

## **Chapter 1 – My First Journey to the Netherlands**

Hey! I'm Yi-Mei

I used to live in China, but now I live here in the Netherlands. I moved to another part of the world, in the west.

Welcome to my official story. Would you like to know what happens next?!

**Turn the page.**

**ENJOY READING!**

## **Chapter 2 – The Beginning of My Adventure**

Hey! I'm Yi-Mei. I was 16 years old when I wrote this part of my story, and I had been living in the Netherlands for 11 years. I would like to tell you about my adventure.

I was born in China. Unfortunately, my biological mother could not take care of me. She thought it would be better for me to grow up with someone else who could take care of me.

My mother therefore made the difficult decision to give me up. She put me in a box and left the box in front of a police station. This must have been the hardest decision she had ever made, because she actually did not want to lose me, but she felt that she had no other choice.

When my mother left me in the box in front of the police station, it was dark outside. The police did not find me until the next morning. They saw a box with a baby inside and took me inside. They called a doctor for me.

Fortunately, the doctor was able to examine me that same day. He performed several tests. He checked how much I weighed, how tall I was, and whether my lungs and heart were working properly.

Luckily, there was nothing wrong with me. I was healthy.

However, the doctor noticed something else about me. I was missing one hand. I obviously did not know this myself at the time.

Because I was healthy, I was able to go to an orphanage in Lu'an. mijn verhaal van yimei.docx

### **The Orphanage**

When I arrived at the orphanage, I saw many other children. The children were sad and were all crying. I started crying too because I did not understand what was happening.

Because I was still a baby, I do not remember very much from that period. That is why I will continue my story from the time when I was older and could remember things myself.

I can remember things much more clearly from when I was about five and a half years old.

I remember my caregiver at the orphanage. He was a man, and he had taken good care of me during all those years.

I slept in a small bed made of metal. One day, I needed to go to the toilet, but I could not get out of my bed by myself because it was a real children's bed.

I called for my caregiver, but he came too late. I had wet my bed. I had not done it on purpose; it was an accident.

My caregiver became a little angry with me and hit me very hard on my bottom. He did this because I was getting older and he thought I needed to learn not to wet my bed anymore.

### **The Day I Met My New Family**

I also remember the day my caregiver came to tell me that I was going to have a new family.

At first, I really did not want this. I could only cry.

I cried because I did not want to leave the orphanage. My new parents had adopted me, and they were coming to meet me that very day.

I went to the provincial government building. This was where I met my new parents and my brother for the first time.

They had brought a Chinese book and many other things for me.

I looked through the book together with my new parents and looked at the other things they had brought.

Then I looked around and saw my caregiver. He walked away because he felt that I would be in good hands with my new parents.

I did not understand why he was walking away without me. I therefore followed him because I wanted to go with him.

My new mother was surprised that I had run after him and came after me.

My mother said to me:

**"Come with us. We are your parents now."**

I was not happy about that at the time. I looked at her and became sad and angry. I made a fist underneath my clothes.

I turned away from my mother. She did not like seeing me upset either, but she really wanted me to become her child.

We then took a group photograph outside the provincial government building with the people who were going to help my parents during the adoption process.

I was about five and a half years old in that photograph.

After that, I left with my new parents and my new family. mijn verhaal van yimei.docx

### **My First Days With My New Family in China**

My parents and my brother took me to a hotel in China called Hafei.

I received new clothes that my parents had brought from home. In the evening, we went shopping and had something to eat at the hotel.

After three days, we went back to the orphanage because I wanted to show my new clothes.

A staff member said:

**“It is nice to see you again and to see that you are doing well.”**

I was proudly showing everyone my new clothes.

While I was still in China, I also visited a war museum and a zoo. I really enjoyed these trips.

My new parents, my brother and I stayed in China for about a week.

At the end of that week, we went to Beijing. I needed to get a passport and a visa so that I could travel to the Netherlands. mijn verhaal van yimei.docx

### **My Journey to the Netherlands**

On **25 January 2007**, my journey to the Netherlands began.

I travelled by plane to the Netherlands together with my new family.

During the flight, I fell asleep in my seat. I woke up when we arrived in the Netherlands. It was dark outside.

We arrived in Amsterdam at **Schiphol Airport**.

After we got off the plane and collected our belongings, I ate **vlaai** for the very first time.

I thought it was delicious!

Eventually, a taxi bus came to pick us up. The journey from Amsterdam to our home in **Vaals** took about three hours.

We arrived home very late, so we all went straight to bed.

I had my own little bed in the room I shared with my brother. That was where I slept.

The next day, I met my grandmother and grandfather for the first time.

### **My First School in the Netherlands**

Three weeks after arriving in the Netherlands, I went to kindergarten for the first time.

That was where I started learning to speak Dutch.

I was in a class with many other children, and my teacher was called **Chantal**.

After the summer holidays, I moved up to the next class, and Chantal was still my teacher.

A year later, I moved up another class. I started learning mathematics and reading, but these things were difficult for me.

Because I found some things difficult, I became angry more often.

During the May holiday, I had to leave my old school, where there had been many kind and friendly pupils and teachers.

I went to look at another school.

At first, I had to get used to the new environment. My parents and the people at the school decided that this new school would be a better place for me because it would make learning easier for me.

This school became **Adelante**, which was called **Fransiscusoord** at the time. mijn verhaal van yimei.docx

### **Growing Up at School**

Eventually, when I was 12 years old, I moved into the older pupils' section.

During breaks, I played with other girls.

I was also bullied, especially by groups of children who were bigger than me.

Because of this, I often became very angry. Sometimes I became so angry that I hit someone.

Usually, after I hit someone, I ran away from the children who had been bullying me.

My teacher saw that I had hit someone and asked me what had happened.

The children who had bullied me said that I had suddenly started hitting them for no reason and that nothing had happened before.

Fortunately, my teacher did not simply believe their story.

During the weeks that followed, we talked together about what had happened and eventually solved the situation together. mijn verhaal van yimei.docx

### **The School Year 2016–2017**

The following school year, **2016–2017**, was completely different.

When I woke up in the morning, I took a shower, got dressed and went downstairs.

I had something to eat and then brushed my teeth.

The school bus arrived, so I got on the bus and went to school.

When I arrived at school, I walked to the classroom and said good morning to my teacher.

At nine o'clock, the school bell rang and the lessons started.

When the next bell rang, it was break time. I went outside and then came back inside when the lessons started again.

When the school day was over, I took the bus home.

The next day, I went to school by bus again.

I also had gym class at school, and I absolutely did not like it.

That made me angry.

I also became angry when there were things I could not do.

Fortunately, I have grown a lot since then. mijn verhaal van yimei.docx

### **The School Year 2017–2018**

During the new school year, **2017–2018**, I realised that I no longer really liked the school and actually wanted to leave.

I talked about this with my support worker.

He told me that he had heard what I was asking for, but that I still needed to be patient because I had to stay at Adelante for a while longer.

I really did not like hearing that.

As the school year continued, my mother and my support worker worked hard to find a new place for me.

The school also did its best to make my days easier.

I was given a buddy.

She was a young woman who was 21 years old and helped me throughout the day.

At first, especially during the first week, I had to get used to having a buddy, but she also had to get used to me.

After that first week, things became much better.

We began to understand each other. mijn verhaal van yimei.docx

### **My Biological Mother**

One day, a woman came to speak with me at school.

I told her that I did not like being at that school anymore and that I really wanted to go to another school.

She said:

**“But then you will miss your friends here.”**

I said:

**“Yes, actually I will.”**

But I also wanted to tell my story about my biological mother.

I had always thought about my biological mother.

I told my mother in the Netherlands:

**“I really want to find my real mother. I want to search for her, see her, hug her and get to know her better.”**

That is something I really want.

My mother told me that we did not know where my biological mother was and that it would be very difficult to find her.

But I had a feeling that I might still be able to find her.

I imagined that my biological mother might have lived in a small house somewhere.

I did not know anything about my biological father, because I had never really talked about him.

But he was still my father, and I also wanted to find him. However, I wanted to find my biological mother first.

My mother in the Netherlands knew who my biological father was and whether I had any biological brothers or sisters, but I did not know that myself.

I thought that I might only find out when I found my biological mother.

I was often thinking about China and hoping that everything would work out.

### **My Life at Home**

Sometimes I thought about China a lot.

Most of the time, I felt that things were going well, but sometimes they did not.

When things were not going well, I sometimes went for a walk for about half an hour or went to my room and cried.

I could become very sad and depressed.

Sometimes I listened to music while I was in my room.

In the evening, I would go downstairs again, sit on the sofa and later go to bed.

The next morning, I would wake up, quickly check my messages, take a shower and get dressed.

Then I would go downstairs and eat something warm, such as chilli noodles.

After that, I would sometimes go upstairs to my adoptive parents and tell them that they needed to get up and make food for me.

I even wrote in my original story that I was quite spoiled at that time.

When my father had finished making food, he would sometimes go outside with the dog and with me.

In the evening, I watched television, drank Red Bull, ate popcorn and sometimes stayed awake until around 1:00 or 1:45 a.m.

From Monday to Thursday, except Wednesday, I had different things I had to do.

Sometimes I did not like that, but I also knew that I needed to have things to do in my life.  
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### **My Work and My Missing Hand**

I also wanted to tell people where I worked.

I worked at **Rabobank Catering in Bocholtz**, a workplace for people with disabilities.

When I walk outside, people often notice that I have only one hand.

People sometimes ask me: