进来，我的意识一下子放松了，人也跟着迷糊了过去。再次醒来的时候，已经是第二天了。我看见四面一片白，才知道已经住在医院了。我还在纳闷，就听见一个人惊喜地叫了起来：“醒啦，醒啦！”我费力睁开眼睛，看见一位中年妇女，似乎在哪里见过。

“阿姨，你是？”我疑惑地问。中年妇女一脸的笑容，说她是小区楼下的药店老板，是她找人把我送进医院的。难怪我感觉有点面熟，原来是一个小区的。可她半夜三更地找我啥事呢？难道知道我高烧专门来救我？

是啊，中年妇女说，昨晚她接到一个电话，说五楼的一个叫小龙女的女孩子发高烧，严重得很，求她上去看看。深夜打电话求救，是谁知道我生病了呢？中年妇女摇头说是一个陌生号码，她也不晓得是谁。

感冒高烧是雷阵雨，来得快退得也

快，几瓶液体下去，烧也退了。回到小区，药店老板来了救我的电话号码，回拨了过去。

一个浑厚的男高音接了电话，我忙把事情简单叙述了一下，问是谁打的。男高音略微顿了顿，说不晓得这事，你打错了吧。

打错了？我把电话号码对了无数次，明明是这个电话打给药店老板的啊。咋回事呢？我上网查询了一下号码归属地，是广西。

我绞尽脑汁，也没有想出那边有什么亲人和朋友，会是谁呢？

这个谜团还没有找到答案，奇怪的事情紧接着又来了。

那天，我和往常一样坐在电脑前工作，突然传来一阵急促的敲门声。打开门，我看见一个中年人站在门口，手上托着一个蛋糕。

一看见我，中年人开口了：“你是小龙女小姐吧？”

我没有说话，点了点头。

中年人把蛋糕递了过来：“我是楼下蛋糕店的伙计，今天早上有人打电话过来，为你订做了这个生日蛋糕。”我没有打电话订做啊，再说这个城市也没谁知道我的生日啊。

我忙问多少钱，中年人连连摆手说：“放心吧，订做的人已经把钱支付了。”

“把钱支付了？”我急促地问，“那……他长什么样子呢？是男还是女呢？”

中年人微微一笑说：“没来人，钱都是通过银行账号支付的。”

今天是我的生日？我跑到台上算了算阴历，果然是我的生日。我看着那大大的蛋糕，还有上面的祝福语，突然有一种想哭的感觉。

自从母亲去世之后，老爸忙里忙外，连维持生计都艰难，哪有闲心记我的生日。这么多年，不要说有人在生日给我送蛋糕，就是祝福语都很少听到。

我拿起勺子尝了一口奶油，是我喜欢的那种奶油味儿。香香的，软软的，那种感觉真好。吃完蛋糕我又开始笑了，想起来真是莫名其妙，蛋糕吃完了还不知道是谁送的。

前前后后一分析，我觉得要挖出这个人，还是要从蛋糕店的电话和银行记

录上入手。哪晓得，我跑到楼下的蛋糕店，店主啥也不透露，只说客人要求保密，他们做生意的理应信守承诺，既然答应了就不能透露半个字。

看来上次给药店打电话和这次订做蛋糕的人，不但对我知根知底，连我的爱好和习性都掌握得清清楚楚。这个人会是谁呢？我脑海一个机灵：难道是老爸？

当即拨通了老爸的电话：“哈哈，老爸，你啥时也学会了浪漫呢？”

“你说啥子？”老爸疑惑地问，“我啥子浪漫了？”我忙把今天的事情说了，还将分析的理由提了出来，说不是你还有谁呢？

老爸瓮声瓮气地说：“哎呀，今天因困过生啊，我都搞忘了。不过蛋糕真不是我买的，我就是想给你订也不知道蛋糕店的电话号码啊！你好好想想，看是不是你附近的朋友订做的，故意要给你个惊喜。”看老爸说得那么坚决，不像说假话。

几天之后的一个晚上，我把头放到水龙头下面冲了足足十分钟，感觉大脑都有点凉意才停止，用毛巾胡乱擦了擦。

没过多久，我就开始不停打喷嚏。我拨通了老爸的电话，有气无力地说：“老爸，我今天淋雨发高烧了。”

一听这话，老爸在电话那头开始唠叨：“你这孩子，上次都冒了一次险，还那么不长记性。看医生没有？吃药没有？”

我忍住笑意，继续装：“准备去看医生呢，但浑身无力，躺一阵子再去吧。”老爸还在那头唠叨了好一阵，才挂了电话。

过了好一阵子，楼下的药店阿姨敲门进来了，说接到电话说我得了重感冒，过来看看，怕又像上次那样。

我忙把阿姨让进房间，说我怀疑一直是老爸在暗中照顾，故此想出这个办法证实一下，逼他现身。

阿姨开始不吭声，后来经不住我的软磨硬缠，才说上次打电话的人和这次确实是同一人，但不是你老爸，而是一个女人的声音。

一个女人的声音？会是谁呢？我前前后后想了想，不由惊叫起来：难道是她？我随即又开始摇头，不可能……绝对不可能，她恨我都来不及，咋可能暗

中照顾我呢？

三、来自远方的电话

经过一番颠簸和长途跋涉，我回到了阔别已久的家。

一看见我，老爸也是满眼发亮，端茶洗水果忙得不亦乐乎。看着老爸那日渐苍老的身影，我突然有一种惭愧：其实只要老人开心，我又何必对过去之事斤斤计较。

听了我的诉说和分析，老爸沉思良久，也惊呼：你每次打电话她总是很在意，难道真是她？

她，就是我的后妈。多年前，母亲病逝不久，老爸就领回来一个女人。

我还沉浸在失去母亲的痛苦中，认为老爸和那女人早就私通，活活把母亲气死了。于是，我痛恨那个女人，用死来强迫老爸在她和我之间选择，并要老爸答应永世不娶她。

面对我的无理取闹，老爸答应了。可在我大学毕业那年，老爸居然违背誓言，和那个讨厌的女人结婚，让她升级成了我的后妈。我回家大吵一番后走了，自此再也没回来过。

见我不吭声，老爸说：“这些年来我独自支撑这个家，真的很累，要不是她默默地支持和关心我，我可能早就倒下了。而且，她一直都很关心你，把你看作她的亲生女儿啊！”

后来我也知道，母亲去世的时候她还不认识老爸，我也明白错怪了他们。她呢？此时我才发现她居然不在家。

老爸一脸的喜悦说：“一听说你要回来，她说你最喜欢吃红烧肉，不顾我的反对硬是上街割肉去了。”

正说着话，我看见她从外面回来了，比过去苍老了许多。老爸一看见她就



问：“上次我们一起去闺女那里，你独自偷偷做啥去了？”

一起？我惊呆了，一年前我发烧的前一天，老爸来看过我，那天不是老爸一个人来的？

老爸笑了笑说，他们是一起来的，可到了小区她说闺女还没有谅解接纳她，去了怕影响闺女的心情，就在楼下等。

两人约定了走的时间，一起在火车站见面。

后妈明白了过来，喃喃地低声道，她从平日我和老爸的电话里发现，我是一个人住，又不和邻居来往，万一有什么事都没人照应。她就趁机去小区的那些商铺要了电话号码，就是这些电话号码，救了我的命……

我发高烧那天，他们在回家的火车上。她听说我感冒发高烧，又碰巧下了大雨，她实在放心不下，就借别人的手机给小区药铺老板打电话，求她去看看我。在我生日那天，她又打电话订了蛋糕，并求老板不要透露。

“因为‘远水解不了近渴’，我当时就想，如果闺女有事我们这么远也帮不上忙，就只能求小区附近的人了。”她的声音突然小起来，“可是不敢和你们说，怕闺女知道了怪我，说我监视她呢！”

看着一脸愧疚的她，我突然有点冲动，过去轻轻地依偎在她怀里，呜咽地低声叫了起来：“妈——”