

JING

A New Play

By David Wendell Nelson

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For Cindy, my Jing

The author would like to thank the following people for their support and encouragement: Cindy Nelson, Kate Nelson, Elizabeth Nelson, Tom Chavez, Phyllis Chan, Carolyn Nguyen, Noreen Valdes, Sara Guerrero, Chance Theatre, Lisa Moon at CATS, Jeannie Wood at CATS, Chelsea Spangler, Valeria Vega, Michelle Hunte, Yvonne Logan, Hollywood Fringe Festival, New Musicals Inc., Jeffrey Mason, and Kevin Hoggard.

Cast

Aaron Thomas - young male Caucasian

Ling-si Po - young Chinese-American female, older sister of Jing

Old Ling-si Po - (narrator) present day Ling-si. In her 70s.

Chinese-American female

Yao - landlord of the Po apartment, Chinese male in his 30s

Combined Rolls:

John Clark - Asian/White, about 35 years old. Aaron's son. **Security Guard No. 1** in scene 23

Lawyer-male. George Hoffman-Portsmouth Square Rally speaker-male.

Nick-Guard at prison. **Party Guest** in scene 20

Mr. Po - Jing's Chinese father, mid 50s. **Night Fair Booth attendant**-older Chinese male or female at the night fair.

John Clark - Asian/White, about 35 years old. Aaron's son. **Security Guard No. 2** in scene 23

Mrs. Po: - Jing's Chinese mother, mid 50s. **Mrs. Lee** at the night fair. **Nurse** in scene 20.

Coffee Shop Waitress-female. **Cal Reporter:** female. **Party Guest** in scene 20

Portsmouth Square Rally Host-male or female. **GGP Rally Host**-male or female. **Party Guest** in scene 20, male or female.

Jing Po - young Chinese-American female. **Register girl**-Chinese, about 30 years old. Ling-si's daughter

Sabrina Clark - John's wife, female in her 30s. **Party Guest** in scene 20

Ramon Ochoa - young male of Mexican heritage (some dialog is in

Spanish). Band member: guitarist. **Student No. 1**

David Fiske - young male. Band member: bassist. **Student No. 2**

Paul Escobar - young male of Mexican heritage (some dialog is in Spanish). Band member: drummer. **Student No. 3**

Scott Morgan - young male. Band member: keyboard. **Student No. 4**

Total: 16

Time and Place

The story takes place in 1970/1971 with flash forwards to the present day. The location is Chinatown, prison, and the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco California.

1

SCENE 1

1

Present day. Play “**CUE 1-ANTHEM QUOTE**”. OLD LING-SI PO comes on stage.

OLD LING-SI

Hello. I’m so glad you’re here. There’s something I’d like to say. It’s a story actually. About my family, especially my sister. It’s a story that needs to be told for a variety of reasons, as you will soon see. Suffice to say, it is a lesson for all of us.

The media screen above the stage begins to show images of JING.

OLD LING-SI (CONT’D)

That’s right. That’s her. Her name is Jing.

Play “**CUE 2-GUZHENG BACKGROUND**” as she speaks.

OLD LING-SI (CONT’D)

I always wondered about my little sister and what the real story was. For years I never had a complete picture, only a perplexing mosaic of events and conversations. Until now. As if by some divine guidance, the complete chronicle came to me in the form of old friends, new acquaintances, and random chance. I have always felt that all this happened, at least in part, because of me. My friends and family reassure me that I’m mistaken, but I feel I failed somehow. Of course, this explains, at least in some small way, why I want to relay this amazing story. I do it for myself, my sister, and my family. It is a story of family, the high cost of xenophobia, and the search for the truth. But above all, it is a story of love.

The media screen now begins to show images of 1970 San Francisco, Chinatown, civil rights marches, hippies, rock and roll icons, marijuana, Mario Savio, and antiwar protests.

OLD LING-SI (CONT’D)

(referring to the media screen)

Ah yes. San Francisco in the late 60s and early 70s. I’m sure some of you remember those days. It was an amazing time to be alive. Everything seemed different then. I consider myself fortunate to have been a part of it. So let’s begin with something that happened just last week. Oh yes, my name is Ling-si Po.

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. The media screen goes dark. Cast brings a gravestone onto the stage. JOHN stands quietly alone in front of the gravestone. HE is dressed in a black suit and obviously distraught. He carries a single rose in his hand. After a few moments SABRINA, his wife, enters the stage slowly and joins JOHN. SHE wears a black dress.

SABRINA

I'm so sorry, I don't know what to say. Just remember all the love.

JOHN

I know things have to change, but I still wish it was yesterday.

JOHN places the rose on the gravestone.

SABRINA

I think we better go, we don't want to be late.

JOHN

(having trouble leaving)

I never got to say goodbye to her.

Gravestone is removed and a desk, a safe deposit box, and three chairs are brought on.

SABRINA

(tenderly)

Come on.

SABRINA and JOHN walk to the other side of the stage. There are two empty chairs on the other side of the desk. LAWYER stands when HE sees THEM approaching.

LAWYER

John.

The LAWYER shakes JOHN'S hand.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Sabrina.

The LAWYER hugs SABRINA. HE motions for JOHN and SABRINA to sit down. THEY sit. LAWYER sits down as well.

LAWYER (CONT'D)
(to JOHN)

Please sit down. I'm so sorry to hear about your mother. She was a fine person.

JOHN

Thanks, I appreciate that.

LAWYER
As your mother's only heir, all of her estate goes to you.

JOHN and SABRINA nod.

LAWYER (CONT'D)
Including this.

LAWYER reaches into a drawer and puts a safe deposit box on top of the desk. JOHN looks surprised.

LAWYER (CONT'D)
Her safe deposit box. I'll give you a few minutes to look it over.

LAWYER leaves.

SABRINA
(referring to the box)
Did you know she had something like this?

JOHN opens the box and begins taking things out. Media screen shows the contents.

JOHN
She never mentioned it to me.

JOHN examines a photo from the box. It displays on the media screen.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(sadly)
That's my party when I turned ten.

JOHN shows SABRINA the photo.

SABRINA

Look at you, you're cute as can be!

SABRINA picks up a newspaper clipping from out of the box and holds it up. It displays on the media screen. This photo exactly matches the band playing in the next scene.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

So who is this here?

JOHN examines the clipping.

JOHN

I have no idea who he might be.

SABRINA

So who is Aaron Thomas?

2

SCENE 2

2

SABRINA and JOHN remain seated. OLD Aaron's apartment. LING-SI comes to center stage. Aaron's apartment. AARON, SCOTT, DAVID, PAUL, and RAMON enter Aaron's apartment. MR. PO, MRS. PO, LING-SI, and JING take their places in the apartment above the shop.

OLD LING-SI

The year is now 1970 in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco in early July. Aaron Thomas and his four bandmates live in an aging three story Victorian on Page Street near the panhandle of Golden Gate Park. With Aaron as their leader, the band is a staple at the San Francisco area anti-war rally scene. Perhaps bandmates doesn't accurately describe the relationship these young men have. They are indeed a family of devoted artists.

(pause)

Oh, there they are. I remember them all so well. Let's see what these creative artists are up to.

SABRINA and JOHN remain seated. The BAND is practicing "ANTHEM REHEARSAL". AARON and RAMON play electric guitars, SCOTT plays the keyboard, DAVID plays the bass, and PAUL plays the drums. JING, MR. PO, MRS. PO, and LING-SI are all in the apartment above the shop. LING-SI is busy in the kitchen while the others are seated and reading. The scene opens with wild psychedelic images on the media screen. AARON, RAMON, and DAVID are working on a new song but do not sing or play. Media screen goes dark.

SCOTT

Well, that was definitely not it.

AARON

Words. A song with words would be good.

RAMON

(to AARON)

We need a great groove. Or you could make crazy shit up. Like Dylan.

Singing to the tune of the “ANTHEM” and emulating Dylan’s voice.

RAMON (CONT’D)

Lost in the ozone on Christmas day. Gather round all you clowns, on your knees to pray.

SCOTT

(emulating Dylan’s voice to the tune of “LIKE A ROLLING STONE”)

How does it feel? To be a schlemiel?

AARON

(emulating Dylan’s voice too)

You guy’s are unreal.

AARON laughs at the boys good-naturedly. The BAND members put down their instruments and sit down.

AARON (CONT’D)

(Now in a normal voice.)

But this is supposed to be anti-war. Inspirational.

RAMON lights a marijuana cigarette.

RAMON

Inspire this.

RAMON hands AARON the lighted joint. HE waves the joint away. RAMON gives the joint to DAVID.

DAVID

Speaking of lost in the ozone.

Takes a long drag on the joint.

AARON

(serious)

Like Douglass said, “No struggle, no progress.”

Flash forward to the present day in the LAWYER’S office. JOHN and SABRINA who are still seated at the desk. AARON and the BAND MEMBERS leave the stage.

Remove the chairs and other apartment props. SABRINA and JOHN continue their conversation as THEY examine the contents of the safe deposit box. SABRINA picks up a photo from the box. Media screen displays the image.

SABRINA

It's the same person in this one here.

SABRINA holds the photo for JOHN to see. It appears on the media screen.

JOHN

Why these photos of some random guy?

SABRINA

All the photos here are family and you.

JOHN

Except this guy, I wonder why. Maybe Mom knew or had some kind of an idea. I know she would want me to try.

SABRINA

Try what?

JOHN

Why do you think these are here?

JOHN holds the photos of AARON, the media screen displays them.

SABRINA

No idea.

JOHN

I think this has to do with me.

SABRINA
(questioningly)

How?

JOHN

I don't know who my real parents are.

SABRINA

You're forgetting that she didn't know either.

JOHN

That may be true, but this could be the clue I'm looking for.

SABRINA

So why didn't she tell you or me?

JOHN

You sound like you don't want to know!

SABRINA

She didn't know either! She even said so!

JOHN

Maybe Mom didn't know, but I bet she had a clue.

SABRINA

And she never told you? I don't think so.

SABRINA pauses for a moment and looks at the photos.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

So what's the date on that thing?

JOHN

April 24, 1971

SABRINA

Right after you were born.

JOHN

(becoming more animated)

It would explain a lot. Why she kept it. The date. And in San Francisco, the same city where I was born.

SABRINA

(not convinced)

Aren't you forgetting something? The records were lost! Remember?

JOHN

We don't need those records now.

SABRINA

What do you mean?

JOHN

We have year. We have a name.

SABRINA

Don't get your hopes too high. This could lead nowhere.

JOHN

I have to try. I have to know.

SABRINA looks intently at the photos.

SABRINA

Wait! Wait a minute. Show me those again.

JOHN show SABRINA the photos again. THEY display on the media screen.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

The same girl is in all three photos!

JOHN

Oh my God! She's Chinese!

SABRINA and JOHN leave the stage. Begin "CUE 6-FLASHBACK MUSIC". JING, LING-SI, MR. PO and MRS. PO come down the stairs and enter the shop. Flashback to 1970. Most of the shop shelves are bare. A guzheng sits on top of the counter. MRS. PO, JING, and LING-SI busy themselves in the shop while MR. PO reads the newspaper. OLD LING-SI walks onto the stage.

OLD LING-SI

Yes, that's me and my family in 1970. And I was so thin! My mom and dad immigrated to San Francisco after World War II. They set up shop at the corner of Grant and Clay in the heart of Chinatown. Their new home was a block or two from historic Portsmouth Square, the gathering place for all Chinatown. I was born in 1946 and Jing in 1949. As you can see, Jing was the quintessential Chinese beauty with a perfectly proportioned face and flawless porcelain skin, her long black hair falling almost to her waist. I mean, just look at her, a Chinese flower child! I admit that I was jealous at times. A little.

(MORE)

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

She would always create such a stir with the boys, while no one would even notice me. It was like being the invisible sister. But I never let it show. So, let's meet the family!

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage.

MR. PO

(worried, looking at the newspaper, to

MRS. PO)

Oh my God! Things are getting really bad back at home.

MRS. PO

We're lucky we got out in time.

MR. PO

Forced labor. Re-education.

MR. PO shakes his head.

MRS. PO

The entire Fong family disappeared.

MR. PO

Zhou Enlai and Mao's wife. What a mess.

MRS. PO

We're safe here. Our girls are free here.

MR. PO

I just wish the shop was more of a success.

MRS. PO

(to JING)

Play something for your father to cheer him up.

JING nods and picks up the guzheng and begins to play the instrumental "CUE 7-GUZHENG SOLO".

MR. PO

Very nice.

JING

Thank you, Father.

MR. PO

(to JING, raising his finger)

In Chinese!

JING
(to LING-SI, laughing)

Gracias?

MR. PO shakes his head in disappointment.
JING puts down the guzheng and goes over to
the counter where LING-SI is working. SHE
picks up the newspaper.

JING (CONT'D)
Big Brother is at Cal next weekend! We should go.

LING-SI
If I can get away from here.

MRS. PO
Ling-si, would you run to the dry cleaners later please?

LING-SI
(to JING)
See what I mean?

LING-SI turns back towards MRS. PO.

LING-SI (CONT'D)
(to MRS. PO)
Shi. (Yes)

JING
We should check out Haight-Ashbury. I know this great coffee shop!

LING-SI
Easy for you to say college girl.

JING
Come on. It will be fun!

MR. PO
Girls, help your mother with the new dresses.

JING
(to MRS. PO)
You need some help Mom?

LING-SI and JING go over to their mother.

MRS. PO
(scolding tone)

In Chinese!

JING and LING-SI help MRS. PO move dresses
from a portable rack to the shop floor.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)
(to JING)

Say it slowly.

JING
(stammering in embarrassment)

Really, I have no idea.

MRS. PO
(to JING)

Really, is that the best you can do? And besides! How do you expect to get a Chinese man?

JING
(slightly annoyed)

I'll just have to do the best I can.

MRS. PO
Learn Chinese, don't dress this way. You scare all the men away!

MRS. PO points at JING. MRS. PO goes over
to the register and leaves JING and LING-SI by
themselves. Teasing, LING-SI wags her finger at
JING in fun, imitating their mother in
exaggerated tone of voice.

LING-SI
(teasing)

Say it again, this time slowly. You better learn Chinese, you Chinese ho!

JING
I don't have time for that! I'm working here all the time. Besides, I'd rather go see the Grateful Dead.

JING and LING-SI laugh.

LING-SI

(to JING)

Your Chinese is worse than mine. And you even have a tutor! It's not like Mom and Dad haven't tried. It's always Chinese everything. Even men.

JING

(teasing)

You don't like Chinese men?

LING-SI

(indignantly)

That's not what I meant. America is such a smorgasbord. So much to choose from.

JING

That's why Cal is so great. You've got Apollinaire, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Jefferson Airplane.

LING-SI

And lots of guys.

JING smiles and nods knowingly. MRS. PO comes back over to JING and LING-SI.

MRS. PO

For Chinese men I'd recommend that you learn just what they like. But look at what you wear, I don't know what Yao sees in you!

JING

I know *exactly* what he wants! And it's not to teach me Chinese!

MRS. PO

Well, you're not trying very hard!

MRS. PO shakes her head in frustration.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

You need more tutor time with Yao.

LING-SI and JING go back to putting dresses on the racks. MRS. PO heads upstairs to the apartment to make tea. LING-SI and JING visit quietly.

JING

(with concern)

We need to get you out of here more often.

LING-SI

Who's gonna mind the shop? You? You're always at Cal!

JING

How 'bout our landlord? That guy checks you out big time.

LING-SI

(teasing)

Yao checks out everything in a skirt! Including you. Why do think he wants to be your tutor?

JING

He's harmless enough I guess.

JING picks up the guzheng and plays a few bars of a blues riff on the guzheng. Play **"CUE 9-BLUES"**

MR. PO

I don't think that was a melody I know. Very different.

JING

(suppressing a giggle)

Very different.

JING puts down the guzheng while SHE talks to her father.

MR. PO

So you are practicing Chinese with your sister?

JING

Not really. Ling-si is as bad as I am!

Both JING and MR. PO laugh.

JING (CONT'D)

(laughing with her father)

I don't think there's any hope for me!

The TV news is showing images of the latest antiwar protest. Media screen displays the images.

MR. PO

(angry, and pointing to the TV)

Look at this. More protesters! They should show more respect for their country!

JING

They're trying to save their country.

MRS. PO comes down from the apartment with the tea. She sets it down on the counter by the register and begins to pour.

MR. PO

(annoyed)

From what?

JING

From war.

LING-SI

(to JING, under her breath)

Don't start.

MR. PO

I don't think so.

JING is about to respond, but LING-SI comes over and gently takes JING by the shoulders and moves HER away from HER father.

MRS. PO

(oblivious to the conversation)

Tea everyone.

3

SCENE 3

3

THE PO FAMILY leaves the stage. Present day. Bring a chair, desk, and computer onstage. JOHN enters the stage and sits down in front of the computer. JOHN is asleep in front of the computer late at night. SABRINA comes slowly onto stage in HER robe. SHE gently touches his shoulder and HE awakens.

SABRINA

You still at it? Come to bed, you're gonna need your rest.

JOHN nods slowly. SABRINA comes over to the computer and looks over HIS shoulder at the screen.

JOHN

I can't seem to find hardly anything at all.

SABRINA

You're starting to scare me. This is becoming an obsession.

JOHN ignores her.

JOHN

(looking at the screen)

For two years Aaron Thomas played at this coffee house in the Haight.

JOHN points to the computer. The media screen shows a newspaper clipping announcing AARON THOMAS playing at the Haight Coffee House.

SABRINA

The Chinese girl? Anything at all?

JOHN

Nothing.

JOHN pushes his chair away from the desk in frustration.

SABRINA

I might have guessed.

JOHN

This is not a good sign. Maybe there's nothing *to* find.

SABRINA

You don't really know that yet. I know you want this. Try the Cal archives. Broaden your search.

JOHN

What if I find something I don't wanna know?

SABRINA

You still have to try.

(pause, trying to cheer him up)

So. What else you got?

JOHN

Just this coffee house.

JOHN goes back to the computer. SABRINA looks over his shoulder at the image of the coffee shop. The image is displayed on the media screen and is exactly the same as the coffee house onstage. SABRINA and JOHN leave the stage.

4

SCENE 4

4

Begin “**CUE 11-SCENE 4 INTRO**”. Local coffee house in Haight-Ashbury. Cast members not involved with the scene sit down at the tables and a few begin to quietly smoke a joint. The center table is for JING and LING-SI when they come onstage. Upstage there is a small 3 foot high riser where AARON, DAVID, RAMON, SCOTT, and PAUL are setting up their musical gear. The year is now 1970. A WAITRESS comes onstage to attend to the seated customers. SHE seems to be interested in AARON. AARON steps up to the mic when the cue ends.

AARON

Good evening everyone. Thanks for coming out tonight for a little music, prose, and coffee. And don't forget to tip your waitress. We are the Aaron Thomas band and I'm Aaron Thomas, your host for the evening.

The BAND takes a moment to tune up while LING-SI and JING enter the coffee shop and sit down at a table. In the dimly lit ambience AARON does not see JING.

JING

(referring to AARON)

Ooo! Who is that?

JING appears to be transfixed as AARON performs. LING-SI looks at HER with concern.

LING-SI

I thought we were here for the coffee.

JING doesn't respond.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

(in a teasing voice)

Remember, only Chinese men!

JING
(smiling)

Too late!

WAITRESS comes over to JING and LING-SI'S table.

What will it be ladies?

WAITRESS

JING watches AARON intently and doesn't respond to the WAITRESS.

Two green teas please.

LING-SI

The WAITRESS notices JING'S interest in AARON.

He *is* a major hottie, isn't he.

WAITRESS
(to JING softly)

AARON
Before our next song, we have an open mic for you poets. Any poets out there with something to say?

JING enthusiastically raises HER hand and looks at AARON. AARON is immediately struck by her beauty and cannot respond for a moment.

What are you doing?

LING-SI
(surprised by HER sister)

The mic is yours.

AARON
(to JING)

Jing!

LING-SI

AARON comes down off the stage to JING'S table and takes HER by the hand and leads HER to the stage. AARON appears to be awestruck.

AARON
(to JING)

What's your name?

JING
(to AARON)

Jing Po.

AARON goes to the mic and introduces JING.

AARON

Tonight's poet is Jing Po.

AARON and the BAND MEMBERS all vacate
the stage and watch from the audience.

JING
(softly)

This is called "Shimmer".

JING recites "**CUE 13-SHIMMER**". SHE
appears to go into a trance with her eyes closed.
Media screen shows images of French
impressionistic art. AARON is transfixed.

JING (CONT'D)

It is a reflection only time may reveal
That singular mirror of our true selves
The details of our lives
Are illuminated with painful clarity
No matter the distance
Each stands highlighted
Absolute and immutable
Waiting to be judged by God
Yet it is a reflection
Only of what can be seen
Not of the invisible
And unknowable depths

JING pauses briefly.

JING (CONT'D)

But it is in these depths
That lives are measured
The shallows of concern and care
The depths of love and sacrifice
The currents that steer our lives

(MORE)

JING (CONT'D)

There are those who languish in its depths
 And never see the surface
 Only you see beyond my reflection
 Only you have seen my soul

JING opens her eyes. Applause. AARON stands and applauds enthusiastically. HE then goes to the stage. WAITRESS brings the teas to LING-SI.

AARON

(to JING, takes her hand)

Beautiful.

(to crowd)

Jing Po please!

More applause. AARON walks JING back to her table. JING sits while AARON stands and stares, smiling blankly. THEY are oblivious to everything except each other. LING-SI inspects AARON closely as she sips on her tea.

JING

Sit down.

AARON sits down.

AARON

“The shallows of concern and care, the depths of love and sacrifice.” Beautiful imagery.

JING

Thanks. Lots of inspirational imagery around here.

AARON

And the “only you see beyond my reflection, only you have seen my soul.” Almost like music. So Mallarmé.

JING

French symbolism. The best.

AARON

I love your mysterious, personal touch.

JING

Yeah, there's some autobiography in there.

AARON

I'm taking a French Symbolism class at Cal.

JING

With Aubert! I wrote Shimmer for his class!

AARON

I'm sure he loved it.

(pause, tenderly)

And the "only you have seen my soul", who might that be?

JING

(smiling)

Someday I hope to find out.

AARON tears himself away from JING and turns to LING-SI.

AARON

Sorry to be so rude. I'm Aaron Thomas.

AARON shakes hands with LING-SI.

LING-SI

I'm Ling-si, Jing's sister.

AARON

A pleasure.

AARON turns back to JING.

JING

I haven't seen you here before.

AARON

We're the new band.

RAMON comes over to AARON and stands next to him. The other BAND MEMBERS go back onstage

RAMON

Dude, time to go back to work.

AARON
(to RAMON)

Just a minute.

The WAITRESS comes over to AARON.

WAITRESS
(seductively)

Hi Aaron!

The WAITRESS traces her finger seductively
across AARON'S shoulders. HE ignores HER.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
(softly to JING)

Stay away from him.

RAMON
(to AARON)

Let's go.

AARON
(having trouble tearing himself away)

Okay, okay.

(to JING)

I have to go. Stay for the next song? I think you'll like it.

AARON stands up and starts to slowly back
away from the table with RAMON taking HIM
by the shoulders.

JING
Sure. Stop by our shop. Grant and Clay.

AARON
Great.

AARON steps on to the stage and snaps out of
his trance-like state. The BAND gets ready to
play while LING-SI and JING have their
conversation.

LING-SI
(to JING)
How do you do shit like that? All in the space of ten minutes.

JING

He is such a cutie.

LING-SI

No doubt. But I hate to tell you, he's white! Mom and Dad would freak.

The WAITRESS comes over to JING and LING-SI'S table and drops the bill on the table from about two feet above. Media screen goes dark

WAITRESS

Pay up front. On your way out!

LING-SI

I think it's time to go.

JING

We just got here. I didn't finish my tea!

LING-SI

I think we've done enough damage for one night.

LING-SI throws down some money on the table, takes JING by the arm and heads off stage. AARON watches JING as SHE waves to him.

5

SCENE 5

5

The next day. The PO family Chinatown import shop. JING and LING-SI are working in the downstairs PO family shop. MR. and MRS. PO are upstairs reading in the family apartment.

JING

Hell, will you look at this! There's nothing left!

JING turns and looks at the shop inventory.

LING-SI

I don't think we can go on like this for very long.

JING

No tourists, no business.

LING-SI

I don't how we went so wrong.

JING

Neither do I.

LING-SI

It's gonna take a miracle to save this place.

LING-SI and JING busy THEMSELVES in the shop as YAO enters.

YAO

Ni hao lovely ladies. How are you?

Leering slightly at JING.

LING-SI

Hello Master Yao. Here for the rent?

(YAO nods)

JING

(to LING-SI quietly)

I hope we have it.

LING-SI
(to JING so YAO doesn't hear)

I don't think so.

JING
(to LING-SI quietly)

Just tell him we gave it up for Lent!

JING and LING-SI smile at each other.

YAO

May I go upstairs?

LING-SI

Sure.

YAO starts moving up the stairs.

YAO
(to JING)

Jing, I know you love the Chinese Harp and I'd be glad to give you one. If that's okay with you.

JING doesn't respond. MRS. PO opens the door for YAO and HE walks in to the upstairs apartment. MR. PO stands up and EVERYONE bows. Still visible, the girls busy themselves downstairs in the shop.

MRS. PO

Ni hao Master Yao. How are you?

YAO

I'm fine, thank you. Good to see you.

MRS. PO

Would you like some tea?

MRS. PO goes to the kitchen to prepare the tea.

YAO

Yes, thank you. How's business?

MR. PO

I'm afraid it's not as good as it might be.

YAO

I saw your lovely daughters downstairs. I offered one of my guzhengs to Jing.

MRS. PO
(from the kitchen)

A very kind offer.

MR. PO hands YAO an envelope filled with cash.

MR. PO
(quietly to YAO)

We will get you the rest next week.

YAO

No rush. I know business has been slow. Please, I don't want to burden your family.

MR. PO

Thank you. I appreciate your understanding.

(pointing to the envelope)

By the way, you should be careful with so much cash.

YAO

I can take care of myself. I carry my own insurance.

YAO pats HIS coat pocket confidently where HE is keeping HIS gun. He makes a hand gesture like a gun.

YAO (CONT'D)

Jing is a fine musician. And a beautiful young woman.

MR. PO

And headstrong as well. I believe that Berkeley school is a bad influence.

MRS. PO returns to the living room with the tea.

MRS. PO

She is so American. And her Chinese is terrible!

YAO

She doesn't take it seriously.

MRS. PO begins to pour the tea. THEY begin to drink.

MRS. PO

Your tutoring once a week is not enough.

YAO

Certainly not. At least twice a week.

MRS. PO

That would be a great help.

MRS. PO looks at YAO.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Perhaps you might honor us by helping Jing twice a week. You are a fine son of China.

MR. PO

You know the traditional ways.

YAO

I would be happy to help.

YAO finishes his tea.

YAO (CONT'D)

I must go. Thank you for the tea.

YAO gets up to leave and heads downstairs,
EVERYONE bows. MRS. PO goes downstairs
with YAO.

YAO (CONT'D)

(now downstairs and looking at JING as
HE walks off stage)

Goodbye girls. And Jing, remember that guzheng. And I'll be back on Tuesday for your lesson.

YAO leaves the stage. MRS. PO follows YAO
to the edge of the stage and waves goodbye.

JING

(to LING-SI)

Tuesday night?

LING-SI

(teasing)

Ooo, with Mr. Right! He definitely has a major thing for you.

JING

(in a deep voice and swaggering a bit.

Imitating YAO)

So my little concubine, I've come for the rent!

LING-SI

(in a high pitched melodramatic voice)

I don't have a thing! What could I possibly give you?

JING

(continuing her imitation)

Perhaps a little Szechuan? Word on the street is that yours is hot and spicy!

JING looks LING-SI up and down.

JING (CONT'D)

(continuing her imitation)

Give us a kiss!

LING-SI blows JING a kiss. LING-SI hugs
HER sister and THEY laugh.

MRS. PO

Behave girls!

MRS. PO corners JING and talks excitedly.
LING-SI goes to the register and does not hear
the conversation. MR. PO reads the newspaper
upstairs.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Your father and I have asked Yao to tutor you twice a week now.

JING

(nonplussed and in a normal voice)

Oh?

MRS. PO

Yes.

JING

(laughing slightly, then pause)

Oh, I see where this is going. I don't think this is about tutoring at all.

(pause, warily)

This couldn't have anything to do with our financial problems?

MRS. PO

(becoming annoyed)

You are Chinese, not American. Honor your heritage and family.

JING

(trying not to over-react)

Well, tell Yao that I am flattered but once a week is more than enough.

MRS. PO

(still annoyed)

Remember who you are young lady. Yao is an important man. His help could save this shop.

JING

(becoming slightly alarmed)

You're really serious about this, aren't you?

MRS. PO

We will talk later of this. Get those new dresses on the rack. Off with you.

AARON enters the shop. JING and LING-SI do not notice AARON. MRS. PO comes over to help AARON. SHE doesn't know who HE is.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

(to AARON)

May I help you?

AARON

(trying to charm her)

Yes thank you. Tomorrow is my parents' anniversary and they are quite the art collectors. Your shop was recommended by a friend.

MRS. PO

Why thank you. Any specific art form?

AARON

Mostly painting and sculpture.

HE looks at the paintings on the wall.

AARON (CONT'D)

These are most impressive.

MRS. PO

You have an eye for quality I see. These are all by Yun Shi.

AARON

I love his almost unfocused quality. Very impressionistic.

MRS. PO

Ah, you like French art.

AARON

I prefer a non-graphic approach. Leaves more to the imagination.

MRS. PO

There is similarity between the two styles.

AARON

No doubt.

MRS. PO

You are a well informed young man. It's nice to see a young person take such an interest in these things.

JING finally notices AARON with her MOTHER and begins to panic. SHE goes over to LING-SI at the register.

JING

(under her breath to LING-SI)

Holy shit. He's talking to Mom!

LING-SI stares in disbelief.

JING (CONT'D)

Don't stare!

AARON

My parents would love any of these. But I think I'll take this one.

MRS. PO

You are a most thoughtful son.

MRS. PO takes the painting off the wall. JING walks nervously over to AARON and her MOTHER.

JING

I think we need more tea mother.

AARON

(to MRS. PO, feigning ignorance)

Oh, this is your daughter! Thank you for your help.

MRS. PO bows and gives JING the painting.

MRS. PO

(to AARON)

My daughter Jing will wrap this for you.

(to JING)

Such a nice young man.

JING can hardly believe what has happened.

MRS. PO goes upstairs to prepare more tea.

JING

(to AARON, smiling and under her
breath)

That was my mother!

AARON

(teasing)

I really was looking for something for my folks.

JING

(smiling)

You are so bad...

AARON

(to LING-SI at the register)

Hi Ling-si. How's business?

LING-SI

(nervously)

You're going to get us in trouble.

MR. and MRS. PO come downstairs with the
tea.

MR. PO

(referring to AARON)

Are you helping your customer Jing?

JING
(flustered)

Uh, no, not yet.

MR. and MRS. PO watch as THEY drink their
tea.

AARON
(enjoying the situation)
Yes, I could use some more help. Pajamas for my grandmother perhaps?

JING
(under her breath and smiling)
Pajamas? Are you kidding? You're killing me here, smart ass!

SHE goes to the shelf and starts going through
the pajamas.

JING (CONT'D)
(in a mocking voice and getting into the
spirit of the situation)
Isn't this one nice? So feminine. I'm sure it would look great on you!

MR. and MRS. PO finish their tea and head
upstairs.

MR. PO
(to MRS. PO)
What a well mannered boy.

MRS. PO
For an American.

MR. and MRS. PO disappear into the apartment.
MR. PO goes back to the newspaper. MRS. PO
occupies herself in the kitchen. JING, LING-SI,
and AARON all gather around the register.

JING
(laughing)
You fruitcake! That was supposed to be funny?

AARON
Actually, it was kind of funny.

JING
(smiling)

Yeah, I guess.

LING-SI
(with a disapproving look)

Not funny.

AARON pays LING-SI at the register.

JING
(tenderly)

I loved your song last night.

AARON

Thanks.

AARON looks intently at JING. LING-SI comes out from behind the register and takes AARON good naturedly by the arm and moves him towards the door.

LING-SI
(interrupting AARON in an exaggerated, patronizing voice)

Time to go now...

JING

What are you doing tonight?

AARON

Something with you I hope.

JING

Meet me at Portsmouth Square at 9 tonight. Next to the Goddess of Democracy statue.

AARON nods.

LING-SI
(in a mocking tone)

Thank you. Come again.

LING-SI ushers AARON out the door with his painting. AARON leaves the stage. JING and LING-SI try to have their conversation at the register without drawing attention to themselves.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

(to JING)

Are you crazy? He's still white and a musician too!

JING

That's bad? Why is everyone so intolerant around here?

LING-SI

(sarcastically)

Maybe we should introduce him to Mom and Dad right now.

JING

I think Mom likes him already!

JING turns to a rack of dresses and looks at them intently.

JING (CONT'D)

So, what do you think I should wear tonight?

LING-SI

(sarcastically)

How about this?

Pulls a negligee off the rack and puts it up to JING. THEY both smile.

6

SCENE 6

6

That night. Scene changes to Portsmouth Square. Begin “**CUE 16- NIGHT FAIR POEM**”. Bring on the night fair sets. The night fair is in full swing. Media screen shows Chinese art images, as well as the booths with JING and AARON exploring. JING is waiting nervously next to the Goddess of Democracy statue. AARON arrives shortly thereafter amid all the people and hustle and bustle. Wait for cue to finish.

AARON
(enthusiastically)

Hi.

AARON goes to hug JING, but she motions him to stop.

JING
Not here. Too many neighbors.

AARON nods. THEY sit on a bench at the foot of the Goddess of Democracy statue.

AARON
You look wonderful.

JING
(beaming)
Thank you Aaron.

AARON
I have a little something for you.

HE hands JING a small box. SHE smiles and opens it. It is a blue moonstone pendant.

JING
It's beautiful!

AARON

Blue moonstone from Sri Lanka. May I put it on you?

JING nods. AARON puts the pendant on JING.
SHE is beaming.

JING

I love it. Thank you so much!

AARON sings a phrase of "FOR THE LOVE
OF THE MOON".

AARON

For the love of the moon.

AARON (CONT'D)

So this is the night fair.

JING

Happens every Saturday night. Follow me. I want to show you something.

JING attempts to take AARON'S hand, but he
resists.

AARON

All those neighbors!

THEY laugh. JING takes AARON'S hand and
THEY begin to walk.

JING

What the hell.

THEY go to a musical instrument booth that has
all kinds of instruments, including traditional
Chinese instruments. A BOOTH ATTENDANT
watches the instruments.

AARON

I'm a musician and I don't recognize half of these instruments.

JING

A lot of these are traditional Chinese instruments. Check this out.

JING selects a guzheng and sits down to play.
AARON is amazed.

AARON
I thought you played piano!

JING
(referring to herself)
Chinese...all part of the gig.

AARON
A woman of many talents.

AARON gives a knowing look at JING. SHE
smiles.

AARON (CONT'D)
That looks hard to play. How is it tuned?

JING
Four octave pentatonic scale. 21 strings. Moveable bridge. I use finger picks on the right
hand and push on the strings with the left to bend the notes. It's called a guzheng.

AARON
Very cool. How long have you been playing?

JING
Since I was a little girl.

AARON
Well done.

JING
(playfully)
So get a guitar Elvis. Let's see what kind of Chinese chops you got.

AARON selects a guitar and sits down in a
chair.

JING (CONT'D)
(smiling)
C pentatonic. No f. No b. Try to keep up.

AARON nods. As the song starts, the booth
attendant recognizes the song and adds his own
percussion of tapping feet, drums, and gong.
JING starts to play **“CUE 17-SPRING ON
THE MOUNTAIN sans vox”**. AARON listens
intently and then joins JING.

Again both AARON and JING mimic playing the guitar and guzheng. When the song finishes THEY both break into laughter.

AARON

That was fun.

JING

(smiling)

Not bad for a rocker.

THEY put down the instruments and begin to walk. AARON takes JING'S hand. Begin "CUE 18-WALKING MUSIC".

AARON

You must know everyone around here!

JING

Some.

Spying the anti-war booth, AARON leads JING to the next booth. YAO now appears and is wandering around the night fair, but hasn't seen JING and AARON yet

AARON

Come on, I have something to show you.

THEY head to the anti-war booth. AARON picks up a brochure and shows JING.

AARON (CONT'D)

Look who's playing tomorrow at the rally! The Aaron Thomas band. These guys rock!

JING

You're playing tomorrow? How cool!

AARON

Can you come?

JING

Sure.

AARON

Should be a big crowd.

THEY start to walk again. THEY come to the Planned Parenthood booth. AARON picks up an IUD.

AARON (CONT'D)

Hmm, what is this? What does IUD stand for?

JING laughs and picks a brochure on vasectomies and looks at it blankly.

JING

Gee, what's a vasectomy? And what are these big scissors for?

AARON

(laughing)

Not funny.

JING

(playfully)

Ah, the male ego. Such a fragile thing.

AARON

(in a melodramatic tone)

It's not easy being male.

THEY start walking again. The tone of the conversation becomes more serious.

JING

(firing right back at him)

Try being Chinese and female.

AARON

(in a more serious tone)

Nothing is simple.

JING

My parents would totally freak if they knew about you. And Americans are just as bad. Like that waitress.

AARON

No joke.

(smiling)

But I think your Mom already likes me!

JING

Yeah. If you buy something.

(pause)

Are you hungry? How about some Chinese?

AARON

Definitely. I could even go for something to eat.

JING shoots him a look and then smiles. THEY
walk up to a Chinese food booth

JING

Hi Mrs. Lee.

MRS. LEE

Hello Jing.

MRS. LEE looks disapprovingly at AARON.

JING

(to AARON)

Try the Dim Sum. The vegetarian is best.

AARON

Sounds good.

JING

Two vegetarian Dim Sum please.

MRS. LEE hands her the food while glaring at
AARON. AARON pays MRS. LEE and starts to
walk away.

MRS. LEE

(so AARON can't hear)

Who's your friend? Do your parents know?

JING

(in an exaggerated, patronizing voice)

Thank you Mrs. Lee.

MRS. LEE

(softly to JING)

He's a white boy.

JING
(beginning to anger)

Yes, he is. Is that a problem?

AARON hears JING and comes back over to the counter.

AARON
Is everything alright?

JING
(answering AARON but making sure
MRS. LEE can hear her)
Some people don't think I should be with an American boy.

AARON
That's alright, let's go.

JING
(speaking loudly for all to hear)
It's not alright. It's like you're not good enough!
(starting to get angry)
Maybe this food isn't good enough!

JING puts HER food back on the counter and glares at MRS. LEE. AARON comes back to the counter.

AARON
(to JING)
It's okay. Let's go.
(to MRS. LEE)
Sorry.

HE picks up JING'S food off the counter.

AARON (CONT'D)
(to JING)
Are you okay?

No response from JING. AARON carries the food to a nearby table. THEY sit.

JING
(still fuming)

You're special to me. And it makes me crazy when people say stuff like that.

AARON

Do you know her?

JING

A neighbor. It's like they're still in China.

AARON
(smiling, teasing)

So. How special am I?

JING

Special enough to piss me off!

Laughter.

AARON

What higher praise.

AARON pause thoughtfully and looks at JING.

AARON (CONT'D)

I was thinking about your poem the other night. Why such a personal piece?

JING

The usual. Am I Chinese or American? A family that doesn't really know me, except Ling-si.

AARON

And the last lines? Who has seen beyond your reflection?

JING looks long and hard at AARON.

JING

I think you know.

JING and AARON start to kiss tentatively, still wary. YAO comes over to JING and AARON. YAO puts his hands on his hips.

YAO
(in a condescending tone)

Jing, your parents would not be pleased.

Who's this?

AARON

AARON stands up in a protective manner.

Jing!

YAO

I should go.

JING

JING looks torn and stands up slowly.

Why? Who is this guy?

AARON

Remember the landlord I told you about?

JING

AARON
(beginning to anger)

So this is Yao.

AARON turns to face YAO.

This is none of your...

AARON (CONT'D)

JING
(interrupting, trying to calm AARON)

It's okay. You don't understand.

AARON

Please...

JING just shakes her head.

It's a family thing. I have to go.

JING

You on campus Monday?

AARON

JING nods and turns to leave the stage.

AARON (CONT'D)
(calling after her)

Sproul Plaza! Noon!

JING nods again as SHE walks away. YAO turns to follow JING and smirks slightly at AARON as he goes.

7

SCENE 7

7

Aaron's apartment. RAMON, SCOTT, PAUL, and DAVID are getting ready for rehearsal. EVERYONE is relaxed except AARON. HE sits next to the phone while the others get ready to play. When THEY are ready begin "CUE 19-SCENE 7 INTRO". Wait until cue ends before starting dialog.

RAMON

So, you get any sleep last night?

AARON

Not really.

RAMON

Well, guess we'll find out soon enough.

(trying to cheer AARON up)

Come on dude, let's hope for the best.

DAVID

I hear they're doing a lottery now if you're not a student.

AARON

Yeah, the operative word here is *full-time* student! I had to drop a class and went below the minimum. Not like you guys.

SCOTT

So, that means you go into the lottery?

PAUL

Time to burn your draft card!

AARON

Well, here goes. The moment of truth. Lord have mercy.

AARON checks his watch then goes to the phone.

AARON (CONT'D)

Hey, guys! I can't hear.

BAND stops playing. RAMON continues to play his guitar mindlessly.

RAMON
(singing mindlessly)
Once upon a time you dressed so fine, threw the bums a dime...

AARON
Shut up Ramon, I can't hear!

RAMON stops singing.

DAVID
I hear they're taking only up through 198.

AARON dials.

AARON
(speaking into the phone)
Hi, I'd like to get a lottery number for the draft.
(pause)
Sure, I'll wait.

DAVID
Let's keep a positive thought here guys.

EVERYONE listens intently.

AARON
(into the phone)
February 17th.

AARON is immediately stunned. HE slowly hangs up the phone.

AARON (CONT'D)
189.

EVERYONE is thunderstruck. There is a long silence as EVERYONE looks at AARON.

SCOTT
(clueless)
Is 189 bad?

DAVID slaps SCOTT on the back of the head. EVERYONE glares at SCOTT. AARON begins to pace.

DAVID comes over to AARON and puts his hands on his shoulders to settle him down. AARON sits down nervously in a chair.

RAMON
(worried)

Man, that makes you 1A.

SCOTT
(mindlessly)

It's okay. You'll see.

SCOTT comes over and kisses the top of AARON's head. AARON pats SCOTT'S arm in appreciation.

AARON

Report for active duty?

RAMON

Easy. Let's not panic yet.

Pats AARON on the back.

AARON
(slightly panicked)

I can't do this.

DAVID
Remember what happened to David Harris?

SCOTT
(mindlessly)

Who's David Harris?

EVERYONE, except AARON, looks at SCOTT for being so clueless. AARON stands. HE is lost in thought and stares out at the audience. Shakes his head slightly and lets out a sigh of frustration.

RAMON

Where's that J?

Scene moves to Sproul Plaza on the UC Berkeley campus later that day. AARON, DAVID, RAMON, SCOTT, and PAUL are setting up for a concert in the plaza. It is a few minutes before noon. The BAND is erecting a small stage with a large banner draped across the front declaring "Make a difference. Join Students For A Democratic Society." There is a small card table in front of the band with a single chair. JING walks briskly onstage. AARON sees her and rushes to embrace her passionately. THEY have their conversation while the BAND continues to set up.

AARON

(excited)

I'm so glad you could come.

AARON and JING separate. AARON takes JING'S hands.

AARON (CONT'D)

You are so beautiful.

JING

Thank you kind sir. I have a lit class at 2, so no problem.

(pause, confused)

JING (CONT'D)

Are you guys playing here today?

AARON

We're recruiting for SDS, students for a democratic society. Music is the best way to get people's attention.

JING

Very cool!

AARON

(worried, slowly)

You know, I was a little worried after the other night. At the night fair.

JING

It's kind of hard to explain.

AARON
(trying to get it off his chest)

I have some bad news.

JING
(concerned)

What kind of bad news?

AARON

I have to go to Vietnam.

JING becomes very alarmed.

JING

Vietnam? Why didn't you tell me?

AARON
(dramatic pause)

Lottery numbers happened just this morning.

I got a low number.

JING

But you're in school!

AARON

I had to drop a class. Went below the minimum.

JING

Oh no. What are you going to do?

AARON

I wish I knew.

There is a pause in the conversation as THEY
look at each other.

JING

Would you really go to Vietnam?

AARON

I don't know.

JING
(concerned)

You could go to prison.

AARON

I suppose it's better than Vietnam.

JING

Talk about a test of conviction.

(pause, thinking)

What about an appeal?

AARON

I don't think so, since I'm below the minimum.

JING

Could you do conscientious objector?

AARON

(shaking his head slightly)

I'd have to show a history of that kind of thing.

JING

How long do you have?

AARON

Less than a month probably.

JING

(surprised)

A month? Oh no.

JING pauses thoughtfully.

JING (CONT'D)

Would you really go to prison?

AARON

I guess I don't have much of a choice.

JING

This is a matter of conscience. If you cooperate, you'll have to live with it all your life.

AARON

That's what bothers me.

JING

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. Remember that?

AARON

(impressed)

How do you know all this stuff?

JING

(smiling)

Berkeley student.

AARON

(reflectively)

I know what I have to do. I'm just afraid to do it.

JING

And for how long?

AARON

David Harris got two years.

JING

That's a long time.

AARON

(big pause, tenderly)

I have this feeling about you and me.

JING

(softly)

So do I.

AARON

But two years?

JING

(smiling)

I don't give up that easily.

AARON

(more seriously)

So what do you think I should do?

JING

(frightened for AARON)

My God, it's war! You could be killed.

AARON just shakes his head.

JING (CONT'D)

I have faith in you Aaron Thomas. Be the man I know you can be.

AARON
(thoughtfully)

For you, I can do that.

JING
You know the landlord guy I was talking about, Yao?

AARON
Yeah.

JING
Well, Mom and Dad don't think I'm Chinese enough so they've asked him to tutor me. But it's not about that. Yao wants something else.

AARON looks intently at JING.

AARON
(surprised)
What do you mean?

JING
He knows Mom and Dad are in deep financial shit. So he's taking advantage to get what he wants.

AARON
(becoming alarmed)
Over my dead body!

JING
I respectfully declined.

THEY start to walk among the booths.

AARON
Glad to hear it. But that's outrageous.

JING
And Mom's not giving up. Makes me feel like a piece of meat.

AARON
That's not fair to you!

AARON shakes his head in disbelief.

JING

Mom is pissed. She's trying to get the guilt thing to work. I feel terrible about it.

AARON stops again and looks in her eyes.

AARON

Don't do that! You have a life too.

AARON lowers his voice and speaks tentatively.

AARON (CONT'D)

A life with me, I hope.

JING

(smiling at AARON)

I was hoping you might say that.

AARON pauses and reaches in his pocket.

AARON

Oh, and I have a little something for you.

HE hands JING a small box. SHE smiles and opens it.

JING

It's beautiful!

AARON

Blue moonstone from Sri Lanka. May I put it on you?

JING nods. AARON puts the pendant on JING. SHE is beaming.

JING

I love it. Thank you so much!

AARON calls to the other BAND members.

AARON

Hey, guys! Let's do it now.

The BAND springs into action while AARON and JING watch.

AARON (CONT'D)

I have a little surprise for you!

JING is confused. The BAND quickly brings forth a folding card table, checkered tablecloth, two white plates, silverware, a large candle, two chairs, napkins and cups. THEY bring over a picnic basket full of food and places it on the card table. DAVID places a large umbrella over the table. AARON places a small, beautifully wrapped package on JING'S plate. With all the essential features in place AARON walks over to JING and offers HER his hand.

AARON (CONT'D)

(to JING with a mischievous smile)

If you would follow me...

JING

(thrilled)

Thank you Aaron. You planned all this?

AARON escorts JING over to the table. AARON pulls out the chair for JING to sit. JING is elated. AARON sits down. The BAND, without AARON, goes back to the stage and continues to set up. AARON pours wine from a plastic bottle into their glasses.

AARON

No alcohol on campus, so just to keep up appearances. And now for your dining pleasure, we have eggplant parmigiana from Giovanni's just down the street!

AARON dishes the eggplant.

JING

You are so sweet.

AARON points to the small box now next to JING'S plate.

Go ahead and open it.

AARON

JING smiles from head to toe and removes the silver ribbon and opens the package. It is a beautiful moonstone ring.

Moonstone!

JING

With a few diamonds for luck!

AARON

JING immediately puts it on.

It fits perfectly!

JING

Well, I did have a little help from Ling-si with the size.

AARON

JING throws her arms around AARON in appreciation.

Thank you so much! Two gifts in just a few days. You certainly know how to spoil a girl!

JING

AARON has trouble refocusing after such stimulating affection.

Oh. I actually can say something in Chinese! Okay, here goes. Buyong xie (You're welcome).

AARON

Not bad. You are such a dear.

JING

The BAND continues to set up while JING and AARON eat and converse.

You did all this for me?

JING (CONT'D)

Of course. But I did have a little help from the boys.

AARON

JING

They love you, don't they? It's wonderful to see.

AARON

They're my family. My comrades.

(in a more serious tone)

After what happened the other night, I wasn't sure you'd come today. What was that all about with Yao?

JING

I'm getting the full court press from Mom and Dad. Be more Chinese. Kiss up to Yao.

JING looks intently at AARON.

JING (CONT'D)

I can't even begin to tell them about you.

AARON

What about what you want?

JING

It's my family. It's like this crazy balancing act. And Yao knows I'll catch hell for seeing you.

AARON

Just as long as he stays away from you.

JING

(tenderly)

Remember what you said at the night fair? About you and me?

AARON

Of course.

JING

Well, I feel the same way. So don't worry.

The conversation is abruptly shattered by a young female REPORTER who has just come onstage. SHE carries a camera.

CAL REPORTER

Hi you guys, I'm from the Daily Californian. I'd like to do a piece on your unique membership drive approach.

JING and AARON have trouble leaving their conversation.

AARON

Sure.

CAL REPORTER

Do you mind if I take some photos?

AARON

Of course not.

The REPORTER surveys the lunch table and the BAND in amazement.

CAL REPORTER

I wish my boyfriend would do this for me!

The REPORTER takes a few quick photos of JING and AARON and then moves towards the BAND for more photos. JING and AARON go back to their conversation. The BAND, except for AARON, begins to remove the musical gear and take it off stage.

JING

Any idea how long we have? Before you have to report for duty?

AARON

Still no word.

JING

Tell you what. Let's make the most of the time we have.

JING lifts HER glass of wine to toast.

JING (CONT'D)

To us! And the future.

AARON lifts his glass as well.

AARON

To us!

THEY toast.

JING

I can't tell you how much this all means to me. The ring and our Italian lunch. Xie xie (thank you).

AARON

Oh I know that one! That's thank you, right? How do you say "Anything for you" in Chinese?

JING looks AARON directly in the eyes and speaks tenderly. SHE doesn't tell AARON what it really means.

JING

Wǒ ài nǐ.

JING and AARON stand and embrace.

SCENE 8

Flash forward to present day. Early morning. Bring a desk, chair, and computer onstage. A disheveled JOHN is in his robe sitting in front of the computer and working feverishly. HE works for a few moments by himself. SABRINA comes onstage dressed nicely for work.

SABRINA

(concerned)

Aren't you going to work?

JOHN ignores her question and continues to work.

JOHN

You were right about the Cal archives. I found all kinds of stuff! Photos. Articles.

SABRINA

(more insistent)

So what about going to work?

JOHN is absorbed with HIS search and answers flippantly.

JOHN

I have lots of sick days. Don't worry.

SABRINA

Of course I'm worried. You're missing work and up all night. You're totally obsessed with this. You're gonna have to let it go.

JOHN ignores SABRINA. HE is more serious now.

JOHN

I don't think so. Check this. There was an anti-war rally in Chinatown.

HE shows her on the computer screen. Media screen displays the images.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And guess who supplied the music!

SABRINA

Let's see.

SHE looks at the computer closely.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

It says he was a Cal student.

SABRINA becomes more animated with the discovery of this clue.

SABRINA (CONT'D)

That's the connection! Check the Cal student newspaper.

JOHN

Good idea.

(pause)

And there's more. It says he spent some time in jail.

SABRINA

He's a criminal?

“CUE 23-OVERDRIVE SHORT VERSION”

plays. Flashback to 1970 a few weeks later at Portsmouth Square. Remove scenery. Bring on a three foot riser, mic stands, ten chairs for the dignitaries, podium for the speaker, and all the BAND equipment. All cast members not involved with the scene gather in front of the stage. Media screen shows anti-war messages, psychedelic images, and video clips. As soon as the set up is complete, the RALLY HOST, BAND members, and GEORGE HOFFMAN come on stage. HOFFMAN and the BAND sit down, HOST goes to the podium. Wait for the cue to end before proceeding.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST

Good afternoon everyone! Thanks for coming out today! We are the Chinese-American Coalition Against the War. Only together can we make a difference in this world!

Cheering.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST (CONT'D)

Today we have music by a local boy himself, a staple here at the Bay Area antiwar rallies, Aaron Thomas and his band! But first let's hear from the distinguished professor from MIT George Hoffman! Dr.Hoffman please!

Applause. JING enters from the back of the theater and is working her way to the front of the crowd to see AARON. HOST takes his seat. GEORGE HOFFMAN comes to the microphone.

GEORGE HOFFMAN

(in a large, deliberate orators voice)

Thank you very much. Today the United States is being polarized by the anguish of war. The staggering loss of life. Senseless destruction. A government defying the will of its people. What can a man do in the face of such reckless genocide? There can be only one answer. There will always be only one answer. You, my friends, are the answer. Only you can reclaim the soul of America. It is not enough to talk of justice. It is not enough to believe in freedom. You must be the vehicle for that change. Make no mistake, it is dangerous business. Yet, our path is clearly set before us.

(MORE)

GEORGE HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Do not be corrupted by the dangerous arrogance of our imperialistic foreign policy. Do not fall victim to the dogs of war when you as peacemakers are denounced for lack of patriotism. The salvation of America from the wages of war is the culmination of true patriotism. What path will our nation's destiny take? You, my friends, are the answer. So what can a man do in the face of such reckless power? At every opportunity he must defy the will of the oppressor, for silence is betrayal. We must resolve to change or face the warning of John F. Kennedy: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable". I would like to close with the famous words of Dr. King. "If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream!!" Thank you!

GEORGE HOFFMAN flashes the peace sign. Applause. GEORGE HOFFMAN sits down, waving to the crowd. HOST comes to the microphone.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST

Thank you so much Professor Hoffman for those inspirational words! Words to live by! Alright, time for some music from the AaronThomas Band. Aaron...

HOST sits down. The BAND comes up to the microphones. AARON speaks thoughtfully.

AARON

I was recently requested to report for active duty in the military. And like Professor Hoffman said, "Defy the will of the oppressor". I am here today to publicly announce my refusal to serve.

Cheering. JING is moved by all this and puts her hands to her face in admiration and concern. Cheering dies down.

AARON (CONT'D)

This was a hard decision for me. But as Frederick Douglass said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress".

(in a more somber tone)

I'd like to dedicate this next song to the one who helped me be the change I want to see. Only she can see beyond my reflection. Only she can see my soul.

AARON looks at JING. AARON, RAMON, SCOTT, PAUL, and DAVID play the instrumental "CUE 23-OVERDRIVE" followed by applause and cheering. Again the band mimics playing their instruments.

Applause and cheering.

AARON (CONT'D)
(now speaking)

Thank you so much!

HOST comes onstage. The BAND remains onstage.

PORTSMOUTH SQUARE RALLY HOST

Thank you Aaron Thomas Band. Inspiring words and music! And thanks again to our illustrious speaker George Hoffman. Peace!

HOST leaves the stage. The BAND congratulates AARON. The BAND starts to pack up and then leaves the stage. AARON motions for JING to come up onstage. SHE comes up onstage and immediately hugs AARON. CROWD leaves the stage.

JING
(amazed)

I can't believe what I just heard.

JING kisses AARON.

JING (CONT'D)
You were amazing! Did you mean what you said?

AARON
(with authority)

I did.

(pause)

You know, it was you who helped me realize what I have to do. I keep thinking about your poem, "absolute and immutable, waiting to be judged by God."

JING
I'm so proud of you.

(concerned)

You know it's not going to be easy.

AARON
(softly)

I know.

JING

Remember what we said? About matters of conscience? You just said it yourself: no struggle, no progress.

AARON nods his head slowly.

JING (CONT'D)

I know you Aaron Thomas. Be that change.

AARON

What would I do without you?

JING takes AARON'S hands.

JING

(tenderly)

So what happens now?

AARON

I'll probably have a hearing and spend a couple of years in prison.

JING

That's not what I meant. What happens to you and me?

AARON

(thoughtfully)

It would be selfish for me to ask you to wait. So I would understand if...

JING interrupts.

JING

(smiling)

Don't be stupid.

AARON

Who would do poetry for me?

JING

I always will.

AARON hugs JING and smiles.

JING (CONT'D)

Are you hungry?

AARON
Sure.

JING
Let's stop by my house for some Chinese.

AARON
(smiling)
Dying man's last request.

JING
And don't worry. My parents are gone tonight.

AARON
Ling-si won't be happy.

JING
Leave Ling-si to me.

AARON
Let me get my stuff.

AARON puts his guitar in HIS case, picks it up,
and walks off stage with JING.

JING
Sure, Mr. Rock Star.

10

SCENE 10

10

Clear the stage. PO family APARTMENT AND SHOP that same evening after the rally. AARON and JING enter and head up the stairs to the apartment. The shop is closed for the evening. AARON is carrying his guitar case. THEY enter the apartment hand in hand.

AARON

Hi Ling-si.

LING-SI comes out of the kitchen drying a plate. SHE has been washing and drying the dishes.

LING-SI

(surprised)

Hi Aaron.

(to JING, under her breath)

What are you doing? Mom and Dad would freak if they knew he was here! Did anyone see you?

JING

We came in the back door.

LING-SI

(worried)

If anyone saw you, we know who they'd call. Your favorite obsessed tutor.

LING-SI heads back to the kitchen and the dishes. AARON takes his guitar out of his case and starts to tune. HE sits in a chair in the living room. JING goes to the kitchen and starts preparing food.

JING

(to LING-SI)

Ask Mr. Rock Star here what happened at the rally.

LING-SI

(to AARON)

How did it go?

AARON
I decided not to serve.

JING
In front of 2,000 people!

LING-SI
(concerned)
Really?

AARON
I had to choose. Do what's right...

LING-SI
You're a brave man, Aaron Thomas.

AARON
Not really.

JING
(to LING-SI, with JING beaming)
He is wonderful, isn't he?

AARON
Jing, do you mind if I show you this song I'm working on?

JING
Of course not.

AARON
It kind of came to me after we talked the other night. No title or lyrics yet, just chords.

LING-SI listens carefully with a new respect for
AARON. AARON plays the instrumental **CUE**
#26-AARON'S MIRROR-short sans vox.
AARON looks at JING lovingly.

JING
(almost speechless)
Wonderful.

LING-SI
(to JING so AARON can't hear, smiling)
Are you guys in love or what?

JING can only nod, having forgotten entirely why she was in the kitchen.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

Food! Remember?

JING picks up two plates of chow mein.

JING

Follow me, I have to show you where I wrote Shimmer.

AARON

Sure.

AARON grabs his guitar, puts it in the case, and THEY head to the roof. LING-SI watches THEM ascend the stairs as SHE dries a dish. There is a beautiful view of the city from the top. JING puts the food down on the small table. THEY stand and admire the view. Start **“CUE 28-ROOFTOP MUSIC”**.

AARON (CONT'D)

What a great view. Summertime in San Francisco. I love this city.

JING

This is my escape.

JING takes AARON'S arm.

AARON

I only wish we could escape up here.

JING

If only.

THEY go to the sofa and sit. AARON kisses JING. THEY move to the futon. LING-SI works in the kitchen. Wait until cue finishes before YAO knocks loudly on the door. LING-SI walks to the door.

LING-SI

(trying to be calm)

Yes, who is it?

YAO

(in a forceful voice)

It's Yao! Open the door please.

LING-SI

(panicked)

Uh, just a moment. Let me get something on.

LING-SI runs up the stairs to the roof. YAO continues to knock.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

You guys! Yao's at the door! I'll try to stall him! I suggest you get dressed!!

JING

(panicked)

Not good. This guy is relentless.

THEY struggle to get dressed quickly.

AARON

Don't worry. There'll be another time.

After a brief but passionate kiss, AARON quickly puts his guitar in the case and goes down the fire escape to the street. JING heads downstairs. LING-SI is already at the front door. YAO is pounding louder and louder.

YAO

Open the door!

LING-SI

Just a minute!

JING

(to LING-SI)

Don't open it.

LING-SI

He sounds seriously miffed.

YAO opens the door with his key and marches through.

YAO
(animated)

Where is he?

LING-SI
(afraid of YAO)

Master Yao. Please, you should not be here.

JING
(furious)

Get the hell out of my house!

YAO charges up the stairs to the rooftop and bursts through the door only to find the roof empty. JING and LING-SI follow behind him up to the roof.

YAO
Looks like someone left in a hurry.

JING
I'm calling the cops.

JING starts to head downstairs, YAO intercepts HER and grabs HER by the wrist in anger.

YAO
Then perhaps I should inform your parents of your little get together tonight.

JING stops walking. YAO now realizes he has some leverage over JING with this discovery.

YAO (CONT'D)
And your American friend.

YAO releases JING. YAO begins to relax and sits down confidently on the sofa. HE speaks more slowly now.

YAO (CONT'D)
(with an almost smug tone)
I know about your anti-war musician friend. Aaron is his name? But before you do anything rash, let me make a suggestion. I would do what your parents say, if you want to keep the shop. Understand? And remember, you are Chinese, not American.

JING and LING-SI are speechless and don't respond.

YAO (CONT'D)

Good. I think I know the way out. Good night ladies.

LING-SI goes to the shop. JING goes to her room. MR. and MRS. PO go to the apartment.

11

SCENE 11

11

PO family APARTMENT AND SHOP the next day. LING-SI is working in the shop. JING is in her room. MR. PO and MRS. PO are in the apartment reading. YAO enters the shop.

YAO

Hello Ling-Si. How are you?

LING-SI

(annoyed, answers curtly)

Fine. Here for the rent?

YAO

No, not today. Are your parents upstairs?

LING-SI nods. YAO goes up the stairs to the apartment and knocks. MRS. PO answers.

MRS. PO

How are you Master Yao?

YAO

Fine thank you.

MRS. PO

Please come in, have some tea?

YAO enters and sits down with MR. PO. THEY all bow.

YAO

Yes, thank you so much

MRS. PO goes to the kitchen. MR. PO and YAO sit down.

YAO (CONT'D)

As you know I'm fond of Jing, and the tutoring is coming along nicely.

MRS. PO
(yelling from the kitchen)

She forgets that she's Chinese!

YAO
I have a suggestion, tell me what you think. I was hoping my role as a tutor could be something more. Something more permanent.

MRS. PO
(animatedly)

Do you mean marriage?

YAO nods.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)
Arrange a marriage?

YAO
(laughing slightly)
My bank account could really help the store.

MRS. PO comes back from the kitchen with the tea.

MR. PO
(to MRS. PO)
You really think Jing would do this? She's stubborn and proud, just like her mother!

MRS. PO looks at MR. PO indignantly.

MRS. PO
(incensed)
Really.

MR. PO
They don't do that here. Not in the U.S.

YAO
(referring to the previous night)
I think you'll find that Jing is far more willing now.

YAO pauses and speaks more slowly. He is playing his cards skillfully.

YAO (CONT'D)
In addition, let me offer something else. Something that will benefit both of you so you won't have to struggle like all those years before.

YAO pauses and speaks very dramatically.

YAO (CONT'D)

If Jing will consent to this, I am prepared to give the Po family this apartment and store.

MR. and MRS. PO are stunned. THEY look at each other. There is a pause before THEY speak again.

MRS. PO

How very generous Master Yao!

MRS. PO bows deeply.

YAO

As a token of my gratitude, as well as an opportunity to solve your financial problems.

MR. PO

We are truly honored by your kind offer.

MRS. PO

We will speak to Jing.

YAO stands up.

YAO

Very good. Thank you for the tea.

MR. and MRS. PO stand and bow. MRS. PO walks YAO to the door.

MRS. PO

Good bye.

YAO walks down the stairs to the shop with MRS. PO. MR. PO shakes his head in confusion, sits back down on the sofa and reads his newspaper.

YAO

(to LING-SI upon reaching the shop)

Say hello to Jing.

(in a slightly intimidating tone,
reminding her of his threat last night)

Tell her not to forget.

(MORE)

YAO (CONT'D)

(pause)

About the guzheng.

LING-SI just nods. YAO leaves the shop. LING-SI goes upstairs to the living room.

MRS. PO

(calling to JING)

Jing! Jing come down here please!

JING comes from her room down to the apartment.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

(excitedly)

Yao was just here, you won't believe what he just said!

JING

(nonplussed)

Let me guess, more tutoring.

MRS. PO

No, even better! He wants to give us the building.

(dramatic pause)

And all you have to do is marry him!

JING

(in disbelief)

What?

MRS. PO

I think you two will make a real fine match!

LING-SI

(defending HER sister)

Are you joking?

JING

(starting to anger)

So sell me off and keep the shop, is that it? You only care about yourself, you don't give a shit!

LING-SI

Yao's not for her!

MRS. PO

(shouting in anger)

Who would you prefer? Without him we don't stand a chance!

LING-SI comes over and puts her arms around
JING.

JING

Please don't make me do this.

MRS. PO

I still know what's best.

LING-SI

(beginning to anger)

You would sacrifice your own daughter for this!

MRS. PO

(firmly to JING)

As long as you're my daughter, I'll say what you do.

JING

(almost in tears)

No, I can't believe this!

LING-SI

(angry, raising her voice)

Don't do this. It's not worth the price. Yao's a POS!

JING runs to her room followed by LING-SI.
JING throws herself on her bed. LING-SI
comforts her SISTER. MRS. PO goes back to
reading with MR. PO.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

LING-SI strokes her SISTER'S hair as SHE
cries softly.

JING

I can't believe they would do this to me.

LING-SI

I'll talk to Dad. Maybe he can figure out something.

JING

Maybe. But what about the shop?

LING-SI

You have a life too. And what about Aaron?

JING can't respond. LING-SI sits on the edge of the bed and continues to comfort her sister.

MR. PO

(to MRS. PO)

Are you sure? That this is right for her?

MRS. PO

What's right for Jing? Really? Would you rather lose everything?

MR. PO

It's not that bad. We've had tough times before.

MRS. PO

Look around. Our stock is almost gone!

MRS. PO throws her hands up in frustration.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Without Yao, we lose it all!

MR. PO

You don't know that.

MRS. PO

Trust me, I know what's best. This is the only way we will survive.

MR. PO

Things will improve with time.

MRS. PO

Will you take that chance?

MR. PO

Yes, for Jing's sake.

MRS. PO

It's a fool's gamble.

MR. PO

Did you see all the pain in her face?

MRS. PO is oblivious to MR. PO'S pleading.

MRS. PO

She'll be fine with Yao.

MR. PO

(more insistent)

Did you see her face?

MRS. PO

I wasn't happy with you either. At first.

MR. PO

(with growing intensity)

I won't allow it unless Jing consents to it.

(with authority)

Without being coerced!

MRS. PO dismisses MR. PO'S concern with a quick wave of her hand.

MRS. PO

This will all work out.

MR. PO

We'll see.

12

SCENE 12

12

The next day. Bring on a the GODDESS OF DEMOCRACY statue and place a bench just in front of it. AARON is waiting impatiently by the bench in Portsmouth Square. JING enters the stage quickly. SHE rushes up to AARON and takes his hands.

JING

(excitedly)

You won't believe what's happened

AARON

I've got news too.

JING

I'm supposed to marry Yao.

AARON

(in disbelief)

What? I hope you refused!

JING

I'm not throwing away my life with that POS. No matter what my mom says.

AARON

It's your life. You've got to be free.

(pause, tenderly)

You and I, we belong together.

JING

Yes we do.

(pause)

So what's your news?

AARON

Tomorrow they come get me.

JING

Oh no. Not now.

(almost in desperation, trying to be positive)

But we still have today.

AARON

(almost pleading)

I don't know where they'll put me, but if it's close, can you visit?

JING

(vainly attempting to be jovial)

They can't keep me away. And I'll still be here when all this is through.

JING and AARON sit down on the bench.

JING (CONT'D)

It won't be long.

AARON

But two years?

JING

We can do it. You'll see.

AARON

Just tell me not to worry.

JING

What can happen?

AARON

I guess you're right.

JING

Of course I am.

AARON

At least you'll be free.

JING

Free to wait for you.

AARON

(worried)

Don't forget me when I'm gone.

JING

Don't worry, it will all be okay. I promise.

AARON

(whispering)

I've waited all my life for you.

JING

(whispering)

I love you so.

THEY embrace.

13

SCENE 13

13

Flash forward to the present day. Remove the statue and bench. Bring on six desks, six chairs, and two computers. After setting up, the 4 STUDENTS sit at the desks and appear to be studying. JOHN and SABRINA are in the beautiful San Francisco Public Library. THEY are both staring intently at their respective computers. THEY are surrounded by the four STUDENTS who are studying quietly at their desks.

Sabrina! I found it!

JOHN

All four STUDENTS glare at JOHN for talking too loudly.

Shhh!

STUDENT NO. 1

Sorry.

JOHN
(softly)

SABRINA comes over to JOHN'S computer.

Check it out!

JOHN (CONT'D)
(now softly to SABRINA. The conversation gradually gets louder)

JOHN points to the computer. Media screen shows the image of AARON in an orange jumpsuit.

Aaron Thomas spent time in jail alright. For refusing to go to Vietnam. He's not a criminal, he's a hero! I knew it!

STUDENTS all turn again and reprimand JOHN and SABRINA for talking too loudly.

STUDENT NO. 2/STUDENT NO. 1
Shhh!

STUDENT NO. 3/STUDENT NO. 4
Please.

SABRINA
(softly but excitedly)
That's the connection! Vietnam and Berkeley! I'll check the Cal anti-war groups.

THEY both rush back to SABRINA'S computer.
SHE sits down and begins to work quickly.
JOHN stands behind HER and watches over
HER shoulder. Media screen continues to show
the images.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
What anti-war groups did they have back then?

JOHN
Try SDS.

SABRINA
What's that?

JOHN
Students for a democratic society.

THEY search quickly. The passing images
display on the media screen until SABRINA
stops on a specific image of both AARON and
JING together at Cal.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(loudly)
Holy shit!

All the STUDENTS turn for a final time and
reprimand JOHN and SABRINA more
adamantly

STUDENT NO. 1/STUDENT NO.2
Hey!

STUDENT NO. 3/STUDENT NO. 4
Shhh!!

JOHN
(softly but very excitedly)

There they are.

SABRINA

We finally have a name. Jing Po.

JOHN
(excitedly but quietly)

Check Chinatown for Po families.

SABRINA

Right.

SHE searches quickly for a few moments.
Media screen displays the white pages of the
phone book. There are many Po names.
SABRINA stops when SHE gets to the page
with the Po names.

SABRINA (CONT'D)
(in dismay)

There must be almost 100.

JOHN
Somebody in Chinatown must know about this.

Remove the tables, desks, and computers.

14

SCENE 14

14

Flashback to 1970, a number of weeks later than the previous 1970 scene. While the cast is clearing the stage OLD LING-SI walks thoughtfully onstage. A bench and an arched arbor with the name “Woh Hei Yuen Park” are brought onstage.

OLD LING-SI

I remember something called the “cascade effect” from my chemistry class years ago, where something unforeseen triggers an unexpected chain of events. That is exactly what happened on an October day in 1970. Even though it was years ago, I remember it with painful clarity. It was on that pivotal October day where my life and Jing's changed forever. We started out just before 9AM on a cold, blustery day, having told our parents of our intention to go to the Chinatown branch library on Powell.

JING and LING-SI enter the stage and begin to walk around. Media screen shows THEM walking the streets of Chinatown.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

We walked west on Clay past Gordon Lau Elementary where we both went to school. We stopped and peered through the chain link fence at the children playing.

JING and LING-SI stop and look at the imaginary schoolyard where the children are playing. JING has a distant look on her face. LING-SI points at the imaginary children.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

My sister set a leisurely pace as we window shopped and then stopped for a quick green tea.

JING and LING-SI begin to walk again.

JING

Let's sit for a while. And thanks for coming with me. I love my big sister.

THEY walk through the arbor. JING hugs LING-SI. JING and LING-SI sit down on the bench.

OLD LING-SI

In retrospect, I can see Jing was avoiding what she already knew to be true. This was a short-lived moment of tranquility before the storm. Still, I'm glad I was there to help. Woh Hei Yuen means "Garden of Peace and Joy." I was struck by the irony of the situation, my melancholic sister sipping tea in this lovely place. Hardly peace and joy.

JING and LING-SI begin to walk again. The arbor is removed and replaced with a building facade that reads "Chinatown Health Center". The bench remains. JING approaches the health center door slowly with trepidation, then charges through the health center doors followed by LING-SI. THEY cannot be seen behind the door. Media screen goes dark. After a few moments JING comes charging out the health center door and sits down on the bench. LING-SI follows her out. SHE is distraught. OLD LING-SI walks off stage.

JING

(in a panic)

I can't believe this. Tell me what just happened!

LING-SI puts her arm around JING.

LING-SI

You don't want to know.

JING

(despondent)

I'm glad you're with me. Only you and Aaron give a shit.

LING-SI

We are sisters after all.

JING stands up and walks around in frustration.
LING-SI gets up and follows her.

JING

(beginning to panic again)

Aaron is gone for two years and now this. Now it's not just me.

LING-SI takes JING'S hands and tries to calm JING.

LING-SI

I know this wasn't exactly the plan. But things will work out. Somehow.

Starting to panic, JING breaks away from LING-SI and walks nervously.

JING

Work out? Everything will hit the fan when they find out. Family dishonor. Yao and the shop. I can just hear it now.

JING pauses to think.

JING (CONT'D)

And Aaron! My God.

LING-SI comes over to JING and puts HER hands on JING's shoulders. LING-SI looks straight into JING'S eyes.

LING-SI

(with authority)

Listen to your big sister. We will get through this together. You and me. Understand?

JING nods reluctantly.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

No need to panic, remember you still have me.

JING

(overcome with emotion)

I love you big sis.

JING hugs LING-SI.

LING-SI

This won't be easy, you'll start to show eventually.

JING

Mom and Dad will completely freak when they find out.

THEY both move back to the bench and sit. Jing is on the verge of tears.

LING-SI

(forcefully)

You're gonna be okay. No one needs to know right now.

JING

I hope I know what to do.

LING-SI

We *both* will do what's best for you and the baby.

JING

(tearfully)

At least I have Aaron and you.

LING-SI

That's right.

JING

(rambling now)

I hope I know what to do.

LING-SI

I'll be here to see this through.

JING

(in tears)

Aaron needs to be here too.

JING puts her head in HER hands and begins to cry in earnest. LING-SI holds JING in her arms for a few moments and then they leave the stage. The bench and building facade are removed.

15

SCENE 15

15

A few months later. AARON'S jail cell and the PO family shop, apartment, and JING'S room are brought on. JING and LING-SI are in JING'S room. Media screen shows AARON, dressed in a prison jump suit, being led away and writing letters in his cell. MR. and MRS. PO are reading in the apartment living room. The action starts in AARON'S cell. NICK, the guard, brings a guitar to AARON'S cell. When the cast finishes setting up THEY go by AARON'S cell, each one giving HIM a knuckle bump.

NICK

Hey Aaron, I got something for you.

NICK unlocks the cell, hands AARON the guitar. HE is ecstatic.

AARON

Thanks Nick. I can't tell you how much this means to me!

NICK

Just don't keep everybody up.

AARON sits down and starts playing the opening bars of the guitar part of Robert Johnson's Crossroads a la Eric Clapton. AARON plays "**CUE 34-CROSSROADS**". NICK watches in amazement.

NICK (CONT'D)

Not bad for a white boy!

NICK and AARON both laugh. AARON suddenly puts the guitar down in frustration as a shadow of concern comes across his face.

NICK (CONT'D)

Let me guess, there's a girl.

AARON
(in frustration)

I just need to be out of here.

NICK

You chose to be here son.

AARON

I need to talk to her.

NICK

Not a lot you can do from here. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.

AARON

I know. When I'm out of here, things will be fine.

NICK puts his hands on AARON'S shoulders.

NICK

There you go.

AARON picks up his guitar and starts playing.
AARON plays **"CUE 35-SEND YOU MY
LOVE CHORDS"**.

NICK (CONT'D)

That's the right idea.

NICK shuts the cell door and leaves the stage.
MR. and MRS. PO are still reading in the living
room. Media screen shows AARON and JING
at the night fair. AARON puts down his guitar
then stands up looking up at JING'S room. OLD
LING-SI comes to center stage. Wait for cue to
end before proceeding.

OLD LING-SI

Back in Chinatown, Jing and I are returning from the health center. Mom is at the register and a few customers are in the shop. Jing unsuccessfully tries to pull herself together as we walk through the door. I run interference for Jing so Mom doesn't see her face and start asking questions.

MRS. PO doesn't look up from the register as
JING and LING-SI hurry past.

MRS. PO

Hello girls.

OLD LING-SI

I hurry Jing up the stairs and past Dad with his newspaper in his face.

JING and LING-SI walk quickly past MR. PO.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

No problem getting by Dad. I steer Jing to her room and deposit her on the bed. She curls up and clutches her pillow like a fullback afraid of fumbling the ball.

JING collapses on her bed in her room. Media screen goes dark.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I can see she is on the verge of tears again. I can almost feel her pain. I again desperately try to find something to say, something to ease her misery. What does Jing do when she is feeling poorly, I ask myself. Better not to say anything, just do it. I go to Jing's desk and get pencil and paper.

LING-SI goes to JING'S desk and get a pencil and paper. SHE hands it to JING.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I tell her, "I know what you need. Write Aaron a poem. Like *Shimmer*."

JING begins to write quickly.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

In less than an hour, she hands me back that piece of paper. I am, again, amazed by the creative power of my little sister. I have kept that same piece of paper to this very day. I'll let Jing read it...

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. JING stands and begins to read. **CUE 36-SHORTENED WITHOUT YOU SANS VOX.**

JING

(reading her poem slowly with emotion)

Sing me a love song
I'll pretend that you're here
To make all this go away
But it's never that easy
When there's so much to lose

(MORE)

JING (CONT'D)

And I'm the price they have to pay

I can hardly believe it
That this could happen to me
I can hardly believe it
I just want us both to be free

What am I supposed to do
Sing the same old song
Pretend that nothing's wrong
Or maybe face the fact that we can't go back
What am I supposed to do
Without you

Any fool can tell you
Nothing's as sweet oh no
Until it slips right through your hands
It's always what they wanted
And never what I really need
And only now I understand

One day at a time now
But it's not the same
I just wish I could see your face
There's no more love songs
With the moon in the sky
It's like you disappeared without a trace

I can't believe it
That this can keep us apart
I won't believe it
But what about this hole in my heart

Increasing in intensity.

What am I supposed to do
Sing the same old song
Pretend that nothing's wrong
Or maybe face the fact
That we can't go back
What am I supposed to do
Without you

Repeat “What am I supposed to do, without you” until the cue ends. JING hangs her head and begins to cry slightly as LING-SI comforts her sister. Proceed after cue ends.

LING-SI
(in amazement)

That was wonderful.

JING
(tearfully)

Thanks for taking such good care of me.

LING-SI
(smiling)

What are sisters for?

JING gets up off the bed forcefully with a determined look on her face.

JING

There’s something I have to do.

LING-SI
(realizing what JING intends and in a panic)

You don’t have to do this now. Bad idea. And besides, the test could be wrong.

JING

You’ve obviously never been pregnant!

LING-SI

Do you feel alright?

JING

It’s hard to say. It’s kind of a mix of panic and joy.

LING-SI

Please, let’s wait.

JING

I can’t. It would be like walking around with this weight on my shoulders.

LING-SI

What if you miscarry?

JING

I don't know how or why, but I know I won't.

LING-SI

(reluctantly)

We both know Mom will tell Yao. And goodbye shop.

JING

I know.

(pause, trying to be funny)

Well, I didn't want to marry that piece of shit anyway!

LING-SI attempts a lame smile.

LING-SI

What about Aaron?

JING

I have to tell him myself. This weekend. Can you cover for me?

LING-SI

Of course.

JING

(wistfully)

You know, this may sound crazy, but it is kind of wonderful.

LING-SI

Mom and Dad won't see it that way.

JING forcefully takes LING-SI's hand.

JING

This is the way I see it. Mom is gonna completely freak. Just let her go. When Yao finds out, it's adios shop. And no wedding. And Mom and Dad will have to look for financial help somewhere else. Then Aaron and I and our child can be together.

LING-SI

I have a bad feeling about this.

JING

(forcefully)

Come on.

JING and LING-SI slowly walk to the living room of the apartment.

MR. and MRS. PO are reading and don't notice them. LING-SI stands next to her sister for moral support.

LING-SI
(softly pleading)

Please don't do this...

JING
(to her parents, with her head down)

Mom. Dad. I have something to say.

MR. and MRS. PO look up at JING
questioningly.

JING (CONT'D)
(softly)

I'm pregnant.

Very long pause. MR. and MRS. PO look on in
stunned silence.

JING (CONT'D)
(now forcefully)

I said I'm pregnant!

MRS. PO
(incensed)

You must be joking! That would ruin any chance...

JING interrupts.

JING
(loudly)

I am not joking!

MRS. PO
(now furious)

Let me guess! That idiot hippie white boy!

LING-SI
(to JING under her breath so MRS. PO
can't hear)

Let it go, just let it go...

MRS. PO
This will ruin everything! Yao will never stand for this! And all because of you!

JING
(softly)

I'm sorry Mother.

MRS. PO
Good Lord, we will never get the shop now! We will be the laughing stock of the neighborhood! This will not be good for business either!

MR. PO
(calmly but concerned)
A child is serious responsibility. Have you planned for this?

JING
Yes I have.

MR. PO
Have you been to the Health Center? You must be careful now.

JING nods.

MRS. PO
That's not the issue now!
(to JING)
Yao will certainly not marry you now! Unless...

MRS. PO pauses to think for a moment.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)
Let him get used to the idea of marrying Jing. Wait as long as we can.

LING-SI
(under her breath to JING)
Then he'll be *really* pissed!

MR. PO
This is a bad idea. Jing needs our help.

MRS. PO
(to herself)
Yes, it is the only way.
(now to JING, angry still)
Look what you've done! Disgraced the Po family and ruined our chance for the shop!

MR. PO
(more insistent)
We need to help our daughter!

MRS. PO

We can't help anyone if we lose the shop! I know what's best for this family.

MR. PO throws his hands up in frustration.

AARON'S cell is removed while the PO shop remains onstage.

16

SCENE 16

16

A few days later at the prison. JING visits AARON. Prison visiting area. There is a chair on either side. AARON comes onstage in an orange jumpsuit and paces while he waits for JING. NICK accompanies him and waits nearby. JING comes onstage and rushes to AARON. SHE is immediately in tears. Standing, THEY put THEIR hands on the screen together. NICK smiles to himself at the young lovers' tender moment.

AARON

(ecstatic)

Dear God, I finally get to see you!

JING

(barely able to speak through the tears)

It seems like forever. I missed you so much.

AARON

I can't believe you're here. Let me look at you.

AARON looks longingly at JING.

AARON (CONT'D)

You are so beautiful.

JING

Nothing is the same without you.

AARON

(questioningly)

Somehow you look different. You look so alive.

JING

(gathering her strength to tell AARON the news)

It's all because of you my love.

(smiling slightly)

If you only knew.

AARON

What do you mean?

JING

I need you more now than before. There's something we need to do. Both of us.

THEY both sit down on opposite sides of the screen. JING struggles to tell AARON the news.

AARON

(not comprehending)

Are you okay?

JING

I'm fine. More than just fine.

AARON doesn't understand and shakes HIS head.

AARON

It's all because of me?

JING

(smiles knowingly)

Oh yes.

AARON

If I only knew what? Help me here.

JING

(having trouble divulging the truth)

Everything has happened so fast. I don't know where to start. But first, I have to ask you something.

AARON

Anything.

JING

(quietly pleading)

Tell me that you'll always be mine. Promise me. With all of your heart.

AARON

Of course. Always.

JING

Remember that night on the roof? The moonlit sky, just you and me.

AARON

The night is fixed in my mind. It's the only thing keeps me free.

JING

I know this will be hard to hear, especially since you're not free. But there's something special we have to do, we're now a family. One.

JING points to AARON.

JING (CONT'D)

Two.

JING points to herself.

JING (CONT'D)

Three.

Play "**CUE 37.5-Scene 16 Prison background music**". JING stands up slowly and puts her hand gently on her stomach. AARON stands up in astonishment. THEY put THEIR hands on the screen together again. AARON is momentarily dumbfounded and cannot speak. Start the conversation after the loud guitar intro.

AARON

(dramatic pause)

Oh my God!

(pause)

I can't even help you! Do you feel okay?

JING

I'm fine, no need to worry. But we're in for a fight.

AARON

Your parents will want me dead.

JING

We're a family now. You and me.

AARON

But I can't be there for you!

JING

I know. But just remember you will always have me.

AARON

(despondent)

What will you do?

JING

I'll do the best I can. And I have Ling-si. When you're out things will be fine. We'll be together just like before.

(forcefully)

Nothing will stop us!

AARON

Promise?

JING nods.

JING

Not even my parents.

AARON

The Yao thing?

JING

I swear that will never happen. I would rather die.

AARON

(in utter frustration)

But I should be with you! I just need to be out of here.

JING

You will. Then you belong to me.

JING pauses and touches her stomach.

JING (CONT'D)

I mean us.

JING and AARON rest their heads on the screen opposite each other as the music ends.

EVERYONE leaves the stage. Prison scenery is removed.

17

SCENE 17

17

PO family shop and apartment. A few months later in the morning. LING-SI is at the register and her PARENTS are working in the shop. JING is upstairs in the apartment out of sight from the public eye. OLD LING-SI comes on stage.

OLD LING-SI

It's now a few months later and Yao has returned from his annual monthlong business trip to Hong Kong. His lucrative furniture import business has allowed him to buy a sizable number of buildings in Chinatown. Shrewd and astute, his business interests grow substantially each year. Even in China Yao is infamous for his temper and compulsion for only the best. Up until his departure it was relatively easy to disguise my sister's expanding waistline, but oversize blouses and long dresses will only work for so long, as you are about to see...

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. YAO enters the shop carrying a guzheng and sets it down on the counter.

YAO

Hi Ling-si.

LING-SI

(annoyed, curt)

Hey. How was the trip?

YAO

Hong Kong was fine, but I've been away too long. I found a fine guzheng just for Jing.

YAO holds it up for LING-SI to see. SHE turns her back and doesn't look.

YAO (CONT'D)

Is she here?

MRS. PO and MR. PO notice YAO and come over to the register.

MRS. PO

Welcome back Master Yao.

MR. PO

Jing is asleep upstairs.

YAO

Could you wake her? I think she'd like to see this.

YAO pats the guzheng.

MRS. PO

She's not feeling well.

YAO

Please, this won't take long.

MR. PO

(quietly to MRS. PO)

We can't hide this forever.

MRS. PO

Maybe tomorrow

YAO

I'm sure she'd like to see it.

YAO lays the guzheng on the counter by the register.

MRS. PO

It's beautiful.

MR. PO comes over to MRS. PO

MR. PO

Please. Go get Jing.

MRS. PO goes upstairs and brings down a visibly pregnant JING. YAO looks up and sees JING on the stairs. HE stops in HIS tracks and stares. HE is instantly very angry.

MRS. PO

I can explain.

YAO

What the hell is this?

MRS. PO

The American boy.

YAO

Why didn't you tell me?

JING and MRS. PO continue down the stairs.
JING sits in a chair, listening with HER head
down.

YAO (CONT'D)

This is outrageous. Who knows about this?

MRS. PO

Just the family.

YAO

And you're telling me this only now! Just some minor detail you forgot to mention!
Incredible! Not too hard to figure this one out! Get Yao used to the idea. Then he couldn't
possibly say no!

MRS. PO

We didn't want to burden you until we were sure.

YAO

Well, I think we're pretty sure now! Look at her! If word gets out, I will look like a fool!
And I'm sure we all know who the father is, that hippie!

MRS. PO

The boy is in prison for a few years.

YAO

So Jing needs a husband.

YAO looks at JING.

YAO (CONT'D)

(almost laughing)

Don't look at me. And say goodbye to your shop!

MRS. PO begins to smile, trying to tempt him.
LING-SI goes over to JING and puts her hands
on her shoulders protectively.

MRS. PO
(doing damage control)

We know you have always been fond of Jing. She is young and headstrong, but has a good heart.

JING
(softly to HER mother)

Mother, please.

YAO glances periodically at JING throughout the rest of the conversation in a nervous fashion. He is clearly torn.

YAO
(to MRS. PO)

Why did you let this happen with so much at stake?

MRS. PO
She is a wonderful musician and cook. A man of your importance should have a wife of great beauty and intelligence.

YAO appears to be weakening.

YAO
I know what you are trying to do, but you had your chance.

YAO looks directly at JING.

YAO (CONT'D)
(to JING)

You have disgraced your family and cost them everything!

YAO begins to storm out of the shop. Upon reaching the door, he abruptly turns around, comes back to the counter, snatches the guzheng from the counter, and leaves.

MRS. PO
(to JING)

You were our last hope.

EVERYONE leaves the stage.

18

SCENE 18

18

Prison visiting area a few days later. The BAND members have come to visit AARON. The BAND members are seated on a bench opposite the screen that separates the prisoners from the visitors. THEY are waiting impatiently. AARON walks onstage in his orange jump suit and is excited to see the BAND. The BAND crowds around the screen to visit. NICK watches from a distance.

Guys!

AARON

Great to see you man!

RAMON

Prison dude! You look great in orange.

SCOTT

How they treating you?

DAVID

Okay. How's the band?

AARON

We still play the rallies. But it's not the same without you.

PAUL

Hey. We just got booked for the Golden Gate Park rally. Should be huge.

RAMON

Alright!

AARON

April 24th. We're the headliners.

PAUL

AARON thinks for a moment and then smiles.

Could you use another guitarist?

AARON

SCOTT
(blankly)

No, I don't think so.

DAVID

What do you mean?

AARON motions for the BAND to come closer.
HE waits a moment before HE divulges his
secret.

AARON

Okay. Check this.

AARON pauses dramatically

AARON (CONT'D)

One week from now, I'm released!

SCOTT

Holy shit!

The BAND is ecstatic.

PAUL

Yes!

RAMON

How?

AARON

It seems I am a model prisoner. Out in less than a year!

SCOTT

The band is back!

SCOTT pauses for a moment, thinking.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Hey, hey! I got it! Words for the anthem!

EVERYONE looks at SCOTT in disbelief for
such nonlinear thinking.

RAMON

What?

Okay, okay! Check it.

SCOTT

SCOTT starts singing by himself and motions for the others to join in. The BAND sings in a loud and raucous manner. The BAND sings SCOTT'S new words to the tune of ANTHEM in a very disorganized fashion.

Jail's not the answer
Set Aaron free
Hell no he didn't go
Fuck captivity

SCOTT (CONT'D)

That's funny!

PAUL

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID
(laughing and making comic remarks as they sing)

Jail's not the answer

That's right!

SCOTT

Set Aaron free

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

Okay! Yeah!

SCOTT

Hell no he didn't go
Fuck captivity

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

THEY all laugh. AARON conducts them in fun. NICK laughs.

Jail's not the answer
Set Aaron free

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID (CONT'D)

That's what I'm talkin' about!

SCOTT

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

Hell no he didn't go
Fuck captivity

Song momentarily stops.

RAMON

So when can I pick you up man?

AARON

The 22nd. But there's something I need you to do.

RAMON

Anything man.

AARON

Get word to Jing. And make sure her parents don't get wind of this.

RAMON

Sure.

NICK starts to move the BAND members out
of the visiting area and off stage.

NICK

Okay, okay. I think that's enough for one day.

SCOTT

Okay, let's sing it again!

The BAND continues to sing as they move off
the stage. NICK gently nudges THEM along.

PAUL

Okay!

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

(laughing)

Jail's not the answer
Set Aaron free

NICK

Alright boys let's go.

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

Hell no he didn't go
Fuck captivity

Jail's not the answer

PAUL

I think I'm finally getting this!

RAMON/SCOTT/PAUL/DAVID

Set Aaron free
Hell no he didn't go
Fuck captivity

The song fades away as the BAND leaves the stage.

RAMON

(calling to AARON over his shoulder as he leaves the stage)

One week man. Just like old times.

AARON

(calling back to RAMON in desperation)

Jing. Tell Jing!

Prison area scenery is removed by the cast while softly singing SCOTT'S new words.

19

SCENE 19

19

That evening at the Po family shop. Play **CUE 40 -GIVE IT UP BACKGROUND**. JING, still very pregnant, and MRS. PO come down the stairs from the apartment hurriedly. JING leads the way. THEY are having a heated argument. They walkover to the register. Wait for the introductory ruan melody to blend into full orchestra before starting.

JING

I don't even believe this!

MRS. PO

Not so fast young lady!

JING

You can't blame this on me!

MRS. PO

We have no choice now!

JING

How can you ask me that? It's always about you and what *you* want!

MRS. PO

I do what's best for this family!

JING

You think you know? No way!

MRS. PO

Don't talk like that to me! What I say goes in this family!

JING

Did you ever ask me about any of this? And what I want?

MRS. PO

It's too late for that now. Don't you even care what happens to your family? Should we give up the shop because of you?

JING

Don't blame me for all this. I'm just the easy way out!

MRS. PO
Don't you forget what Yao's done for this family!

JING
The man's a manipulating dirt bag!

MRS. PO
We're lucky he's changed his mind.

JING
(becoming more angry)
What kind of man would ask me to do this?

MRS. PO
We have a chance now, Yao will give us the shop!

JING
(furious)
If I give up my child!

MRS. PO
(becoming more angry)
So keep the baby, what chance do you really have?

JING
Aaron's out in a year.

MRS. PO
(angry)
He's just a hippie and left my daughter all alone. With his child!

JING
(furious)
I won't argue with you! You know nothing about him! Aaron's an honorable man.

MRS. PO
Honorable enough to leave you with his child! At least Yao will marry you!

JING
(screaming)
That's enough! I won't be blackmailed by Yao! Or you! It's my life and my child! I will never give him up! This is bullshit!

MRS. PO comes over to JING, grabs HER by the shoulder and spins HER around. SHE delivers the final verbal blow in a slow, soft, almost evil manner.

MRS. PO

If you can't do this for your family, you can't live here. I mean it. Do I make myself clear?

MRS. PO comes face to face with JING. JING shakes her head no.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Then you're no daughter of mine.

JING cannot believe what SHE has just heard. Proceed to the next line after the loud tam-tam crash fades to silence.

JING

What?

(long pause)

You would do that?

MRS. PO

(malevolently)

What chance do you have if you're on your own? Don't ask me for help, you'll do this all alone. No husband, nowhere to live.

(dramatic pause)

You have no choice.

JING stands speechless. MRS. PO and JING leave the stage.

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SCENE 20

20

One week later. AARON sitting in his cell. OLD LING-SI comes onstage slowly, in thought. Media screen shows images of LING-SI taking JING to the hospital, entry way of the Chinese hospital, and the delivery room.

OLD LING-SI

My sister was caught up in the vortex of this storm: pregnant and unable to marry the incarcerated father, blackmailed by her own family into a marriage of convenience, forced to give up her child, shamed by her family, and purposely kept apart from the man she loved. As a mother, I cannot even conceive of my precious daughters being wrested from my arms. I can hardly imagine my sister's pain.

OLD LING-SI becomes slightly teary and uneasy.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I intentionally include myself when I say blackmailed by her own family. Aaron once told me how Martin Luther King said that silence is betrayal. It was true for the Vietnam War and it was true for me. My mother forced Jing to sign the adoption papers, again, threatening to put her out on the street. And I did nothing. My sister descended into a despair the likes I have never seen. I spent many hours consoling her with green tea and Lu DaGun, her favorite rice snack. I suppose I was overly attentive, trying to make up for my inaction and acquiescence.

OLD LING-SI continues with difficulty, recalling the past. JING comes on stage in a wheel chair, pushed by LING-SI. JING is distraught at the thought of giving her baby away.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

Jing insisted that I be present for the delivery. It was something I will never forget.

JING carries the baby in her arms. OLD LING-SI watches THEM in utter sorrow.

JING

(to LING-SI)

Isn't he the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?

LING-SI

Can I hold him for a moment?

LING-SI gently picks up the baby.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

He's an absolute angel.

(pause)

Those eyes! He's looking right through me!

JING

He has Aaron's eyes.

LING-SI

(a vain attempt to cheer JING up)

And your cute little nose!

LING-SI can only manage a pathetic little smile.
JING can't respond. LING-SI hands the baby
back to JING.

JING

(pause, despondent)

Aaron should be here. He will never even see him.

The NURSE enters. SHE watches JING and
LING-SI for a moment.

LING-SI

You will have to tell Aaron. Tell him about that beautiful boy in your arms.

JING

(looking into the baby's eyes and
beginning to cry)

What should I tell your daddy? That you are a brown-eyed, black-haired treasure?

(now even more despondent)

And that he will never ever get to see you...

LING-SI comforts JING.

NURSE

(kindly)

I'm so sorry, but it's time.

JING
(wailing in utter pathos)

No, I can't do this. No!

JING holds the baby tightly.

NURSE
(to JING, gently)

I know this is hard. I'm so sorry.

(now to LING-SI)

Help your sister.

LING-SI
(to JING, beginning to cry as well)

May I hold him?

JING reluctantly gives the baby to LING-SI.
JING begins to sob profoundly.

JING

No, please!

LING-SI brings the baby close to JING'S face.

LING-SI
(in tears)

Say goodbye to your son.

JING tenderly kisses her son.

JING

Goodbye my love...

LING-SI gives the baby to the NURSE. The
NURSE quickly leaves the stage.

JING (CONT'D)
(screaming)

No!

OLD LING-SI turns sadly to leave the stage
with JING and LING-SI. NICK comes onstage,
approaches AARON, and lets him out of the
cell.

NICK
(to AARON)

Here's your stuff kid and say goodbye to the slammer.

AARON walks up to NICK. NICK gives
AARON a bag filled with his personal
belongings.

AARON

I couldn't have done it without you.

NICK
(in fatherly manner)

Get out of here kid. You can keep the guitar. As a souvenir.

THEY walk away from the cell towards a table.

NICK (CONT'D)

Someone's here to pick you up.

RAMON comes onstage.

AARON

So good to see you! You have no idea.

THEY hug. AARON gets out of his jumpsuit
and into his regular clothes as the conversation
progresses.

RAMON

You're a free man!

Slaps AARON on the back.

RAMON (CONT'D)

Out after less than twelve months! That beats two years!

NICK turns to go.

AARON

Nick, wait a minute!

AARON motions for RAMON to follow. THEY
walk over to NICK.

AARON (CONT'D)

Ramon, this is Nick. The man who kept me sane through all this.

NICK

It was my pleasure. You're a good kid Aaron.

NICK and RAMON shake hands

RAMON

(smiling)

Thanks for looking after this bum.

NICK

No problem.

NICK now turns to AARON.

NICK (CONT'D)

And don't forget what I told you. About Jing.

AARON

Yes sir.

In a burst of appreciation, AARON seizes NICK and hugs him tightly. NICK is slightly uncomfortable with such an overt display of emotion.

NICK

(laughing)

Ah, you hippies, always big huggers.

NICK leaves the stage as he flashes the peace sign. AARON anxiously turns to RAMON.

AARON

(anxious)

Have you heard from Jing?

RAMON shakes his head.

RAMON

No. I stopped by twice. No luck.

AARON

Let's stop by on the way home. I have to see her.

RAMON

Whatever you say. Come on, let's get the hell out of here.

AARON and RAMON move off stage. The cell is removed and the PO family apartment and shop are set up. LING-SI is working in the shop. JING is upstairs on her bed curled up in postpartum depression. SHE is no longer pregnant. There are no customers in the shop. MR. and MRS. PO are getting ready to go out. THEY put on their coats and begin to descend the stairs to the shop. AARON enters the shop.

LING-SI
(shocked to see AARON)

Oh my God! Aaron!

LING-SI gives AARON a big hug.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? How..

AARON
(interrupting her, excitedly)

Early release! Can you believe it?

(pause)

Where's Jing?

MR. and MRS. PO see what's going on. THEY hurry down the stairs and come over to LING-SI.

LING-SI

She's in the...

MRS. PO
(interrupting LING-SI)

That American boy!

LING-SI
(quickly and under her breath)

Jing had to...

MR. PO
(interrupting LING-SI)

Are you Jing's, uh, friend?

MRS. PO
(agitated)

Jing is going to marry a Chinese man. She is not here.

SHE tries to shoo AARON away. MRS. PO firmly grasps AARON'S arm and tries to move him towards the door. AARON doesn't move.

AARON

Please Mrs. Po, I need to see Jing.

MRS. PO does not respond.

AARON (CONT'D)
(to LING-SI)

Is she here?

MRS. PO

Please. You must leave!

MRS. PO again tries to move AARON out the door. HE stands his ground.

AARON
(pleading)

Please Mr. Po, Jing would want to see me. I'm sure of it.

MR. PO
(having trouble telling a lie)

Please, Jing is not here. It is best that you leave.

LING-SI shakes her head. MRS. PO picks up the phone and begins to dial.

MRS. PO

I am calling the police!

AARON
(to LING-SI in desperation)

Ling-si, where is Jing?

LING-SI

She's right...

MRS. PO
(to LING-SI, interrupting HER)

Don't!

MR. PO
(to AARON)

Please. We don't want any trouble.

MR. PO starts to move AARON towards the door.

AARON

(pleading)

What about the baby? I have to know. Please!

MRS. PO starts to talk on the phone to the police.

MRS. PO

(into the phone)

We have some trouble at our shop.

AARON

(to MR. PO)

I just want to talk to her.

MRS. PO

(into the phone)

At Grant and Clay.

AARON

(frantic, to LING-SI)

What happened?

LING-SI tries to answer but MRS. PO makes a quick hand gesture to silence her. AARON and MR. PO are approaching the door. A police siren is heard in the distance. AARON stands at the door, staring in disbelief for a moment.

AARON (CONT'D)

(in abject frustration)

Please, I have to know.

AARON turns to go out the door. HE leaves the stage. MRS. PO puts the phone down.

LING-SI

(to MRS. PO)

Was that really necessary? Aaron should know the truth.

MRS. PO

After the wedding.

LING-SI

This is honorable Chinese behavior?

MRS. PO dismisses her with a wave of her hand.

MR. PO

We're meeting Yao at the title office. We should be back in about an hour and a half.

MRS. PO

(emphatically)

And you are not to tell Jing about that boy!

MR. and MRS. PO leave the shop. LING-SI immediately sprints up the stairs to the apartment living room and into JING'S room.

LING-SI

(to JING, breathless)

Aaron was just here!

JING

What?

JING is instantly on her feet.

LING-SI

(excitedly)

Early release. Mom and Dad tossed him out.

JING gets a coat and puts it on. SHE is excited.

JING

I have to explain.

LING-SI

Well, you better hurry. They went to the title office with Yao. You have about an hour and a half.

THEY both hurry down the stairs to the shop. JING hugs LING-SI as JING leaves the shop and moves offstage. LING-SI leaves the stage. AARON'S apartment. A little later the same day. AARON and RAMON arrive at the apartment.

A banner saying "Welcome Home" is on the wall for his welcome home party. All the BAND members are there, plus friends. Beer and marijuana are everywhere. Tinny music plays. **Play "SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME-TINNY PARTY MUSIC"**. The apartment has a piano. AARON and RAMON enter the apartment. AARON is becoming more and more despondent.

BAND MEMBERS/PARTY GUESTS

Welcome home Aaron!

Much hoopla and good feelings and hugs.

SCOTT

Hail the conquering musician!

DAVID jumps up on a chair with AARON standing directly in front of him. HE puts his hands on AARON'S shoulders.

DAVID

And now! Fresh from his acclaimed whirlwind tour of the Big House. Your favorite felon and mine, the man who gave "the joint" a whole new meaning.

Those smoking pot hold up their joints and cheer. PAUL comes over and stands next to AARON.

PAUL

The sultan of the slammer, the prince of penal. Should I say that? I give you Aaron "Fuck Authority" Thomas!!!

Cheering. AARON bows graciously as if to an audience. The hoopla dies down and AARON and RAMON settle into some chairs as the party goes listen and watch. SCOTT comes over to AARON. SCOTT kisses AARON on the top of his head.

SCOTT

(to AARON)

It's good to have you back man. There's no band without you.

AARON nods in appreciation and pats
SCOTT'S arm.

RAMON

Did you see Jing inside?

AARON

No. I barely talked to Ling-si and then her parents tossed me out.

RAMON just shakes his head.

RAMON

I'm sorry man. What a welcome home present.

AARON

I have to see her.

DAVID comes over to RAMON and AARON
and puts his hands on AARON'S shoulders.

DAVID

We play the big rally tomorrow at Golden Gate Park. You game?

AARON

Sure.

SCOTT

(to AARON)

Yeah! Just like old times.

PAUL

I say we head to the Buena Vista to celebrate!

AARON

(to RAMON)

Go ahead. I appreciate the party and all, but I just want to be alone.

AARON turns to look at the party people.
THEY start to disperse, including the BAND
members and PARTY GUESTS. As people
leave, THEY quietly wish AARON well and pat
him on the back as THEY go out the door.
AARON is left alone in the overstuffed chair
with the "Welcome Home" banner right behind
him. HE sits for a moment in despair.

HE goes to the piano and begins to play aimlessly. When HE finishes HE sits still at the piano for a moment and then slams his hands down on the keyboard in frustration.

AARON (CONT'D)
(screaming in frustration)

Ah!

HE sits at the piano with his head down. JING arrives at AARON'S apartment door and finds it unlocked. SHE knocks but no one answers. AARON ignores the knocking.

JING

Hello?

SHE knocks again and then goes in. SHE turns on the light.

JING (CONT'D)

Hello, anyone here? It's Jing. Aaron? Are you here?

AARON hears her voice and is instantly alert.

AARON

Jing?

THEY rush together for a long passionate embrace. THEY are ecstatic. **"CUE 44-Scene 20 background music"**.

AARON (CONT'D)

Finally! It's really you!

JING

Hold me. Just hold me.

AARON

I will never let you go. Never.

JING

I said I would never forget you, remember?

AARON can only nod. JING and AARON slowly separate.

AARON

My God, Jing Po. Still so beautiful after all you've been through.

JING is beaming.

AARON (CONT'D)

I dreamed of you two everyday. It kept me alive. Family.

(long pause)

Can I see my son?

JING is instantly anxious about what she must disclose.

JING

(tentatively)

There's something you should know, you won't want to hear. But how was I to know that you'd just appear, suddenly?

(long pause as she summons her strength)

Before I tell you, I need to hear you say that you won't leave. Make me believe it.

AARON

(tenderly)

I will never leave you. Never.

JING looks at the floor in despair.

JING

(barely a whisper)

I had to do this all on my own. My parents said I couldn't live at home unless...

(long pause)

I gave our boy away.

JING sits down on the piano bench and puts her head in her hands and starts to cry slightly.

AARON looks at HER in disbelief.

AARON

What do you mean? You gave our boy away?

JING

(almost unable to speak)

He was adopted last week.

AARON

(starting to anger slightly)

Adopted? How could you do that? Why?

SHE stops crying and summons up HER strength.

JING

I didn't have a choice! You weren't here and I had to do the best I could.

AARON

(concerned)

What do you mean?

JING

Yao said he'd give Mom and Dad the building if I would marry him and give up the baby. They totally bought it.

AARON

Unbelievable! That's blackmail!

JING

Mom said she'd throw me out of the house if I didn't. I didn't know you'd be out early.

AARON

(calming down)

Neither did I until last week. I asked Ramon to stop by but he never got past your parents.

JING

If I would have known, this didn't have to happen.

AARON is overwhelmed with this revelation.

AARON

I can't believe this! Where is our son?

JING

I don't know. Legally they can't tell you.

In despair AARON slowly sits down next to JING on the piano bench.

AARON

(in sadness)

So we'll never know. And I never even got to see him.

(AARON pauses for a moment)

Are you married?

JING

No. Next week.

AARON
(calming down)

I put you in this position. And I wasn't there for you.

JING

No. We both made this happen. I allowed myself to be blackmailed. I let them take our son.

JING starts to cry softly again.

JING (CONT'D)

I thought you'd be gone for two years. I didn't know what to do.

AARON comforts JING and holds HER in HIS arms.

AARON

You did what you had to do. We both did.

(AARON tries to console JING)

Tell me about our son.

JING stops crying.

JING

I wish you could have seen him. He's a wonderful blend of both of us. A brown eyed, black haired angel.

(tentatively)

I'll understand, now that you know. If you hate me for what I've done. If you feel you can't stay.

AARON
(reassuringly)

I promised you! You're the mother of my child. And the only one I will ever love.

AARON takes JING'S hands.

AARON (CONT'D)

We are a family. Nothing can keep us apart.

JING smiles weakly. AARON embraces JING.

JING

I'm so sorry. I need him back.

We both do.

AARON

AARON holds JING in his arms.

AARON (CONT'D)

What are we going to do?

JING

I lost our child. I won't lose you.

AARON thinks for a moment.

AARON
(tenderly)

Marry me? Instead of that Yao?

SHE looks him straight in the eye

JING

Really?

AARON nods.

JING (CONT'D)

Sure.

(pause)

This won't be easy.

AARON releases JING and becomes more animated.

AARON
(more forcefully)

I don't care. You can't marry this guy.

JING
(struggling)

What about my family and...

AARON
(interrupting JING)

After what they've done to you?

(pause)

We don't have any choice now.

JING
What do you mean?

AARON
Stay here. After the rally tomorrow we can just leave.

JING
Rally?

AARON
We play the rally tomorrow in Golden Gate Park.

JING
Do you really think this will work?

AARON
Your parents don't know where I live. We can be out of the apartment by morning.

JING
(worried)
I don't know. This will be hard on them.
(pause)
What about the band?

AARON
What's really important here? If we stay here, it's all over. And your parents are using you!

JING
(torn)
I know, I know.

JING looks concerned.

AARON
(tenderly)
What's the matter?

JING
This is hard for me. My family. You.
(pause, thoughtfully)
And everything is riding on this.
(pause)

I guess we're paying the price for being different. Maybe that's the reason we're together.

AARON turns and looks JING in the face. HE takes her hands.

AARON

(trying to cheer her up)

I have a new song or two. One for you. I'll do it at the rally.

JING

I'd love that.

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SCENE 21

21

Later in the evening on the same day. The PO family's Chinatown shop. LING-SI is downstairs minding the shop as her PARENTS and YAO return from the title office.

YAO

(to Ling-si)

Well, your parents will be the proud owners of this building on Monday!

MRS. PO

(to LING-SI, concerned about JING)

Where is Jing?

LING-SI

In her room.

MR. and MRS. PO with YAO head up the stairs to the apartment.

MRS. PO

Master Yao, would you care for some tea?

YAO

Thank you. You are too kind.

MRS. PO heads to the kitchen to fix the tea. YAO and MR. PO are chatting in Chinese at the table. MRS. PO puts the water on to boil and heads down the hall to check on JING. SHE knocks gently on JING'S door.

MRS. PO

Jing dear, would you like some tea?

No response.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Jing?

(pause)

Jing?

SHE enters JING'S room and discovers JING isn't there. SHE comes out in a hurry and goes to the living room.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)
(to MR. PO and YAO)

Jing isn't in her room! Is she downstairs?

MR. PO

I don't know, ask your daughter.

MRS. PO calls to LING-SI from the top of the stairs.

MRS. PO
(to LING-SI)

Where is your sister?

LING-SI

In her room.

MRS. PO
(a little louder now)

She is *not* in her room!

No response from LING-SI. MRS. PO is becoming annoyed.

MRS. PO (CONT'D)

Come up here please.

LING-SI slowly ascends the stairs, looking down and dreading what is about to happen. SHE enters the apartment

MRS. PO (CONT'D)
(more annoyed)

Where is your sister?

LING-SI
(answering quietly)

I thought she was in her room.

YAO and MR. PO get up and walk briskly to JING'S door and look in. The tea kettle is starting to whistle slightly.

THEY return to the living room. LING-SI is standing, like a prisoner awaiting a guilty verdict.

MR. PO
(with concern)

Is Jing alright?

No response from LING-SI.

YAO
(his temper starting to show)

Where is Jing?

No response from LING-SI. The tea kettle is starting to make some serious noise. YAO's temper is starting to show. HE comes over to LING-SI and stands right in front of her in an intimidating way.

YAO (CONT'D)
(more emphatically now)

Where is Jing!?

LING-SI does not respond but only backs away from YAO. YAO now comes up to LING-SI and takes her firmly by the shoulders. The tea kettle is screaming now.

YAO (CONT'D)
(his anger showing)

I'm sure you know! Where?

At this point, LING-SI snaps. After all of the years of being the good daughter, SHE can't take it. As soon as YAO grabs her shoulders, SHE knocks THEM aside in pent up fury.

LING-SI
(with fury and the tea kettle going full blast)

As if I would tell you after what you've done! What do you expect? She gave up her only child! I can't believe it took me so long to say anything! You only want this building! We're just the hired help to you! You all make me sick, the way you sold off Jing!

LING-SI glares at YAO.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

(screaming)

I'm not telling you shit! All of you can go to hell!

(softly and with some remorse)

I didn't really help when she needed me. I should have listened to my heart instead of you. And now I've lost my best friend.

(beginning to anger again)

I can't believe this. I let this happen to my own sister!

LING-SI pauses, staring at THEM in anger.

MRS. PO comes over and puts HER hands on LING-SI'S shoulders. LING-SI angrily brushes them off and walks away.

LING-SI (CONT'D)

Shut that stupid tea kettle off!!

MRS. PO runs over and turns off the tea kettle. YAO'S temper is flaring. HE approaches LING-SI, takes her by the shoulders again and slaps her across the face.

YAO

(yelling)

Where?!

LING-SI recoils in fear. MR. PO has now had enough as well.

MR. PO

(angry)

Enough!

HE shields LING-SI and pushes YAO away.

MR. PO (CONT'D)

Stay away from my...

MRS. PO comes over to YAO. SHE is almost groveling at YAO'S feet.

MRS. PO
(interrupting)

I am so sorry Master Yao, you are...

MR. PO interrupts forcefully.

MR. PO
(speaking slowly and with great authority
to MRS. PO)

Sit down! You've done enough! And not another word! I told you I would not allow this.

HE points at MRS. PO. SHE stops in her tracks
and reluctantly sits down.

MR. PO (CONT'D)
(to YAO)

There will be no wedding! Keep your building! And stay away from my family!

LING-SI looks on in amazement.

LING-SI

Dad, what about...

MR. PO
(with great authority)

I will not sacrifice my family!

(now more gently)

And tell your sister I am sorry I let it go this long.

MR. PO takes YAO by the arm and moves him
toward the door.

YAO
(with malice)

You will regret this.

YAO turns to go out the door.

LING-SI
(screaming at YAO)

You'll never find her! And get the hell out!

YAO leaves.

22

SCENE 22

22

A bench is placed just outside the PO shop. Flash forward to the present. The media screen now shows JOHN and SABRINA walking from shop to shop in Chinatown. JOHN and SABRINA walk onstage. JOHN is carrying a list in his hand. THEY appear to be tired. THEY sit on the bench.

SABRINA

My feet.

JOHN

I think Po's must be like Smiths. They're everywhere.

Points to the door of the Po shop.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Let's do one more and then I'll buy you lunch.

SABRINA nods wearily. THEY enter the shop. A young lady minds the register.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to register girl)

Hi. We're looking for information about a Jing Po who used to live here in the 70s.

The REGISTER GIRL is immediately interested.

REGISTER GIRL

Jing Po? I was named after my aunt Jing Po.

JOHN

Can you tell us anything about her?

REGISTER GIRL

Not really. But my mom can. Mom!

SHE calls to her MOTHER who is coming down the stairs. It is OLD LING-SI who is now over 70 years old. SHE comes over to the register. SHE looks at JOHN and gasps slightly.

OLD LING-SI
(regaining her composure)

Can I help you?

JOHN

We're trying to find out about a Jing Po. We think she lived in this area in the 70s.

LING-SI takes her time to respond. SHE is obviously taken aback by the question.

OLD LING-SI

Jing Po was my sister. My daughter here was named after her.

Motions to the REGISTER GIRL. SABRINA and JOHN look at each other.

SABRINA

We found this clipping in his mother's things after she died.

LING-SI inspects the clipping. Media screen displays the old photo of AARON.

OLD LING-SI

I remember Aaron well.

JOHN

I was born just days before this and adopted by the Clark family. This is my wife Sabrina and I'm John Clark.

OLD LING-SI

Nice to meet you.

LING-SI bows. THEY all gather around the register counter.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)
(becoming very interested)

You were born just before this?

JOHN

April 17th, 1971. Here in San Francisco.

OLD LING-SI
(in disbelief)

Oh my God.

Can you help us?

JOHN

Oh yes.

OLD LING-SI

JOHN and SABRINA look at each other.

I knew it when I saw you.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

What do you mean?

JOHN

OLD LING-SI
(smiling)

You look just like your mother.

SABRINA

John is your sister's son?

LING-SI nods.

JOHN

Do you think we will ever really know?

OLD LING-SI

I already know.

LING-SI pauses before continuing.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

I need to show you something.

OLD LING-SI quickly goes to the counter and pulls an envelope from a drawer. SHE comes over to the table and sits down. SHE takes the contents out carefully and puts them on the table in an almost reverent manner. This is obviously very difficult for her. A teary OLD LING-SI looks at JOHN. JOHN picks up the Blue Moonstone pendant. He holds it out in front of him, looking intently at it and sets it back down on the table.

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

These are her things from that day.

JOHN

What day?

Remove the PO family shop and apartment from
the stage.

Flashback to 1971. The next day. April 24th, 1971. Golden Gate Park at Kezar stadium. It is 11 A.M., one hour before the rally starts. OLD LING-SI comes on stage while ten chairs onstage and places them on stage right for speakers and dignitaries, including a podium, banners, and microphone. As OLD LING-SI speaks, JING comes onstage and sits in one of the chairs. SHE watches as AARON and the BAND MEMBERS bring their musical gear onstage. THEY make multiple trips from off stage as they set up their amplifiers, drums, microphone stands, and cables.

OLD LING-SI

(speaking animatedly)

April 24, 1971 in Golden Gate Park's Kezar Stadium. Over 150,000 are in attendance, one of the largest assemblages of any kind in San Francisco's history. The atmosphere is charged with energy. On the same Sunday in Washington D.C., over 500,000 anti-war protesters also gather. The streets feeding into the park are jammed with attendees. I'm sure that some of you here remember those days. People are singing John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance." Signs and banners abound with the usual messages: "Hell no, we won't go", "U.S. out now," and "Resist the draft." That one is my favorite.

OLD LING-SI points to a banner. Media screen displays the poster. With a picture of a flower, it says, "War is not healthy for children and other living things."

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

But not everyone is caught up in the electric rally spirit, as you can see.

OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. Still distraught over the loss of her son, JING stands up and wanders around, lost in her reverie. AARON notices her pensive mood, stops, and puts down what he is carrying. AARON comes over to JING and puts his arm around HER. SHE is in tears.

JING

(despondent)

I can't get him out of my mind. I see his sweet face.

(with tremendous guilt)

I let them take our son. I need to tell him how this happened. And how much I love him.

AARON just nods and holds her tightly.

JING (CONT'D)

(tenderly)

I wonder where he is right now?

AARON takes JING'S hand and leads HER back to HER chair. THEY both sit as AARON puts HIS arm around HER. JING regains some of HER composure.

AARON

I suppose we'll never know.

JING

He will never know about us. And how all this happened. He'll grow up without us.

AARON

I wonder what he looks like. If he is anything like his mother, he will be amazing.

NEITHER can manage a smile.

JING

I'm sure he will like music. That much is in the genes.

AARON

(pensively)

Maybe something will happen someday. Something that will bring us all back together.

JING

Funny you should say that. I was thinking the same thing.

JING sits up abruptly in HER chair and attempts to shake off HER reverie.

JING (CONT'D)

Better get back to work Mr. Rock Star!

AARON

Aye, aye, mon capitaine!

AARON kisses HER tenderly on the cheek and returns to setting up. Play “**CUE 45-Short Quote of Anthem**” (incidental music). GOLDEN GATE RALLY HOST comes onstage and the BAND, JING, and MARSHALL LOGAN take a seat. At the same time, two SECURITY GUARDS walk down the aisles of the theater and take THEIR place in front of the stage. THEY are followed by a group of chanting protesters (all cast members who are not involved with the scene) carrying signs. The sound of the crowd begins to grow. The media screen above the stage shows images of actual footage from the rally. We see images of the BAND playing, JING and AARON, Vietnam clips, San Francisco landmarks, and YAO making his way through the crowd. Media screen goes dark. Wait until cue finishes then the GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY host comes to the microphone.

GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY HOST

Good afternoon everyone! Welcome! We are over 150,000 strong today!

Cheering.

GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY HOST (CONT'D)

Because united we stand, divided they fall!

More cheering.

GOLDEN GATE PARK RALLY HOST (CONT'D)

We have a great line up today. We have live music from a man who was just released from prison for refusing to serve in the military, our own native son, a San Francisco boy himself, Aaron Thomas and his band! But first we have the distinguished orator from Savannah Georgia, the "Captain of Souls", Marshall Logan. Power to the people!!!

MARSHALL LOGAN comes to the microphone.

MARSHALL LOGAN

(in a powerful orator's voice, like Martin Luther King)

Good day my brothers and sisters. In 1917 President Woodrow Wilson described the United States as the "most peace-loving of nations".

(MORE)

MARSHALL LOGAN (CONT'D)

How our collective memory has failed us! Since the inception of the United States, there have been hundreds of military operations, both here and abroad, resulting in the deaths of millions of people, the bulk of them so-called "non-combatants". The military is, in short, the imperialistic hammer that beats the drums of war. The most peace loving of all nations? We are, without any doubt, the most belligerent of all nations!! To further our own self interest we have engaged in all manner of depravity. And perhaps most amazing of all, we still collectively see ourselves as the purveyors of freedom and justice in this world. The first step to reversing this heritage of imperialism is simple: Realize the true nature of our past and learn from it. Somehow this madness must stop, for silence is betrayal. We must resolve to change or face the warning of John F. Kennedy: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable". I would like to close with the famous words of Dr. King. "If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream!!" Thank you!

Flashes the peace sign and sits down. Huge applause. The BAND comes to the microphones. The BAND MEMBERS come to the microphones and prepare to play. Applause and cheering.

AARON

Thank you so much. It's great to see so many of you here. The Aaron Thomas Band is proud to have been part of the anti-war movement here in San Francisco over the years.

(pause, dramatically)

I was recently released from prison for my refusal to serve in Vietnam. I would like to recognize and dedicate this next song to Jing Po for reminding me of my moral conscience and being my musical muse.

YAO is enraged and charges toward the front of the stage, pushing people aside. YAO reaches the stage and takes out the one SECURITY GUARD with a single blow to the stomach. JING spots YAO in the crowd.

AARON (CONT'D)

It's called "War is not the answer". And it goes like...

JING interrupts AARON.

JING

(in a panic, yelling)

Aaron! Aaron! It's Yao!

SHE points to HIM in the crowd and backs away from the front of the stage and ends up a few yards behind AARON.

YAO

(furious)

She belongs to me, hippie!! Me!!

All this happens very quickly. YAO whips out a hand gun.

JING

He's got a gun!!

YAO gets off 3 shots before the remaining two SECURITY GUARDS bring him to the ground. All hell breaks loose. Everyone drops for cover. Screaming and people running. AARON falls to the stage, slightly wounded in his arm. BAND members gather around AARON. RAMON rips his shirt into pieces to make a bandage for AARON's arm. Pandemonium. AARON seems to recover a bit. SECURITY GUARDS are hustling YAO out the back of the theater followed by the frightened protesters.

SCOTT

(in a panic)

Medic! We need a medic here now!

AARON

(weakly)

Where's Jing?

JING has fallen down, mortally wounded, a few feet behind AARON. EVERYONE turns around and sees JING on the stage floor. Renewed pandemonium as EVERYONE realizes that JING is truly injured. AARON attempts to get to his feet but can't. DAVID and RAMON lift AARON up and take him to JING. HE holds JING in his arms. RAMON takes the rest of his shirt and gives it to AARON to put on JING'S wound.

AARON (CONT'D)
(in a panic upon seeing her wound)

Jing! Dear God! Dear God!

JING
(struggling to speak to AARON)

I'm so sorry

(pause)

For everything...

AARON
(in anguish)

It's okay... Be still...I have you now.

JING'S arm falls to her side and SHE becomes unconscious.

AARON (CONT'D)

Please... Jing.... Please....

(in agony)

No!

AARON holds JING in his arms as SHE dies. Begin **"CUE 49-JING DIES"**. The media screen displays a faint image of JING and AARON fading into a diffuse background of images consisting of JING'S PARENTS, the war, YAO, prison, and the angry WAITRESS. EVERYONE leaves the stage. Cast quickly removes all scenery. OLD LING-SI comes on stage after the cue ends.

OLD LING-SI
(with sorrow)

My sister died so needlessly that April day. She was the victim of my parents' intolerance and greed. And to a small degree, my indecision. I will never forgive myself, even though my family considers me blameless. All I seem to think about is how I'd change the past. How I let my mother abuse Jing. How I never stood up for my sister. If I have learned anything from all this, it is that love is truly the answer. I am resolved to share my sister's story and show how xenophobia, cultural intolerance, and hate can only cause misery. I suppose I am doing this to somehow absolve myself of my guilt. Perhaps not absolve, but to at least come to terms with my shortcomings. My sister's death is with me always. Every time I tell my sister's story. Every time I go to the night fair. Every time I read her poetry or hear one of Aaron's love songs. Every time I hear my daughter play the guzheng. But John has made the circle complete. It gives my heart such joy to see my sister live on through him.

(MORE)

OLD LING-SI (CONT'D)

If it is true that our loved ones live on through our memories, then my sister is alive and well. Her life was all too brief, but for a short while she shared life's greatest gift. The joy of selfless love.

Begin "CUE 50-AARON AND JOHN". OLD LING-SI leaves the stage. A solitary door is brought on stage. Flash forward to the present day at AARON'S house. The stage is bare except for the door. JOHN and SABRINA enter. SABRINA stops JOHN about halfway across. Wait until music stops before continuing.

SABRINA

Go ahead. I'll be right here.

JOHN approaches the door and knocks as SABRINA watches. An aging AARON THOMAS answers the door. HE comes out of the doorway and stands face to face with JOHN.

JOHN

Excuse me. Sorry to bother you, but are you Aaron Thomas?

AARON nods. JOHN holds up the blue moonstone. After the applause begins, start "CUE 51-OUTRO".

THE END