

Hyodo

written by

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Final Draft

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FADE IN:

INT. JEN'S KITCHEN - DAY

We see an apartment kitchen, cramped but cozy. A breakfast in progress sits on the counter beside a sizzling pan.

JEN (O.S.)

Yes!

We turn to see a little kitchen table by the window. JEN (30s, Korean) and PAUL (30s, White) sit beaming at each other. Jen wears a crisp pencil skirt and blouse, Paul sports well-worn, paint-stained clothes.

JEN

Oh my god I thought you'd never ask.

PAUL

My lease ends in August so we should start looking at places now...I don't suppose you know a real estate agent? Preferably the sexy kind?

He winks at her, scooting his chair closer to hers. Jen smirks.

JEN

I think I could arrange that.

His hands around her waist, Paul pulls her in for a kiss. Just before their lips meet, their moment is broken by the sound of the fridge opening. Letting out a sigh of frustration, Jen leans back and Paul scoots away, returning to the stove.

HYUNJU (late 50s, Korean) carries a Tupperware and ingredients from the fridge, setting up next to Paul's crepes. She bumps into him as she passes, and he steps aside.

She makes space on the cramped counter, shoving his bowl of batter back, and begins cutting a green onion. Paul makes awkward eye contact with Jen. She grimaces apologetically.

PAUL

Morning, Mrs. Lim!

She ignores him and resumes cutting. Unfazed, Paul returns to his crepes, plating them and topping them with whipped cream. He tries to reach for a bowl of strawberry compote by her.

Hyunju reaches out and smacks his hand away. He drops the bowl, and it shatters on the ground, splattering strawberry juice.

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JEN

Mom!

Hyunju *tsks*, continuing to chop her onions.

HYUNJU (in Korean; subtitled)

It's rude to reach over someone.

Jen sighs and walks over with a rag to sop up the mess. Paul apologizes in the background while Hyunju watches her clean.

JEN

Let's just get breakfast on the way, I'm running late.

We hear Jen and Paul collect their things and leave. Hyunju, frowning, looks to her bowl of porridge. A stray strawberry chunk sits in the bowl, staining the white rice red.

INT. EMPTY HOUSE - DAY

We see Hyunju standing in an empty bedroom, surveying her surroundings. The room is big, she looks small in it.

Talking as they enter, Jen and Paul walk into the room.

PAUL

-and we could share the shelf:
your books and my ceramics!

The two share an excited smile. Jen turns to her mom.

JEN (in English)

Mom? What do you think? This could
be your room.

Hyunju clicks her tongue.

HYUNJU

*It's too big. Can you even afford
a house like this?*

JEN

What? Mom, of course I can.

HYUNJU

*You are not your father. When you
die, it should be in a house you
can afford.*

Jen's face puckers. She turns her face away from her mom, taking a shaky breath and blinking hard. Paul puts a hand on her shoulder. She places her hand over his and they walk out.

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Hyunju bends down by the window and peers through the blinds.
An empty suburban street of identical homes stares back at her.

INT. PAUL'S CAR - DAY

Sitting in the passenger seat of Paul's parked car, Jen buries her face in her hands and screams. Paul strokes her hair.

JEN
She's just so- AGHHHH

PAUL
If she's upsetting you, why don't
you just tell her?

JEN
Very funny.

Paul frowns, but doesn't push. Jen sighs and turns to him.

JEN
Are you sure you're ok with her
moving in with us?

He hesitates a moment too long. Jen snorts out a half-laugh.

JEN
Yeah, that's what I thought.

PAUL
What? No. What? I love your mom.

Jen rolls her eyes. He persists, prodding at her playfully.

PAUL
I love you. And you love her.

JEN (smiling)
Do I?

PAUL
You do.

They sit for a second with that, and Jen frowns uncomfortably.
Her watch beeps. She sighs.

JEN
I should go.

PAUL
Have fun.

She pecks his cheek and steps out of the car.

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INT. CHURCH - DAY

We see a large assembly in the pews, listening to the pastor's sermon. Hyunju and Jen sit towards the middle back.

Closer now, Hyunju's eyes are closed as she listens to the muted sermon. The room suddenly fills with the sound of pages, as everyone opens their Bibles. Hyunju follows suit.

She looks over to her neighbor-- a WOMAN around her same age. Hyunju nods to her. The woman looks down at Hyunju's Bible. It's written in Korean. The woman sniffs and turns away.

Hyunju looks to her daughter. Jen is typing out an email.

INT. CHURCH LOBBY - LATER

The congregation flows from the doors, shaking hands as they leave. Some mill about, drinking coffee and eating donuts. Jen and Hyunju pass, Hyunju already mid-complaint.

HYUNJU

*Church in America is not the same.
In Korea, church is about
community.*

Jen hm's, nodding to the pastor as they go.

HYUNJU

*In America, it's all about
competing for Jesus' affection.*

JEN

Don't you want Jesus' affection?

HYUNJU

*Of course. But it doesn't make you
a good Christian. Just makes you a
showoff.*

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The hum of patrons talking fills the atmosphere of this cozily fancy restaurant. Jen and Hyunju sit across from each other at a table. Jen is looking at the wine menu, Hyunju has her arms crossed, watching the people around them.

JEN

Paul is going to be a bit late.

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HYUNJU

I'm sure he is very busy at mug-making job.

Jen is dressed nicely, her hair loose around her shoulders. She ignores the comment.

JEN

Did you like the place we looked at last week? It was a good size.

Hyunju sniffs, crossing her arms.

HYUNJU

Why does it matter what I think? It's your house, not mine.

JEN

Of course it's your house, Mom.

HYUNJU

I'm a burden for you. Don't worry about what I think, buy whatever house you and Paul want.

JEN

Mom, I don't-

Jen is cut off short by Paul's arrival. He's wearing a nice, maroon suit, his face hidden by the bouquet in his arms.

PAUL

Hi ladies! Sorry to keep you.

He delivers a kiss to Jen with the flowers-- they match her dress. Jen smiles at him as he takes his seat. She reaches over and he takes her hand, beaming at her.

Hyunju picks up her menu.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

The waiter clears empty plates from the table.

Paul leans forward, picking up the bottle of wine. He tops Jen and Hyunju off before plucking up his glass and standing.

PAUL

A toast-- to celebrate the big news!

Jen smiles timidly, picking up her glass. Her eyes flicker over to her mother. Hyunju doesn't touch her wine.

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HYUNJU

What's he saying? What big news?

JEN

It's nothing-

PAUL

Jen got a big promotion!

Jen pinches the bridge of her nose.

JEN

You didn't have to say it for me.
I can tell her on my own.

Paul's forehead creases as he frowns. He is still standing.

HYUNJU

Then why haven't you told me? How long ago was this?

JEN

They told me a few weeks ago, but it was only finalized last Monday.

HYUNJU

Why does he know before me, huh? Why didn't you tell me?

She waves her hand in Paul's direction, accidentally knocking over her glass. Jen grabs her napkin. Paul looks incredulous.

PAUL

Jen, c'mon.

Hyunju's head whips up to face Paul. She glares at him, her face soured with disgust.

HYUNJU (IN ENGLISH)

And YOU knew?

An unfamiliar look of anger crosses Paul's face. A waiter appears, summoned by the noise, but both Paul and Hyunju wave him off without missing a beat.

PAUL

What do you mean by that?

JEN

Don't make it a big deal, you know how she is.

Neither of them acknowledge Jen, still locked in heated glares.

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PAUL
She already told me because I
actually support her.

Paul goes to take Jen's shoulder but she rears back, standing.

JEN
Don't talk to her like that!

At her daughter's defense, Hyunju perks up, looking at her daughter with wide eyes. Jen hands her the car keys without looking. Jen and Paul remain glaring at each other.

JEN
Go wait in the car, I'll be there
in a minute.

Hyunju wordlessly takes the keys and rises from the table, grabbing her coat. As she walks away, we hear the argument growing between the two-- muffled but clear in its fervor.

INT. HYUNJU'S ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are out. The blinds are open, the city peering through the window. Soft blue moonlight spills through.

We see Hyunju in bed, sleeping. Her room is filled with things. Some of it is typical old lady knick-knacks alongside nice dish sets and picture frames with nowhere to go.

We hear the door open. Hyunju stirs a bit. Silently, Jen slips into the bed.

As she crawls in, Hyunju wakes up more fully, realizing what is happening. Jen doesn't acknowledge her.

They lay in silence for a beat.

HYUNJU
*We haven't done this since you
were a little girl.*

JEN (in Koren)
Yeah.

HYUNJU
*I guess that was more your dad's
thing...and you have Paul now.*

JEN
We broke up.

HYUNJU
Oh.

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Satisfaction crosses Hyunju's face. The room is quiet for a moment, then it is suddenly full with the sound of Jen crying. Hyunju looks down at her daughter, her eyes wide and unsure. She awkwardly puts a hand on Jen's shoulder, petting it.

Jen turns onto her side so that she can sob into her mom's chest. Without missing a beat, Hyunju squeezes her tight.

They stay like that for a long moment, then Jen hiccups to a quiet that is almost calm.

JEN

Umma?

She says it quietly, her voice tight-- almost childlike.

HYUNJU

Yes? Scoot down.

Jen scoots and Hyunju reaches down to tug the quilt over her.

JEN

How did you manage it? Being alone.

Hyunju hesitates, smoothing Jen's hair, first like she's fixing it, then soothingly. Jen tucks her head under Hyunju's chin.

HYUNJU

I didn't.

JEN

At all?

HYUNJU

I'm here, aren't I?

JEN

Yeah.

She snuggles closer to her mom. Hyunju kisses her on the head and settles in, holding onto her little girl.

INT. PAUL'S STUDIO - DAY

The studio is covered in ceramic dust. Bowls and mugs indeed line the shelves, alongside delicately hand-crafted sculptures.

Hyunju sits at the work table, sipping from one of the finished mugs. Paul sits across from her, fidgeting with his own mug.

PAUL

So she told you, huh?

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Hyunju nods, setting down her tea and folds her hands. She adjusts her neck and leans back confidently, but the table trembles as she bounces her leg.

HYUNJU (in English)
I know a man wants his own space.

Rubbing his neck, Paul laughs.

PAUL
Mrs. Lim, SHE broke up with ME.

Hyunju raises her eyebrows. She nods, considering.

PAUL
She said she wasn't ready yet,
that it was too big of a step.

HYUNJU
And you believed her?

PAUL
I'm not the one who decides what
she's actually thinking.

HYUNJU
No. I am.

Paul snorts in disbelief, but sits back, opening his palms out.

HYUNJU
She came to me last night. Crying.
Years, I have waited-- thinking
that was what I wanted. But is
not. Not like that.

She cups the mug in her hands, studying it. Without looking up-

HYUNJU
I don't want to only love my
daughter when she's crying.

Paul purses his lips. He reaches out to cover Hyunju's hand with his own, but she scoots them away.

HYUNJU (CONT'D)
She is ready to move on. She just
isn't ready to tell me. So I'm
telling you.

PAUL
So you're ok with Jen moving out?
Without you?

HYUNJU

No.

She takes a deep breath.

HYUNJU

But Hee-jin is a big girl, I
cannot stop her. And when you let
her down, I will be there to say I
was right all along.

She looks down her nose at him. Paul presses his lips together.

PAUL

All this time, I never knew you
spoke English.

HYUNJU

I don't.

She sips at her drink and looks up at him-- the barest hint of
a smirk visible behind the hand-crafted mug.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Spring flowers dot the trees along a residential city.

A moving truck is parked in front of a handsome brownstone.
Paul hops down from the truck carrying a box up through the
open front door.

INT. THE NEW PLACE, KITCHEN - DAY

Paul sets the box down on the counter. Jen pokes her head out
from behind it.

JEN

Last of the kitchen stuff?

PAUL

Yep.

Paul pats the box proudly. Jen smiles and sidles up to him,
putting her hand in his back pocket. He leans into her.

They pause, eyes flickering around for a moment. Nothing.

At the silence, they smile and complete their kiss. Paul tucks
a strand of her hair behind her ear, thumb brushing her bottom
lip as he pulls his hand back. They enjoy a moment together.

PAUL

Welp. Better get started on this.

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He opens the box, rummaging through it. Jen's watch beeps.

JEN

Ok, I need to head out.

She goes for another parting kiss. Paul smiles at her.

PAUL

How's she settling in?

JEN

She's a 56-year old woman rooming
with two other cranky church
ajumma. She loves it.

PAUL (laughing)

Yeah, I see that for her. Have
fun, baby. Tell her I say hi.

EXT. CITY BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Two teams are scrimmaging on a court. Both teams are made up mostly of older Korean women.

The REFEREE-- an older Korean man wearing a clerical collar beneath the striped jersey-- blows his whistle twice.

We see Hyunju and Jen jog over to the sidelines along with the rest of the team. They all wear jerseys that read 'KOREAN CENTRAL CHURCH BB TEAM'.

Jen wipes her sweat away while Hyunju drinks from a thermos.

JEN (in Korean)

You played great.

HYUNJU

*Obviously. If only the ref could
open his goddamn eyes.*

JEN

Don't be racist, mom.

They snort at each other. They begin packing up.

HYUNJU

*You should come over for Bible
study and Karaoke with Ethel.*

Hyunju nods at an older black woman on the other team, who waves back. Jen bites her lip.

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JEN
*Not tonight. Paul and I have
plans. Dinner.*

She watches for her mom's reaction. Hyunju nods.

HYUNJU
*Good for you. Are you celebrating
something?*

JEN
*Mhm. I have some big news,
speaking of which.*

HYUNJU
Pregnant?

JEN
*What? No! Not yet. Or ever, I
don't know.*

Hyunju huffs and wipes her face down with a towel. When she pulls it away-- Jen is holding her hand out.

JEN
What do you think?

An engagement ring on her finger catches the light.

JEN
He proposed this morning.

Hyunju brings her hand closer to her face, studying the ring.

HYUNJU
It's...artsy.

Jen nods, silently, watching her face.

HYUNJU
I approve.

She folds Jen's hands and stands. Jen smiles brightly at her. Hyunja smiles back. A group of *ajumma* gossip behind them.

HYUNJU
*Come. Let's go show off your ring
to Mrs Ha. She'll hate it.*

Jen stands to join them, walking across the court with her mom.