

Nokia 8810”

The reason Lo Ting-fong came to be called Mo Toh-Lo, which later morphed into Mo Lo-Lo, probably had something to do with her Motorola PCN600 cell phone.

Mo Lo-Lo had one peculiar habit, which was that when she was on the phone, she wouldn't ever tell anyone where she really was. Sometimes, when she was lying in bed at home, she would say she was jogging in the park. If she were at the doctor's in Sheung Wan, she'd say she was in Chun Wan having dinner with a friend. If she were at work, she'd say she was swimming at the pool. Nobody would ever know Mo Lo-Lo's whereabouts. If they looked for her where they'd expected to find her, there would be no trace of her. But then, at the most unexpected times, she would suddenly show up. Anyone who could get used to it would become her friend, and eventually it would cease to be weird for them.

Her friends didn't know whether this habit of Mo Lo-Lo's was a fad that began with her getting a cell phone, but then, no one really knew anything about the pre-cell-phone Mo Lo-Lo. Mo Lo-Lo worked at a cell-phone network shop. She had changed companies twice, but never her profession. Mostly she worked at sales booths. The sales team would visit all the major shopping centers of Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories, holding up cell phones while calling out along the streets: "The best and the fastest service provider, no monthly fees, no service charges, free phones, bonus credits, family-friendly, special promotion, great deal," and so on.

Mo Lo-Lo was doing a promotion at the Shatin New Town Center when a guy in a black leather jacket bought a new Motorola Star Tac from her. After he got his new phone, he asked her what her name was. She pointed at his phone and said, "Motorola." She motioned to him to return his receipt, and wrote her cell-phone number on it before slipping it back to him. The next day before she got off work, Mo Lo-Lo answered a call and a voice said, "I'm Ben. I'm looking for Motorola to have dinner with me."

Ben got to know Mo Lo-Lo's phone habit pretty quickly. She had lost several boyfriends because of it before, but she didn't care enough to change. This, Ben also knew. Ben worked in a graphic design firm as a web designer. When he got bored at work, he'd play cell-phone hide-and-seek with Mo Lo-Lo. He worked really hard at guessing, and she

never got bored with feeding him clues. But of course he could never really tell if he ever got it right. Once when he was working late, he called Mo Lo-Lo, who said she was in the shower, which aroused him. Then, as he stepped out of the office, Mo Lo-Lo was hiding around the corner waiting for him. That freaked him out.

One summer evening, Ben excitedly showed Mo Lo-Lo his brand-new Nokia 8810. It was the world's smallest GSM cell phone, with a reflective silver body and an internal antenna. It was officially priced at \$7,380, but on the gray market it was selling anywhere between \$10,000 and \$20,000.¹³ There were only three hundred of them in the whole city. Mo Lo-Lo found it strange that he hadn't asked her about getting one for him through work, but he said that he had bought it through a friend. As she was checking out Ben's new treasure, she could make out two distinctly different sets of fingerprints on its reflective body. Ben said that once the new stock comes in, he'd buy one for her too – girls could use it like a makeup mirror. Shaking her head, she wiped the silver phone clean with her sleeve, took a look at her reflection, then pressed her finger and mouth on it, and gave it back to Ben. After dinner, Ben said he had to go home to work on a deadline for the next day.

Mo Lo-Lo did not go home, but wandered the streets aimlessly. She called Ben's home phone and let it ring over and over, but no one answered. She called his cell phone, which went to his voice mail. After she had called five times in a row, Ben finally answered. She asked him where he was, he said he was at home. "But no one answered your home phone." "I've been switching over to my cell phone." "No one answered your cell phone." "I was in the bathroom." "You can't answer the phone in the bathroom?" "I didn't bring it in with me. How would I know you were going to call?" "Where are you really?" "Stop trying to pick a fight." Mo Lo-Lo hung up on him. Ben tried to call her back dozens of times, but she didn't answer.

Late at night, Ben had just stepped in the door when his cell phone rang. It was Mo Lo-Lo. He asked her where she was. She said, "I'm here." Ben flicked on the lights, and saw in the reflective surface of the Nokia phone that there was a lipstick mark that looked like it was on his cheek under his ear. He rubbed the phone, looked at his reflection again, but it was still there. He looked more closely, and then realized that it was on his face, two red lips, strangely moist and itchy.