

CRAZY RICH ASIANS

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INT. CALTHORPE HOTEL (1995) - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a portrait of a modern ENGLISH LORD. The brass placard reads: "Lord Rupert Calthorpe-Cavendish-Gore."

WIDER to reveal we're in the lobby of an ostentatious, exclusive hotel. It's deserted except for TWO HOTEL CLERKS behind the front desk. It is the middle of the night and RAINING HEAVILY outside.

The lobby doors open and the clerks look up to see TWO CHINESE WOMEN: ELEANOR and FELICITY YOUNG (30's) and THREE CHINESE CHILDREN (NICK 13, ASTRID 8, EDDIE 8) enter. They're DRIPPING WET, dragging their equally soaked luggage behind them.

As Felicity pulls off a PLASTIC BAG she was wearing as a rain hat, Nick runs and SLIDES on the polished floor, leaving a MUDDY STREAK in his wake. The Clerks look horrified. Felicity grabs Nick and scolds him in Hokkien (one of the angrier-sounding Chinese dialects):

FELICITY
(in subtitled Hokkien)
Nick! Stop acting like an idiot!
(to Astrid and Eddie)
Astrid, Eddie, you're wet, don't sit.
They'll think we're farm people.

The other woman, Eleanor (elegant, no-nonsense) gestures for her sister-in-law to stay calm.

ELEANOR
(in subtitled Hokkien)
If you didn't make us walk from the
train station they wouldn't be soaked.

FELICITY
(in subtitled Hokkien;
incredulous)
Taking a taxi for four blocks? Might
as well set fire your money.

One of the Clerks interrupts, intent on getting rid of the unwelcome interlopers.

CLERK #1
May I help you? This is the
Calthorpe, a private hotel--

Eleanor goes to the desk and replies in PERFECT ENGLISH - her pronunciation is BRITISH, with the melodious lilt unique to the well-to-do Chinese classes from former British colonies.

[NOTE: the specific accents of our players are important character details and indications of their background, education and socio-economic status.]

ELEANOR

I'm Eleanor Young and I have a reservation. The Lancaster Suite.

(sees his nametag)

Mr. Ash, we spoke last night when I confirmed?

CLERK #1

I'm sorry, I don't recall....

Clerk #2 surreptitiously presses a RED BUTTON under the counter. Eleanor and Felicity exchange glances. Felicity rolls her eyes, sensing what's going on.

REGINALD ORMSBY (50s, pompous) pops out of a door behind the front desk and the clerks move aside.

REGINALD

Good evening. I'm Reginald Ormsby, the hotel manager, is there a problem?

ELEANOR

Eleanor Young. My family and I would like to be shown to our suite at once. We've had a long flight.

Reginald takes in Eleanor et al and makes a snap judgment.

REGINALD

My apologies, but we don't have a booking under that name.

ELEANOR

I notice you didn't look at your reservation book.

The children watch this face-off with interest. Eddie snarfs a CADBURY BAR, getting chocolate all over his face.

ASTRID

(to Nick)

Your mum is getting that look again.

Nick looks uncomfortable, knows where this is headed.

REGINALD

The hotel is completely booked, Madam. You must have made a mistake.

(MORE)

REGINALD (CONT'D)

I'm sure you and your lovely family
can find other accommodations. May I
suggest you explore Chinatown?

FELICITY

(mutters; subtitled
Hokkien)

*You can explore hell, you red-haired
dog-turd.*

Eleanor levels a glare at Reginald, who doesn't flinch.

ELEANOR

Chinatown? I don't think so.

An embarrassed Nick touches his mother's elbow, whispers:

NICK

It's okay, mum. If they don't want us
here, we should just go.

Eleanor looks her son dead in the eye and decides it's time
for a teaching moment. She WHISPERS in Nick's ear.

ELEANOR

We aren't going anywhere.

(turns to Reginald)

May I use your phone to call my
husband? It's the least you could do.

EXT. CALTHORPE HOTEL - LONDON - NIGHT

Rain pours on the children and Felicity as they watch Eleanor
in a classic British PHONE BOOTH. "THE CALTHORPE" sign casts
a glow over them. We can't hear Eleanor, but she's angry.

INT. CALTHORPE HOTEL - LONDON - NIGHT

Eleanor bursts through the front door with her family right
behind her. Reginald is not pleased.

REGINALD

Mrs. Young! I must ask you to leave,
or I'll call the police.

ELEANOR

Go right ahead.

Reginald is momentarily taken aback. He moves to stop her
when the elevator OPENS and an ELDERLY MAN IN A SILK ROBE AND
SLIPPERS comes out.

It's LORD CALTHORPE, the same man in the opening portrait and owner of the hotel. And he's excited to see Eleanor. Reginald snaps to attention.

REGINALD

Lord Calthorpe! My apologies for the disturbance--

LORD CALTHORPE

(ignoring Reginald)

Eleanor! I just got off the phone with your husband. You should have told me you were coming.

Lord Calthorpe hugs Eleanor and snaps at the clerks.

LORD CALTHORPE (CONT'D)

Get the Lancaster suite ready. Now.

Clerk #1 runs out as Reginald reacts, confused.

LORD CALTHORPE (CONT'D)

Ormsby, draft a letter to the staff: As of this evening, my family's long history as custodians of the Calthorpe has ended. I'm selling the hotel to the Young family of Singapore.

REGINALD

Sir, surely you're joking.

LORD CALTHORPE

I most assuredly am not. Meet the new lady of the house, Eleanor Young.

(all smiles to Eleanor)

Now, will you and your family join me for a toast at the bar?

ELEANOR

We would be delighted. But first...

(turns to Reginald)

Get a mop. The floor's wet.

Eleanor winks at her son, Nick, who grins back. The screen goes to white and three words fill it:

CRAZY RICH ASIANS

INT. ND DARK ROOM - DAY

ON a PILE OF CHIPS being moved to the center of a poker table by a young man, CHANNING (20s, white). We're in the middle of a heads-up (2 person) no-limit hold'em poker game.

Across from him is RACHEL CHU (29, Chinese-American, beautiful, sharp).

It's tense. The 5 face-up community cards on the table are low value, off-suit. Rachel stares at Channing, sizing him up. Finally:

RACHEL
I'm all in.

Rachel pushes all her chips in. Channing is conflicted but FOLDS. Victorious, Rachel pulls the mound of chips in. Channing shows his cards: KING HIGH, off suit. Garbage.

CHANNING
I have to know. What did you have?

RACHEL
You're not gonna like it.

Rachel flips her pocket cards: Queen high, off suit. Worse garbage.

CHANNING
Queen high? That's it?

As Channing GROANS, disgusted, APPLAUSE FILLS THE ROOM. Go WIDE to REVEAL we're in:

AN AUDITORIUM CLASSROOM, packed with a hundred UNDERGRAD STUDENTS. The poker table onstage is projected on a large overhead screen so the students can follow the action.

As Rachel takes the lectern, we see the words scribbled on the whiteboard behind her: "ECONS 305: Game Theory." We realize she's an ECONOMICS PROFESSOR.

RACHEL
That poker bluff I made is a classic example of mixed strategy. When going heads up against an opponent, being unpredictable can be a tactical advantage--

A STUDENT interrupts her:

STUDENT
That wasn't tactical, you just got lucky--

All eyes turn to the Student, a go-getter instigator.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

You had a Queen Six, off-suit -- a 0.126% probability of domination. That's a high statistical likelihood you'd be beat. Betting everything you had with those odds is illogical.

Eyes turn back to Rachel. It's a challenge, which she welcomes.

RACHEL

Excellent point. But I wasn't going on just the odds. We both had bad hands, but I made what's known as a "Soul Read" on my opponent.

Rachel speaks effortlessly while SCRIBBLING a COMPLEX FLOW CHART, which is projected on the overhead screen.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(re: her poker opponent)

T.A. Channing and I have played a lot of poker. Of the 642 hands we've been in, he's played 28% of them. So I know he's a tight player and, having seen him kick a vending machine that ate his dollar, I know how much he hates to lose. Based on that knowledge and his past betting patterns, the chances of him folding was roughly 85%. Which, incidentally, is higher than any grade you've gotten in this class to date--

The Students laugh, impressed. The Go-Getter Student grins good-naturedly, conceding the point.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Remember, game theory isn't just statistics and probabilities. It's about human psychology and behavioral patterns. That's applicable to poker, business, sports, even human relationships--

MALE VOICE (PRE-LAP)

I'm gonna DESTROY you!

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

ANGLE UP - on a bunch of GUYS' HEADS mashed together. It's disorienting as they jostle for space and trash talk:

BRUTE OPPONENT

Your candy asses are going down--

TEAM CAPTAIN

Keep talking, cupcake--

NICK

Get me the ball--

NICK, Chinese, 30's, upper-crust British accent. He's good-looking (although it's hard to tell in this situation) and has an easy yet rugged vibe. He's the same boy we saw in the opening scene, all grown up.

BRUTE OPPONENT

(scoffs)

Yeah, give it to Hong Kong Downton Abbey there. See how far he gets--

REVEAL we're at a rugby rec league game in progress -- the players are in a MAUL (a moshpit slash huddle).

Nick BREAKS FREE with the ball. He sprints down the field, side-stepping and shoving OPPOSING PLAYERS in his way -- he leaves everyone in the dust... until he spots RACHEL walking by in the distance.

He slows down, yells to get Rachel's attention.

NICK

(waving)

Rachel!

Rachel spots him and breaks into a smile. She waves back when -- WHAM, Nick is STEAMROLLED by two HUGE OPPONENTS. Off Rachel, concerned.

EXT. NYU CAMPUS - DAY

Nick, dashing if disheveled post rugby, has an arm around Rachel as they walk through the park. His British accent has only deepened, making him that much more alluring.

RACHEL

We should hit Tea and Sympathy before they run out of sticky toffee pudding. It's all I could think about during class--

NICK

Sorry, can't. I'm subbing for Richard's Western Civ seminar.

RACHEL

Like, now? You can't teach. You look like you've been in a bar fight.

NICK

It'll get their attention.

Rachel gets a text, she reads it, disappointed.

RACHEL

My research associate is leaving for the summer - a family emergency. We were supposed to start work on our Revenue Equivalence paper next week.

NICK

So you're putting off the project?

RACHEL

I don't have a choice.

NICK

(realizing)

You know what that means?

RACHEL

Yeah, all the work I put into getting another paper published this year is down the toilet--

NICK

Or, positive spin, you're free to come to Colin's wedding with me.

RACHEL

(taken aback)

Your best friend's wedding? In Singapore? Isn't that next week?

Rachel seems unsure, which she hides from Nick. They arrive at a building.

NICK

This is me. We'll talk about it later. Oh, almost forgot--

Nick reaches into his duffel pulls out a PINK CONFECTION BOX, which he hands to Rachel. She tears into it, excited.

NICK (CONT'D)

The last sticky toffee pudding. Try to remember to chew this time--

But Rachel is in her own world, scarfing the pudding down. She feels him watching.

RACHEL
(mouth full)
What?

NICK
Nevermind.

He kisses her forehead and takes off.

RACHEL
(mouth full)
Bye!

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rachel and Nick are in her apartment. She's grading PAPERS at the kitchen counter. Nick cuts salami, veggies for a KILLER CRUDITE PLATTER, which Rachel demolishes as she works:

NICK
There's no reason you can't come.
It's about time you met my best mate--

RACHEL
I want to. But I can't help thinking I
should just do the paper on my own--

NICK
You work too hard. You're already a
rockstar in the department.

RACHEL
I need to put up serious numbers if I
want tenure. It's proven, female
minorities in academia get passed over
all the time--

NICK
Your life can not be all about work
and food--

On Rachel, surrounded by a sea of papers with a cold cut hanging out of her mouth.

NICK (CONT'D)
Consider this. By not coming to
Singapore and partying with me, you're
actually perpetuating the hardworking
Asian stereotype--

Nick opens the fridge as he puts the cold cuts away.

NICK (CONT'D)
 --Stop being the model minority. Live
 a little.
 (opens cheese drawer;
 recoils)
 This cheese has been in here since we
 started dating.

Off Rachel, point taken.

EXT. VINTAGE BOUTIQUE- DAY

Rachel and her mother, KERRY (50s, a real estate agent, Chico chic), are shopping at a hip clothing boutique. Kerry has a slight Chinese immigrant accent. As they both browse:

KERRY
 I don't understand - why are you
 worried?

RACHEL
 Nick and I have been going out a year.
 We never even talked about moving in
 or our future. Not that I want him to-
 (finds a blouse)
 This is so you.

Kerry takes the blouse.

KERRY
 Oo, nice.
 (checks price tag; in
 subtitled Mandarin)
Two hundred dollars for a top? Crazy.

RACHEL
 The point is we're in a good spot.
 But flying halfway around the world to
 meet his family? That's going to
 change things.

KERRY
 Your mind is too analytical. You've
 been that way since young -- you never
 do anything unless you're sure of the
 outcome. That's why you're still not
 married. If you wait too long--

RACHEL
 (heard it before)
 Don't say it--

KERRY
 --You'll become a leftover woman.

Kerry flags down a salesgirl. Leans in, conspiratorial.

KERRY (CONT'D)
 This blouse. Give me your best price.

SALESGIRL
 The prices are non negotiable.

RACHEL
 (embarrassed; in subtitled
 Mandarin)
*Mom, this isn't the kind of place
 where you bargain.*

KERRY
 Forty percent off, I'll pay cash.

The salesgirl rolls her eyes, but then:

SALESGIRL
 Twenty percent. Final sale.

KERRY
 Deal.

Kerry smiles, triumphant. Looks to her daughter.

KERRY (CONT'D)
 See? You don't know what you get
 unless you try.

On Rachel, hearing the lesson.

INT. JFK - DAY

Amid the insane bustle, Rachel and Nick enter with their SUITCASES. Rachel, the consummate planner, juggles her various shoulder bags and a folder full of travel documents.

RACHEL
 Here's the game plan: after we check
 in, we should grab a bagel and a
 bottle of Purell, then hunker down for
 the hour slog through security--

An impossibly elegant SINGAPORE AIRLINE FLIGHT ATTENDANT approaches, flanked by three PORTERS.

STEWARDESS

Good afternoon, Mr. Young, Ms. Chu.
We'll take your bags and get you
checked in immediately. Then I'll
escort you to the first class lounge--

Rachel looks confused as the porters take their bags.

RACHEL

There's been a mistake. We're not
flying first class...

As the Stewardess leads the way, Nick puts a hand in the small
of her back, ushering her along.

NICK

Just go with it.

INT. SILVERKRIS FIRST CLASS LOUNGE - DAY

The Stewardess shows Nick and Rachel into a luxuriously
appointed lounge. A 5-star buffet is laid out as soft jazz
plays - a universe away from the insanity outside. Rachel
takes it in as a Waiter serves them a tropical cocktail:

RACHEL

(low; to Nick)

We can't afford first class. There
are flowers in our drinks.

NICK

Don't worry. I got this.

Nick heads for the buffet, Rachel follows, incredulous. Nick
gets two plates **(note: he always looks out for Rachel food-
wise. It's how Chinese everywhere show affection)**

RACHEL

You "got" this? We're college
professors, not the Kardashians. Two
first class tickets to Asia is a
quarter of your net annual income--

Nick doesn't want to get into it, but realizes he needs to
placate Rachel:

NICK

If it makes you feel better, I didn't
pay for them.

(off her look; reluctantly)

My family happens to be the majority
shareholder of the airline.

RACHEL
 (taken aback)
 I thought your father was a
 businessman.

NICK
 He is. And this is one of the
 businesses.
 (re: food)
 Devilled egg?

RACHEL
 You're trying to distract me with food
 and it's not going to work...
 (beat)
 Of course I want the egg. And two of
 those salmon tartines--

ANGLE FROM NEARBY BOOTH: Unseen by Nick and Rachel, a young woman, CELINE (20s, a jet-setting Chinese-Singaporean PYT), spots them and reacts, surprised.

She surreptitiously takes a picture of Nick feeding Rachel a tartine. A TEXT BUBBLE appears on screen as she texts:

CELINE (TEXT)
 Guess who's at JFK?!!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ZURICH PENTHOUSE - EVENING

In an opulent post-modern penthouse with a view of the Limmat riverfront, FRANCESCA (20s, of the glam-fab set) throws a pair of Louboutins into a gleaming Rimowa suitcase she's packing.

She gets a text and checks her phone to see the picture of Nick and Rachel. She reacts, surprised.

FRANCESCA
 Nick Young?

As Francesca texts back:

FRANCESCA (TEXT) (CONT'D)
 Who's the girl?

IN FIRST CLASS LOUNGE, where Celine sees Nick and Rachel settling into a booth. She surreptitiously heads for the front desk, eavesdropping on their conversation as she does.

RACHEL

So exactly how many businesses does
your family own?

NICK

It changes, so it's hard to keep track
of.

We get the sense Nick is being deliberately vague, but Rachel
presses the issue.

RACHEL

Look, I know your family has money.
You went to Oxford, dress in
Aquascutum and don't believe in
Priceline. But now it sounds like
you're Richie Rich... rich.

NICK

Does it matter?

RACHEL

You never talk about your family or
how you grew up. I just want to know
what I'm walking into.

ON Celine, who's been eavesdropping. She sees Rachel's name
on the front desk check-in list. Starts texting:

CELINE (TEXT)

Girl = Rachel Chu. Looks ABC*. VERY
interested in Nick's \$\$\$\$. Could be
his date to Colin's wedding?!

CHYRON: *ABC: American Born Chinese.

BACK WITH FRANCESCA: who doesn't look happy. As she types:

FRANCESCA (TEXT)

I'll find out...

A German man, HELMUT (30's, wealthy investment banker,
besotted with Francesca), enters, pleads with her.

HELMUT

(in subtitled German)

Francesca, you're being rash. Please,
don't go.

Francesca doesn't look up as she responds in PERFECT GERMAN.

FRANCESCA

(in subtitled German)

We had a good run, don't spoil it now.

HELMUT
(in subtitled German)
You can't leave me. I'm begging you.

FRANCESCA
(in subtitled German)
Don't plead, it's unattractive.

Helmut looks bereft as Francesca continues to text.

RESUME WITH NICK AND RACHEL

NICK
If you want to know about my family,
I'll tell you. There are my first
cousins: Alistair, Eddie and Astrid.

The screen SPLITS INTO 4 BOXES, "24" style, with Nick in one box and each cousin in their own box: ALISTAIR CHENG (30s, sunglasses, playboy with pop idol hair), EDDIE CHENG (30s High strung, dapper investment banker), ASTRID (30s, gorgeous, elegant.)

WE INTERCUT BETWEEN NICK & RACHEL and the COUSINS.

NICK (CONT'D)
Alistair's based in Taiwan. He works
in the movie industry...

INT. TAIWAN - MOVIE SET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a dashing HERO, facing off against a VILLAIN. In the b.g., a BUXOM HEROINE is chained to a wall. The Hero and Villain launch into a fast-paced stylistic KUNG-FU FIGHT. The Hero dispatches the Villain and sets free the buxom heroine, who clutches him melodramatically.

BUXOM HEROINE
(in subtitled Taiwanese)
I owe my life to you! My hero!

DIRECTOR
(in subtitled Taiwanese)
Cut! That's it for today!

Buxom Heroine KITTY PONG (20s, DD implants) runs into the arms of Alistair, who is sitting with the other producers behind the DIRECTOR.

Alistair has the same refined accent as Nick, unlike Kitty who speaks with a GIRLY TAIWANESE ACCENT.

KITTY

Alistair! You like it? I was feeling very the emotions!

ALISTAIR

Kitty, you're a star in the cinematic firmament.

The DIRECTOR and Hero/Actor have an aside.

ACTOR

(in subtitled Taiwanese)

She's terrible. Can't we get someone else?

DIRECTOR

(in subtitled Taiwanese;

re: Alistair)

He's financing the whole movie. If he wanted to cast his toothless grandmother we'd do it.

RESUME WITH NICK AND RACHEL

NICK

Then there's Eddie. We never got along as kids. He's a financier in Hong Kong now. A family man.

INT. HONG KONG - TRIUMPH TOWERS PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MORNING

Eddie, his wife, FIONA CHENG (30s, Hong Kong Chinese, in a simple but elegant dress), and their three sons (all under 8 and wearing matching Ralph Lauren Kids outfits with burgundy Gucci loafers) are frozen in "natural" poses -- Eddie and Fiona "laugh" as their boys "play" with wooden airplanes that look more like props than toys -- as fashion photographer, JUERGEN TELLER, takes their portrait. Behind them, wide floor to ceiling windows frame a panoramic view of Hong Kong.

JUERGEN TELLER

Beautiful. I think we're done.

As Juergen wraps up, Eddie scurries over, all smiles. Eddie has the same British accent as Nick and Alistair.

EDDIE

Thank you, Juergen. I'm such a fan of your work for Marc Jacobs. It's an honor to be photographed by you.

JUERGEN TELLER
 Hopefully you'll see your family in
 next month's Hong Kong Vogue.

Eddie beams, but the moment Juergen and his ASSISTANTS exit,
 Eddie loses his smile and turns on his wife, annoyed.

EDDIE
 Your dress was a disaster. If you
 wore the Marchesa gown like I wanted,
 we could be in American Vogue.

Fiona leads their children away from her fuming husband...

RESUME WITH NICK AND RACHEL

NICK
 The only one I'm close to is Astrid.

RACHEL
 I remember. She came to town for
 fashion week. She's the most
 glamorous person I've ever met.

NICK
 Actually, she's really down to earth--

INT. SINGAPORE - JEWELRY BOUTIQUE - MORNING

ON THE BACK of an ELEGANT, SLENDER WOMAN as she enters a high-
 end jewelry store. We FOLLOW HER as the JEWELER, delighted to
 see her, ushers her in --

JEWELER
 Ms. Leong, right this way--

-- She walks past the glass displays of GORGEOUS FINE GEMS AND
 JEWELRY. Several patrons, WEALTHY WOMEN decked in jewelry,
 clothes and handbags with ostentatious logos, sneak looks at
 her, recognizing her.

WEALTHY WOMAN #1
 (excited; whispers to
 friend)
 That's Astrid Leong. Didn't I tell you
 she shops here?

The women look on, intrigued, as the elegant woman pauses by a
 LITTLE GIRL who's there with her mother. The girl wears Hello
 Kitty earrings and looks bored/neglected. ON the elegant
 woman, ASTRID, 30s, who's grown into a gorgeous woman. She
 carries herself with graceful elegance, but her eyes are
 lively and warm.

ASTRID
 (bends down; to girl)
 I like your earrings. They're pretty,
 like you.

The little girl BEAMS. The girl's MOTHER lights up, proud, as the patrons watch Astrid and the jeweler disappear through a hallway into a restricted area...

INT. JEWELRY STORE BACK ROOM - DAY

An ASSISTANT brings Astrid tea in a tiny antique cup as she surveys a specially curated selection of jewels. It's a small, but luxuriously appointed room reserved for elite clientele. Astrid spots a large pair of ANTIQUE EARRINGS crusted in diamonds and rubies.

JEWELER
 An outstanding example of 18th century
 Siamese repoussé work, with cabochon
 rubies and forty-three carats of
 diamonds.

Astrid touches the earrings, intrigued.

ASTRID
 How much?

JEWELER
 (considers)
 Just having you wear one of my pieces
 is better publicity than I can buy.
 I'll let them go at cost.
 (beat)
 One point two. Million.

Astrid gives a subtle nod. The Jeweler beams. As he takes the earrings to be wrapped, Astrid gets a TEXT on her phone. It's from Francesca, who's texted Eddie and Alistair as well.
Screen splits four ways as they text back and forth.

FRANCESCA (TEXT)
 Who's Rachel Chu? Little bird says
 Nick's bringing her to the wedding...

WE INTERCUT BETWEEN FRANCESCA, EDDIE, ALISTAIR and ASTRID:

INT. HONG KONG - PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MORNING

Eddie stares at the phone in horror.

EDDIE
 (subtitled Cantonese)
*Nick?! Asshole! Always stealing my
 spotlight.*
 (TEXTS; in English)
*I thought he was going solo. Anyone
 know who she is?*

INT. TAIWAN - KITTY'S DRESSING ROOM - MORNING

A shirtless Alistair lifts a BLINDFOLD off his eyes to check his phone. He tries to type his reply as Kitty undresses in the background, throwing her underthings on him as she does.

ALISTAIR (TEXTS)
 Rachel Chu? Maybe she's from the
 Taiwan plastics Chus?

INT. JEWELRY STORE BACK ROOM - DAY

Astrid reads the text chain, concerned.

ASTRID (TEXTS)
 No idea. Nick will tell us when he
 sees us.

Astrid then makes a call, which goes to voicemail.

ASTRID (CONT'D)
 Nick, you just activated Radio One
 Asia. Francesca Shaw knows you're
 bringing Rachel to Singapore. I'll try
 to contain it, but cat's out of the
 bag...

INT. AIRBUS 380 - NIGHT

On Nick, who is preoccupied and SWITCHES OFF HIS PHONE as he and Rachel board the plane. Rachel is blown away as the Flight Attendant shows them to first class.

BEAUTIFUL FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 Welcome aboard, Mr. Young, Ms. Chu.
 This is your private suite.

Rachel turns to Nick and mouths.

RACHEL
 Private suite?

There are twelve suites, each equipped with enormous armchairs upholstered in Poltrona Frau leather, two huge flat-screen televisions, and a full-length wardrobe.

BEAUTIFUL FLIGHT ATTENDANT

There's a complimentary bottle of Dom Perignon. And would you like to enjoy your lounge chairs until dinner, or should we convert your suite into a bedroom after takeoff?

Nick looks hopefully at Rachel.

RACHEL

Let's hold off the champagne and bedroom suite for now.

(to Nick)

You're not off the hook yet.

Nick sinks into his chair, smiles in resignation.

NICK

What else would you like to know?

RACHEL

You haven't told me much about your mother.

Nick pauses, it's a loaded subject.

NICK

She's like a lot of Chinese mothers. She runs the family, spends a lot of time with her bible study group...

INT. SINGAPORE - PHILLIP & ELEANOR'S HOUSE - MORNING

CLOSE ON ELEANOR (50s). It's been twenty years since we've seen her, but she still looks amazing. She sits with THREE FABULOUSLY DRESSED WOMEN (50s, JACQUELINE LING, and Eleanor's sisters-in-law: FELICITY YOUNG and ALIX YOUNG). They all have open bibles on their laps, as uniformed MAIDS serve tea and "kuih," colorful local cakes.

ELEANOR

(reads from bible)

--*Strive for the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set not your minds on earthly things--*

Jacqueline and Alix's phones BUZZ. Eleanor looks on disapprovingly as they check their messages.

These matriarchs speak with UPPER CRUST CHINESE SINGAPOREAN ACCENTS (perfect grammar with local flourishes.) Jacqueline reacts, surprised.

JACQUELINE

Eleanor, is Nicky bringing a girl back home, *ah?* My daughter Amanda just heard from her friend, Celine...

Eleanor reacts, it's the first she's hearing of this, but tries not to let on.

ALIX

(looking at phone)

Eddie says her name is Rachel Chu?

FELICITY

I thought Nick was coming alone. Did you know he had a girlfriend?

All eyes are on Eleanor, who gives nothing away.

ELEANOR

Of course.

JACQUELINE

My Amanda knows *everyone* and says she's never heard of her.

FELICITY

Maybe she's from the Taiwan plastics Chu family.

ELEANOR

(covering)

Nick dates so many girls, it's hard to keep track.

(changing subject)

We should go back to the word of God. This week's theme is about being godly wives and mothers--

The women reluctantly return to their bibles.

ALIX

Ephesians 6;4: *Bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

(can't help herself)

I hope Nick's girlfriend is a good, Christian girl--

FELICITY

If he's bringing her home it must be serious. Are they staying with you?
Together?

The three women react, scandalized.

ELEANOR

I told Nicky it wouldn't be a good idea. My interior designer is still working on the guest rooms - the house is a mess.

WIDER to see that Eleanor's palatial home is in pristine order. Jacqueline, Alix and Felicity sneak each other knowing looks as Eleanor returns to her bible.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Where were we? Oh yes, Psalm 34;13:
"Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit..."

The ladies return to their bibles. But under the table, they ALL secretly text on their phones, Eleanor included.

TEXT BUBBLES FILL UP THE SCREEN as the four ladies furiously text: *Have you heard re: Nick's girlfriend? / Nick is bringing a girl home! / SOS Call ASAP / Who is Rachel Chu???*

INT. AIRBUS 380 - NIGHT

The plane is now in the air. Rachel and Nick unstrap themselves as the seat belt sign switches off with a DING.

NICK

By the way, Colin asked if I could join his bachelor party. You okay being on your own for a couple days? You could camp out at the hotel spa--

RACHEL

I'll be fine. My old college pal, Peik Lin, lives in Singapore. I said I'd look her up.
(something bugging her)
How come we're staying at a hotel?
(half-kidding)
You're not trying to hide me from your family, are you?

NICK

Actually, I am.
(off Rachel's look)
(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

Singapore is a cosmopolitan country,
but it's also a tiny, gossipy island.
We stay with my parents and it'll be
nonstop visits from aunts, uncles,
cousins, second cousins, family
friends and, worst of all, my mum's
church people. They bring cake, but
they never leave--

RACHEL

(gets it, but)
What kind of cake?

NICK

The truth is, I want to have you all
to myself -- just for a bit -- before
I have to share you with everyone. Now
are we done with the twelve point
interrogation?

Rachel smiles. Yes, for now. She presses the ATTENDANT CALL
BUTTON, and their Flight Attendant materializes instantly.

RACHEL

I think we're ready for that bottle of
champagne...

Nick grins, leans in to kiss Rachel. We find the PLANE
GRAPHIC on Rachel's entertainment console, showing the flight
path from North America to Singapore. MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

Rachel and Nick's plane tears through the sky. But the screen
FILLS UP with boxes, each featuring a friend, cousin, parent
or aunt TEXTING EACH OTHER ABOUT NICK AND RACHEL'S ARRIVAL.
The boxes MULTIPLY and FILL THE SCREEN, and we wonder what
awaits Rachel and Nick when they arrive...

EXT. SINGAPORE SKYLINE - NIGHT

The A380 flies across the South China Sea, heading for a
SHINING JEWEL at the tip of the Malaysian Peninsula. As the
plane gets nearer, we see the "jewel" is made of millions of
glittering lights from the densely-packed, shining buildings
on the iconic city-state of Singapore.

INT. CHANGI AIRPORT - DAY

Nick and Rachel emerge with other INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS,
pushing luggage carts as they emerge from Customs.

As Nick switches his phone on, he sees he has HUNDREDS OF TEXT AND VOICE MESSAGES. Most are from "MUM."

He hides his concern and phone from Rachel, who's distracted by the shiny arrival hall: an ultramodern tropical oasis with hanging gardens and indoor palm trees.

RACHEL

This is amazing. You guys have a butterfly garden?! All we get at JFK are panhandlers and salmonella.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Niiiiiiiiiiiiick!!!!

They turn to see a willowy young woman, ARAMINTA (20s) clutching SILVER BALLOONS, rushing up to meet them. She jumps on Nick, hugging him. Behind her is a handsome man, COLIN (30s), with a surfer's haircut holding a PLACARD that reads "Best Man." Nick lights up to see them.

NICK

Araminta! Colin!

Araminta releases Nick and immediately grabs Rachel in a tight hug. Rachel reacts, surprised, amused.

ARAMINTA

You must be Rachel. I'm sooo happy to finally meet you!

Araminta has no make on under her wire framed spectacles, and is wearing plaid pajama pants, a tank top and flip-flops. Nick gives Colin a big hug.

NICK

You didn't have to pick us up!

COLIN

I had to welcome my best man properly.
(to Rachel)
And my best man's best girl--

ON Rachel, drowning in balloons as Araminta squeezes her.

RACHEL

I feel very welcomed.

EXT. CHANGI AIRPORT - NIGHT

Colin pushes the luggage cart out the door, flanked by Rachel, Nick and Araminta.

COLIN

How great are those first class
suites? Minty and I got one the last
time we flew and--

Colin COUGHS suggestively. Araminta PUNCHES Colin in the arm -
much harder than one expects - but it cracks Colin up.

ARAMINTA

You're such a liar!
(to Rachel)
He tries to make us sound so exciting,
but all he did is watch *Creed* and cry.

Rachel grins, liking them already. As Colin and Araminta wave
to a waiting Navigator, Rachel has an aside with Nick.

RACHEL

I like your friends. They're dorks,
like us.

A DRIVER gets out and starts loading their luggage. Rachel
starts to get into the Navigator, but Araminta stops her.

ARAMINTA

That's just for luggage. This is us.

Araminta points to a gleaming RANGE ROVER AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

RACHEL

(low: to Nick)
Okay. Maybe not exactly like us.

COLIN

(to Nick and Rachel)
So, where to? You guys hungry?

Colin, Araminta, Rachel and Nick climb into the car.

NICK

Ravenous. Let's do Chicken Rice at
Maxwell Road? Or chili crab at Long
Beach?

COLIN

You been away too long, man! That
place is only for tourists now. We'll
do dimsum on Sims Avenue--

ARAMINTA

Aiyah, Rachel's the guest. Let her
decide.

Colin, Nick and Araminta look at Rachel.

RACHEL
I wouldn't know. Is there a place we
can get a little of everything?

On Colin, Nick and Araminta, grinning.

INT. HAWKER CENTER - NIGHT

Our group enters an open-air pavilion that houses a hive of food stalls underneath swaying palm trees, right on the beach. Even though it is late, the place teems with HUNDREDS of DINERS. The people, like the food they're eating, are varied, colorful: Indian families with their little children, Malay Muslim women in colorful head scarves, Chinese businessmen grabbing a drink after work.

RACHEL
This is unbelievable--

NICK
Welcome to Singapore.

Colin scans the place for an empty table.

COLIN
(spots a table)
There, three o'clock!

As Colin and Araminta hurry over to claim the table, Nick buys TISSUE PACKETS from an Old Lady.

NICK
(to Old Lady)
Toh cheh, Aunty...

Rachel smiles at how respectful Nick is to the old lady. As they head for the table.

RACHEL
Why'd you call her Aunty?

NICK
Here, anyone older than you is Aunty
or Uncle, it's a sign of respect.

RACHEL
I like that. But what's with the
tissues?

Rachel looks on as Nick puts a tissue packet at each seat.

NICK

To save our seats. We're gonna be busy--

Nick grabs Rachel, kicking off our MONTAGE:

- They walk by the dizzying array of stalls, Nick excited to share this world with Rachel:

NICK (CONT'D)

Each hawker has a few dishes that their family has spent *generations* perfecting. It's the only place in the world where street food vendors get Michelin stars--

- Nick orders from a MALAY SATAY vendor, fanning LEAPING FLAMES on his small aluminium grill.

NICK (CONT'D)

(in Malay)

Dua dozen. Satu ayam, satu daging.

- Rachel watches a CHINESE LAKSA vendor put a dozen different exotic toppings in a bowl of noodles.

NICK (CONT'D)

(to vendor; in Cantonese)

Leong woon. Yat woon toh lat chiu.

- Nick orders ICE KACHANG, a tall, colorful shaved ice confection, from a no-bullshit SEVEN YEAR OLD GIRL, who eyes the large bill he gives her with distaste.

7 YEAR OLD GIRL

(in Hokkien)

Uncle, lu boh suah lui, ah?

Nick gives in, hands her the exact change. The girl eyeballs Nick as she hands him his ice kachang.

NICK

(grinning; in Hokkien)

Kam seeah.

Rachel looks at Nick, amazed at his ability to switch between languages and dialects. As they head back to their table:

RACHEL

You just spoke three different languages and I don't even know how many dialects in the last five minutes--

NICK
Singapore's a mish-mosh of Indian,
Malay and Chinese. You learn to speak
quick if you want to eat.

END MONTAGE. The four of them sit at a table OVERFLOWING with
a dozen dishes. Rachel dips a satay stick in peanut sauce and
takes a bite. Her eyes light up.

RACHEL
Ohmygod.

NICK
Right?

RACHEL
This makes all the satay I've had
before taste like dog food--

Araminta and Colin grin with approval as they tear in.

ARAMINTA
(to Rachel)
When Nick said he was bringing you, I
was worried you were one of those
American girls who only eats quinoa.

RACHEL
(mouth full)
Hate those bitches.

COLIN
So, has Nick given you the full run
down on us?

RACHEL
I've heard stories about you two from
grade school, I mean, primary school?

COLIN
Like the time he beat up of Bernard
dickface Tai for taking my tuckshop
money?

Rachel looks at Nick, amused.

NICK
Colin's making me seem more heroic
than I was. I got one punch in before
Bernard Tai sat on me--

COLIN
I thought you were a gone case. The
guy was a fat-ass psycho!
(MORE)

COLIN (CONT'D)

It was a gland disorder or something.
Everyone was too chicken to face him.
But not Nick.

(raises his glass)

To my best man, Nick Young, who can't
fight for nuts, but will always have
your back.

RACHEL

Hear, hear!

They toast and down their drinks. Araminta squeaks,
remembering something. She turns to Rachel.

ARAMINTA

Alamak, almost forgot to ask! Are you
free this weekend? I'd LOVE you to
join my bachelorette party.

RACHEL

You're so nice, but I don't want to
intrude--

ARAMINTA

I promise I wouldn't ask if I didn't
want you there.

RACHEL

(touched)

That sounds amazing. Yes, thank you.

COLIN

More important question.

(re: the food)

What's your favorite thing so far?

RACHEL

Oh, wow, I can't even begin to decide.
But if it's all like this, I'm never
going to want to leave.

Nick grins, not noticing the look Araminta is giving Colin.

EXT. ASTRID'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A sleek Maybach pulls up to an upscale high-rise apartment
building. Astrid steps out. Upon seeing her, the DOORMEN and
PORTERS have an extra snap in their step as they greet her and
take her shopping.

INT. ASTRID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Astrid enters, followed by the Porters. The apartment isn't enormous, but each room is straight out of the pages of Architectural Digest. TWO MAIDS quickly swing into action, taking the bags from the Porters and unpacking them.

ASTRID

Is Sir home yet?

MAID

Not yet, ma'am. Also Cassian woke up, he wants to see you.

ASTRID

All right.

(re: shopping)

You know what to do. Quickly.

The Maids nod, knowing the drill. QUICK CUTS OF:

- In the pantry, one Maid hangs SEVERAL OUTFITS in a SECRET CLOSET behind the shelves of canned goods.

- Another Maid stashes BOXES OF SHOES behind the washing machine.

- In the kitchen, Astrid takes the EXPENSIVE EARRINGS she bought and stores them in a TEA CADDY, which she puts on a high shelf.

As we wonder what's going on:

INT. ASTRID'S APARTMENT - CASSIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Astrid lies by her son, CASSIAN (3), who's half asleep in bed as she reads *The Little Prince* to him in French.

ASTRID

(in perfect French)

--*Cette visite fut très courte, mais elle plongeait le petit prince dans une grande mélancolie...*

Astrid pauses when she hears SOMEONE enter the apartment. She looks to Cassian, now sound asleep, and heads out.

INT. ASTRID'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The SOUND OF A SHOWER BEING TURNED OFF as MICHAEL TEO, 30s, Astrid's husband, former army sergeant and ripped/hot as all hell, exits the bathroom in a towel. He talks to Astrid who's on the bed as he dries off, not looking at her immediately.

MICHAEL

Sorry I couldn't meet up for dinner.
A negative market research report came
in and we thought we might have to
delay the launch--

He trails off when he sees Astrid is on the bed, wearing an impossibly sexy silk robe with nothing underneath.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Nice robe. That new?

ASTRID

Might be.

Michael smiles as he walks over.

MICHAEL

I caught the maid trying to shove a
box of Jimmy Choos behind the dryer. I
don't know why you bother hiding your
shopping from me. Your family's name
is on the building. Everyone knows you
wear the money pants in this house.

ASTRID

Pants are overrated.

She stretches out a sexy naked leg.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

I got you something, too.

She hands him a box, which he opens, revealing an Audemars Piguet Mens watch.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

To celebrate the launch of your start
up. I know you don't like expensive
gifts. But now that you're a CEO,
people expect you to look the part.

Michael smiles, conceding, she's right.

MICHAEL

I don't deserve you--

He KISSES her. She kisses back, expecting more. but:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I've been up for 36 hours, I should
get to bed.

He pecks her on the forehead and settles into bed. OFF Astrid,
disappointed.

EXT. RAFFLES HOTEL BALCONY - NEXT DAY

ON Nick, who looks out past the vast cityscape and the ocean
beyond, glittering under the tropical sun. Something is
weighing on him, but he masks it with a smile when Rachel
walks out, joining him.

She spots a BREAKFAST SPREAD - a selection of pastries, eggs
and an abundance of cut local fruit: papayas, mangosteens,
rambutans. Rachel takes a cup of coffee and bites into a
mangosteen - her eyes widen.

RACHEL
(looks around)
Is it me, or does everything taste and
look more intense here?

NICK
It's not you. I'm reminded of it every
time I come home. Could be the heat,
or how bright it is, but everything
feels magnified.

On Rachel - everything does feel heightened.

RACHEL
So, when am I meeting the family?

NICK
Tonight. My grandmother hosts a small
weekly dinner for the clan. But right
now I have to do some best man stuff.
You gonna be okay on your own?

RACHEL
Totally. I told Peik Lin I'd visit.

NICK
Before you go, I think we need to
explore our suite a little more...

Nick kisses Rachel, who grins.

EXT. SINGAPORE / INT. TAXI - DAY

Rachel sits in a taxi, taking in the sights, the people:

QUICK CUTS of various attractions -- the Botanic Gardens, Singapore's iconic Lion-Mermaid statue, the 7-ton FLOATING BABY sculpture at Gardens by the Bay, Orchard Road --

INT. NICK'S CAR / EXT. GOH FAMILY HOME - DAY

The taxi drops Rachel off in front of a large, showy mansion that bears a striking resemblance to the Petit Trianon. The over-the-topness accentuated by the fact it's tightly sandwiched between two regular duplexes.

Rachel checks the address wondering if she made a mistake, when beyond the gate, the front door opens. A perky, petite but BUXOM Chinese girl, PEIK LIN, 29, emerges. She waves enthusiastically, YELLS.

PEIK LIN
Rachel?! What's up, bitch!

INT. GOH HOUSE - DAY

Peik Lin shows Rachel into the cavernous living room, everything is covered with gold or mirrors.

PEIK LIN
--I haven't seen you since
commencement. You look the same--

RACHEL
(looking around)
I can't believe it. It's a re-
creation of the Hall of Mirrors. Were
your parents inspired by Versailles?

PEIK LIN
More like watching *Dangerous Liaisons*.
On a pirated DVD.

THREE GOLDEN-HAIRED PEKINGESE DOGS run into the room, their high-pitched yaps echo against the marble.

NEENA (O.S.)
Rachel! Wel-kum, wel-kum!

Rachel turns to see NEENA GOH (50s), Peik Lin's mother. She's a short, plumpish woman with a bouffant perm.

She wears a tight pink silk blouse, belted with a chain of interlinked gold Medusa heads, tight trousers and pink slippers. She speaks in VERY THICK CHINESE-ACCENTED ENGLISH:

NEENA (CONT'D)
(yelling at dogs)
Astor, Trump, Vanderbilt, naw-tee naw-tee boys, stop barking!

RACHEL
Hello, Mrs. Goh.

Neena puts an arm through Rachel's and pats her cheek.

NEENA
Ah neh swee, ah! Call me Auntie!
Come, come to the keet-chen. Join us
for lunch!

INT. GOH HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

EIGHTEEN MEMBERS of the Goh family sit around an enormous circular table as four maids deliver food. No one eats, aside from TWO ADORABLE TWIN GIRLS gobbling MCNUGGETS out of a MCDONALD'S BOX placed on heavy gold-rimmed Limoges plates.

NEENA
Ok, everybody *chiak, chiak*. Don't
stand on ce-ree-moh-ny. Rachel Chu,
this is simple lunch, *lah*.

Rachel looks at thirteen different dishes, which look anything but simple. Sitting next to Rachel, WYE MUN (50s) a barrel-chested man in a red oversize Polo-player Ralph Lauren shirt, piles his plate with food. Unlike Nick and his family, the Gohs all speak with HEAVY CHINESE ACCENTS.

TWIN GIRL
Ah Kong, can we go trampoline?

Wye Mun admonishes his grandchildren.

WYE MUN
Aiyah, finish your McNuggets first!
Don't you know there are children
starving in America?
(in subtitled Cantonese;
re: Rachel)
*This girl is American. You see how
skinny she is?*

The girls return to their food with frowns.

WYE MUN (CONT'D)
So Rachel, what do you do in America?

RACHEL
I'm an economics professor.

WYE MUN
(impressed)
Wah, you must be very good with money!

Wye Mun turns to his son P.T. 30s, shy, overweight.

WYE MUN (CONT'D)
P.T.! This is the kind of girl you
should go out with! Not those girls
who want to look like K-pop stars. No
brains, big eyes, small backsides.

P.T. blushes, returns to his noodles.

PEIK LIN
Leave her alone, Pa. Rachel is here
with her boyfriend.

WYE MUN
Boyfriend? I don't see a boyfriend.

RACHEL
His name's Nick Young. He's from
Singapore - we're here for his best
friend, Colin's, wedding.

The whole table STOPS EATING. Eyes go wide. Jaws drop.
Rachel becomes self-conscious.

PEIK LIN
The "Nick" you're dating is Nick
Young?!

NEENA
(mouth full)
You're here for Colin Khoo's wedding?

RACHEL
(surprised)
You know them?

WYE MUN
The Youngs, the Khoos, who doesn't
know them? They're famous, like
Kardashians and Vanderpumps!

RACHEL
Nick is nothing like those people--

PEIK LIN
Colin and Araminta's wedding is
Singapore's event of the century! And
the Youngs are like royalty.

NEENA
Aiyah, why you never tell us before?!
What are they like?

RACHEL
I don't know, I'm meeting them tonight
at Nick's grandmother's house.

PEIK LIN
You're going to his Ah Ma's house?!
(then; re: Rachel's outfit)
You're not wearing that, are you?

Off Rachel -- not anymore.

INT. PEIK LIN'S BEDROOM CLOSET - DAY

Peik Lin throws open the doors to her walk-in closet. Every
shelf and rack is crammed with luxury brand accessories and
apparel. Rachel looks around, in awe.

RACHEL
You don't have to do this.

PEIK LIN
I can't stand by while you embarrass
yourself with Nick Young's family.

RACHEL
I wasn't planning to. But why is
Nick's family that big a deal?

PEIK LIN
You really don't know?

On Rachel, she really doesn't. As Peik Lin goes through her
closet.

PEIK LIN (CONT'D)
First, they're rich.

RACHEL
Your family's rich.

PEIK LIN
We're so-so rich. The Youngs and
Khoos? They're crazy rich.
(explains)
(MORE)

PEIK LIN (CONT'D)

Look, there's Chinese money everywhere nowadays -- Beijing Billionaires, Taiwan Tycoons, the overseas Chinese millionaires in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia. Each group thinks they're better and classier than the rest. But the old money Chinese in Singapore? They're the snobbiest of all of them. It's the English influence. They sent their children to Oxford and became more British than the Brits - all while becoming richer than God.

RACHEL

I know Nick's people have money, but they sound pretty normal when he talks about them.

PEIK LIN

These old families are too high-class to talk about money. Doesn't mean they don't have an eye for it.

Peik Lin throws her a dress...

INT. BMW - METALLIC SILVER - NIGHT

Rachel, in an elegant cocktail dress, sits next to Peik Lin. Peik Lin looks at Rachel, can't help herself:

PEIK LIN

You had to know how loaded Nick is. Isn't that why you broke your No Dating Asian Guys Policy?

RACHEL

(embarrassed)

That was a long time ago.

PEIK LIN

Not that long. You dated every kind of boy in college: black, white, Latino, even that half-Eskimo from Greenland. But if a guy was Chinese, forget it--

RACHEL

That makes me sound like a self-hating Asian. And I'm not--

PEIK LIN

(skeptical)

Mm-hmm.

(MORE)

PEIK LIN (CONT'D)
You ABCs just want to hook up with
blond hair, blue eyed *gwai-loh*
quarterback types--

RACHEL
No! Well, okay, a little.

PEIK LIN
I get it. You're a racial minority in
the States, you want to assimilate by
marrying the dominant race--

RACHEL
STOP. Okay, I'll tell you what it was--

INT. STANFORD - OLD UNION CLUBHOUSE BALLROOM - NIGHT
(FLASHBACK)

Grad-school Rachel hangs with a bunch of other GRAD STUDENTS
at a MIXER.

RACHEL (V.O.)
Whenever I met an Asian guy, I noticed
he'd treat me differently from other
women--

A Chinese-American engineering student chats with his friends
when he catches sight of Rachel.

RACHEL (V.O.)
First, there was the optical scan.
Quantifying my physical attributes.

Engineer's POV: GRAPHIC LINES and DATA fill the screen as we
ZOOM IN on Rachel's different parts:

RACHEL (V.O.)
How big were my eyes? Was I double-
lidded naturally, or did I have that
eyelid surgery? Did I have good child-
birthing hips? Was I, god forbid,
taller than him?

The Engineer likes what he sees, walks over.

RACHEL (V.O.)
If I passed the initial test, then the
real test would begin. The "SATs."

The Engineer introduces himself to Rachel.

ENGINEERING STUDENT

Gerald Wong. ICME. Computational and
Mathematical Engineering.

RACHEL

Rachel Chu. Economics.

Gerald looks pleased. We go into a **MONTAGE** of Gerald and
Rachel's conversation.

RACHEL (V.O.)

The interrogation would start on my
social, academic and talent aptitudes,
to see if I'm possible "wife and
bearer of sons" material. Did I have
an accent? How many generations had
our families been in America?

RACHEL

My mother immigrated when I was a baby-

GERALD

But you hardly have an accent--

RACHEL (V.O.)

Then he would casually bring up his
selling points. What kind of doctors
his parents were--

GERALD

My dad's a cardiologist and my
mother's a neurosurgeon. When they
argue we say it's the battle of hearts
and minds--

Rachel forces a smile as Gerald LAUGHS at his own joke.

RACHEL (V.O.)

He'd drop how many musical instruments
he played, which Ivy League
scholarships he turned down, what
model BMW, Audi or Lexus he drove,
and, of course, his five year plan.

GERALD

Most people here are gunning for
Silicon Valley, but that's short-
sighted. I plan to be CTO for a global
fortune 500 by the time I'm 30--

EXT. SINGAPORE STREETS / INT. BMW - NIGHT

Resume with Rachel and Peik Lin.

PEIK LIN

And Nick? He's not like that?

Rachel smiles.

RACHEL

Nick's not like anyone I've ever met--

Rachel trails off, unused to talking openly about her relationship. Peik lin looks around, suddenly realizing they've long left the densely packed skyscrapers of the city and are now in what looks like a lush natural park.

PEIK LIN

(to driver)

Ahmad, you sure we're not lost, ah?
We're in the bloody jungle--

Peik Lin trails off when they reach an imposing gate with TYERSALL PARK written across the top.

A SIKH GUARD exits the gate and walks around the car, inspecting it and its occupants. Peik Lin and Rachel exchange glances -- is this for real? He sports a beard, crisp olive-green uniform and grasps an old school rifle with a sharp bayonet. He looks like a relic from another time, but is no less intimidating. Peik Lin wordlessly snaps a PICTURE of him on her phone. As he allows the car to pass, it feels like we're entering another world...

They pass a rolling parkland of vast manicured grounds and a handsome avenue lined with tall palms festooned with lanterns.

Rachel quietly gasps as A VAST COLONIAL MANSION comes into view. As they get closer, the enormity of the place becomes evident. This is not a house, it is a palace.

PEIK LIN (CONT'D)

(awestruck)

Your boyfriend's family is totally NOT
normal...

EXT. TYERSALL PARK - CONTINUOUS

Waiting by the massive front doors is Nick, in a linen suit and perfectly tousled hair. Looking every bit the prince of the manor. Rachel exits the car and takes a BAG OF ORANGES she brought. Nick kisses her, looks at her outfit, impressed.

NICK

Hello, gorgeous.

RACHEL
This is my friend, Peik Lin.

NICK
(peers inside car)
Thanks for giving Rachel a ride.
Would you like to join us for dinner?

PEIK LIN
Oh, I couldn't impose.

NICK
You're not, we'd love to--

Before Nick can finish, Peik Lin jumps out, pops the trunk and pulls out a COCKTAIL DRESS and a pair of HEELS.

NICK (CONT'D)
--have you.

RACHEL
You have cocktail dress in your trunk?

PEIK LIN
(of course)
I'm not an animal.

As they head in, they pass a ROW OF LIMOUSINES AND STATELY CARS, some with FLAGS OF STATE.

RACHEL
I thought this was a small family gathering.

NICK
It was, but my grandmother's *tan hua* flowers are going to bloom tonight.
(off her look)
It's a whole thing. So she invited some family friends.

INT. TYERSALL PARK - NIGHT

Nick, Rachel and Peik Lin enter the grand foyer, a dazzling mosaic of black, blue and coral tiles.

NICK
(to Peik Lin)
There's a guest bath at the end of the hall you can change in--

PEIK LIN
Got it. Don't wait, I'll find you.

Peik Lin takes a SELFIE before taking off. An INDIAN SERVANT approaches with a HAMMERED SILVER BOWL FILLED WITH WATER AND ROSE PETALS. Rachel apprehensively dips her hands in the water. The Servant offers her a towel to dry her hands.

RACHEL

I know you lived with your
Grandmother. But you didn't mention
it was in a palace.

NICK

It's not a palace.

RACHEL

There's a man with a rifle guarding
the gate and someone just gave me rose
petals to wash my hands.

(shocked)

Oh God, what is that?

ANGLE ON A STUFFED TIGER by the stairs, mouth open and about to pounce. Nick grins, pats it affectionately.

NICK

This is *Harimau*. My great-grandfather
shot it when it ran into the house and
under the snooker table. When Astrid
and I were kids we'd stash cigarettes
in his ears.

RACHEL

Yeah, you know who has armed guards
and stuffed tigers? The Queen of
England.

As they walk through a hallway decorated with antique ceramics and portraits of this distinguished colonial Chinese family dating back from the early 1800s:

NICK

I know it seems like a lot. But to me
it's just home.

RACHEL

Do your parents live here, too?

NICK

No, they have their own place. When I
was five, they had to move to London
for business. They didn't want to
take me out of school or away from my
cousins, so my mother decided I should
stay with Ah Ma.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)
I loved it here so much, that when
they got back, it kind of stuck...

As Nick leads her down a hallway, Rachel can see OTHER GUESTS heading up the sweeping staircase to a party above.

RACHEL
Isn't the party up there?

NICK
I want you to meet my mother first.

INT. TYERSALL PARK - KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's a bustling scene with MAIDS plating food, COOKS working over WOKS that BURST INTO FLAME, CHILDREN sneaking snacks, DRIVERS of other guests coming in with gifts, tributes. In the middle of it all is Eleanor, in Carolina Herrera, presiding over everything. She inspects various dishes, dispatching orders with calm authority:

ELEANOR
(to Chinese cooks; in
subtitled Cantonese)
*More sesame oil. And no chili -
Mother's doctor told her no heat-
giving food.*

From the way she commands the staff, she's clearly a woman used to running a great house and being obeyed. She pauses when she sees Nick and Rachel approach.

Nick gives his mother a peck on the cheek (note: Nick's exchanges with his parents are formal. They're not huggers.)

NICK
Mum.

Eleanor looks Nick over, touches his hair.

ELEANOR
You need a haircut. It's so unkempt.

(Casual criticism is how many Chinese parents greet their children - it's coded affection and Nick is used to it.)

NICK
This is my girlfriend, Rachel Chu.

RACHEL
(smiles)
So nice to meet you, Mrs. Young. I
mean, Auntie.

Eleanor looks at Rachel, unreadable. Rachel hands her the small bag of oranges she brought.

Nervous, Rachel gives the smallest bow, which Eleanor finds odd. Eleanor holds up an orange, which has a sticker on it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

My mother said I shouldn't show up empty-handed.

ELEANOR

Oranges. Not in season, but how thoughtful.

She passes the oranges to a servant, who spirits them away. Eleanor continues inspecting dishes and directing the servants as they speak. Rachel notices the GORGEOUS RING Eleanor wears.

RACHEL

That's a beautiful ring.

Eleanor gives a tight smile.

ELEANOR

Nick's father had it made for me when he proposed.

(then)

It's nice to finally meet you. Nick has been so secretive, I wasn't sure if you were real.

Nick is used to his mother's passive jabs.

NICK

Rachel's very real. She's also a professor. Of economics.

ELEANOR

Another academic. Do you have specialty?

RACHEL

Yes, my focus is game theory.

ELEANOR

Sounds very specific. Is that subject in high demand at US colleges?

RACHEL

No, actually. But I've always had a passion for it.

ELEANOR

Pursuing one's passion. How American.
What does your mother think?

RACHEL

She was all for it, but she'd be
supportive of whatever I chose to do.

ELEANOR

(abruptly)
Unacceptable--

Rachel reacts, surprised, Eleanor stops a servant carrying out
an elaborate dish.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

This looks so messy. Re-plate it.
(back to Rachel)
Your mother sounds very American, too--

On Rachel, unable to tell if that's a good or bad thing.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

And very independent. Not like here,
where parents depend on their
children. Must be so freeing, not to
have those constraints.

Eleanor shoots Nick a look. He shifts, uncomfortable, and is
relieved to hear a MUSICAL GONG from upstairs.

NICK

That's dinner.

Eleanor heads out, with Rachel and Nick trailing after.

RACHEL

(low; to Nick)
I can't tell if she likes or hates me.

NICK

That's just her face. You'll get used
to it.

As they leave, Rachel sees that her oranges have been
relegated to a side table, forgotten.

INT. TYERSALL PARK - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ON JASMINE CHEN, celebrated Chinese jazz singer, serenading
guests with her rendition of "Take Five," backed by a JAZZ
TRIO. (NOTE: She sings through the entire scene, giving the
feel of a choreographed musical sequence.)

Eleanor, Rachel and Nick enter:

ELEANOR

Nothing formal tonight. Just a buffet
in the living room.

Rachel is unprepared for the sight. The "living room" is a MASSIVE GALLERY, that looks more like a glamorous club from 1930s Shanghai. DOZENS of impeccably-dressed, bejeweled GUESTS clustered in various seating areas. Along the wall are tables STACKED with gorgeously presented dishes and desserts.

NICK

(to Eleanor; low)

Sorry I didn't tell you about Rachel
before. I suppose I wanted you to meet
her in person.

ELEANOR

And now I have.

(then)

You should introduce her around.
Everyone's dying to meet her.

On Eleanor, unreadable, as Nick leads Rachel away.

ANOTHER AREA, Eddie and Michael, Astrid's husband, talk shop.

MICHAEL

--There's been a few bumps along the
road, but the company launch is on
track. Hopefully we'll be in the black
by the end of the second fiscal year--

EDDIE

That's great, Mike. Securing venture
capital for a tech start-up in this
climate is very impressive.

Michael smiles, likes that his efforts are acknowledged:

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Since you're the tech authority, maybe
you can help me with the quandary I'm
in.

MICHAEL

Of course.

EDDIE

What's up with the crap wifi in this
house?

(off Michael; holds up his
phone)

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)
It's fine in the drawing room, but in here -- pfft. Is there something you can do with the modem, maybe?

On Michael, trying not to seethe as Eddie treats him like a member of the Geek Squad.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Oh, there's your wife. Making an entrance, as usual.

Eddie and Michael turn to see Astrid, looking devastating in a stylish modern *cheongsam*, making her way through the gallery. All eyes are on her as she nods, touches and checks in with friends and family members - royalty greeting her court.

As she reaches Michael, she sees he's annoyed.

MICHAEL
I think I've put in enough face time.
I should go.

ASTRID
We just got here.

MICHAEL
The team's pulling an all-nighter to get our compliance reports ready. I should be there. Don't wait up.

He pecks her on the cheek and takes off. On Astrid, disappointed. But she lights up when she sees Nick and Rachel approach -- greets them each with a BIG HUG.

ASTRID
Nicki! Rachel, you made it!

RACHEL
Astrid! Thank God, a face I know!

Eddie looks at Astrid, surprised - they know each other?

NICK
Eddie, this is Rachel. Rachel--

EDDIE
(introducing himself)
Edison Cheng. I'm sure Nick's told you all about me.

RACHEL
Not really. No.

As Eddie reacts, annoyed, Astrid has an aside with Nick.

ASTRID

Everyone's talking about Rachel. Is she ready for all the attention?

NICK

(hedging)

She'll be fine.

Astrid looks at Nick, searching, realizes:

ASTRID

You haven't told her, have you? About you? The family?

(off Nick's look)

Unbelievable. They're going to eat her alive, you know that. And how you've been acting this year doesn't help--

NICK

I'm easing Rachel into things. They'll warm to her once get to know her--

Astrid looks at Nick like he's crazy.

ASTRID

You've been away too long.

Back with Eddie and Rachel.

EDDIE

--I know your family. Your uncle, Albert Chu, in Taipei is a business associate of mine.

RACHEL

You have me confused with someone else. I don't have relatives in Taipei.

EDDIE

(thrown)

You're not from the Taiwan Plastics Chu family? What kind of Chu are you?

Before Eddie can continue, Nick cuts in.

NICK

Sorry to interrupt. I should take Rachel on the rounds.

As Nick and Rachel leave, Eddie turns to Astrid.

EDDIE

Who the hell is she?

As the Jazz Singer breaks into an UPBEAT BALLAD, Nick introduces Rachel around in a series of QUICK CUTS:

- On Aunties Alix and Felicity:

RACHEL

--My mother worked at a restaurant
when we first arrived in America--

FELICITY

(confused)
Your family's in the restaurant
business?

RACHEL

No, my mother was a waitress.

On the Aunties, suppressing their horror.

- On Francesca, Celine and Aunty Jacqueline, who gauge Rachel with critical eyes:

RACHEL (CONT'D)

--My father? He died before I was
born. My mother says he worked in a
factory in China...

Francesca and Celine stifle SMIRKS. Aunty Jacqueline can barely hide her contempt.

AUNTY JACQUELINE

What an *interesting* family you have.
(subject change; to Nick)
Nicki, are you still playing polo?

- An OLDER CHINESE LADY (60s) in conservative traditional Chinese dress embraces Nick, beside herself to see him. Nick has a lot of affection for her, too. Rachel smiles, assumes she's Nick's grandmother.

OLDER CHINESE LADY

(to Nick; re: Rachel;
subtitled Cantonese)
*Your girlfriend is so pretty! You
should hurry up and get married!*

Nick laughs.

RACHEL

(in subtitled Mandarin)
*Thank you for inviting me to your
beautiful home.*

The Older Chinese Lady looks at Rachel, confused.

NICK
 (low; to Rachel)
 She's not my grandmother. This is
 Ling Cheh, my old nanny.

On Rachel, mortified. **END MONTAGE.**

At the bar, Nick orders a drink as Rachel recovers.

RACHEL
 I can't believe I did that.

NICK
 Don't sweat it, no one even noticed.

He hands Rachel a cocktail, which SHE DOWNS IN ONE LONG GULP.
 She's STILL DRINKING when a distinguished Chinese man, PHILLIP
 (60s) an aura of gravitas and stature, walks up. Phillip
 watches Rachel drink, curious.

PHILLIP
 Nicholas. You haven't introduced me
 to your lovely companion.

NICK
 Dad. This is Rachel Chu.

ON hearing "dad" Rachel quickly gulps, pulls herself together.

RACHEL
 (wipes her mouth)
 Nice to meet you, Uncle.

PHILLIP
 The pleasure is all mine. Do you mind
 if I borrow my son for moment?

Nick looks unsure about leaving Rachel alone.

RACHEL
 I'll be fine.

NICK
 Be back as soon as I can.

Nick reluctantly goes with his father, leaving Rachel alone.
 She looks around, but sees the Aunties, Francesca et al giving
 her sideways glances before turning away.

To Rachel's relief, she spots Peik Lin, who scampers up with
 OLIVER T'SIEN, 30s, in tow. He's dapper, white linen suit,
debonair gossip hound. A young Dominick Dunne, with a
 "plummier" (fancier) accent than most.

PEIK LIN

I've been looking everywhere for you.
Nick's cousin has been giving me the
grand tour.

(low)

There's a room for *silverware*. A WHOLE
ROOM. To keep FORKS in--

Oliver introduces himself to Rachel.

OLIVER

Oliver T'sien. Delighted to meet you.

RACHEL

I'm Rachel--

OLIVER

Rachel Chu of Manhattan, not the
Taiwanese Plastic Chus. The Economics
professor who mistook the maid for Ah
Ma--

RACHEL

Oh, God, does everyone know?

PEIK LIN

It's all anyone can talk about.
(on a brighter note)
But they like your dress.

A SILVERY BELL sounds and all eyes turn to Eleanor, who stands
in a doorway leading to the verandah.

ELEANOR

The *tan-huas* are about to bloom. If
you would follow me...

As the Guests file out, Oliver takes Rachel's arm.

OLIVER

Come along. We don't want to be the
last ones down. Queen Elle notices
everything.

Rachel takes his arm and they file out with the other Guests.

INT. TYERSALL PARK - STUDY - NIGHT

Like the rest of the house, the study looks like a room in
Downton Abbey by way of Indochina. Phillip pours two glasses
of brandy, offers one to Nick.

NICK

No, thanks.

PHILLIP

It's good enough for Churchill, it's good enough for you.

Nick takes the brandy as his father sits across from him .

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Your mother and I were expecting you back six months ago. Everything was in place for you to take over the business--

NICK

I told you, I'm not ready yet.

PHILLIP

That's what you said two years ago. I convinced your mother to let you take that pointless professorship--

NICK

There are things in New York that I want to follow through with--

PHILLIP

(cuts him off)

Son, I'm getting old. We need young blood at the helm, someone sharp. And you bloody well know your cousins Alistair and that idiot, Eddie, aren't up to task. Even if they were, your Ah Ma and mother would die before they let that happen.

(beat)

It's time to start acting like a man. And put aside childish things.

Off Nick, a weighty if mysterious decision on his hands.

INT. TYERSALL PARK - CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

Guests stream into a vast open-air courtyard. Hundreds of COPPER LANTERNS are strung above. The effect is magical.

As other Guests admire the *tan hua* flora with their LARGE WHITE FLOWERS, Eleanor fills in a CAUCASIAN EXPAT guest:

ELEANOR

The *tan huas* bloom very rarely, and only at night. But their beauty is fleeting, they'll wilt by dawn...

Oliver is more interested in describing the local fauna to Rachel and Peik Lin, who's in pig heaven.

OLIVER

That's cousin Alexander, supposedly Singapore's most eligible bachelor. But he has a mistress he keeps in a condo in Beverly Hills.

(spots something)

Alistair brought his latest flame, Kitty Pong.

(scandalized)

An *actress*.

He gestures to Alistair entering with Kitty Pong, who wears a revealing, clingy dress that barely contains her ample cleavage. People stare. Alistair's mother, Alix, is mortified.

PEIK LIN

(fascinated)

I heard she was in a porno: *Crouch My Tiger, Hide My Dragon*...

But Rachel is distracted by seeing Celine and Francesca sneering as they sneak glances at her. Oliver clocks this.

OLIVER

Ignore them. They're just jealous you nabbed the crown prince.

RACHEL

Crown Prince? Nick? He's a history professor.

OLIVER

He's also the only son of the only son. The Young family namesake and he's Ah Ma's favorite. Hence the crown prince. Nick's expected to inherit the whole kit and caboodle, including this little hovel. Speaking of the grande dame-

Oliver gestures to the entrance where guests have parted to make way for a distinguished elderly lady, Nick's AH MA (80s). She's frail and leans on her son Phillip's arm as she walks, but her carriage is erect, regal. She's trailed by TWO ELEGANT WOMEN in matching Thai silk outfits.

PEIK LIN

Who are those women behind her?

OLIVER

Servants from the Thai royal court. A lifetime gift from King Bhumipol.

Rachel is overwhelmed by it all, the opulence, the Thai servants, the catty glances thrown her way. Nick appears, holding a plated PUDDING made of little clear pearls.

NICK

Hey, we should meet my Ah Ma. But before that you have to try this. It's sago pudding with palm sugar--

RACHEL

I'm not really hungry.

NICK

You're turning down food. What's wrong?

RACHEL

This night's been an insane fantasy. The tiger, your family, this *house*. I should be over the moon, because apparently my boyfriend is the Prince William of Asia. But all I keep thinking is, I don't know you at all--

NICK

What are you talking about? Of course you know me--

RACHEL

I didn't know you grew up in a mansion with maids and nannies and guards. That every girl who knows you wants to marry you? That you play *polo*?

Nick holds her, looks into her eyes.

NICK

Hey, this is me. I'm the same person I was in New York. I'm the guy who unclogs your shower drain, who eats all the leftover pizza, who got rid of that huge dead rat in your garbage chute. You remember that?

Rachel nods, can't help but smile.

NICK (CONT'D)

It was the size of a cat and smelled like end times, but I did it. So I'm asking, do you want to come meet my grandma?

Rachel looks at Nick, her uncertainty melting away.

RACHEL

Yes. I do.

The *tan huas* are in full bloom as Nick takes Rachel by the hand to Ah Ma, who's seated on a bench. The surrounding crowd pretends not to look. Nick kisses Ah Ma, who smiles to see her favorite grandson.

NICK

(in subtitled Mandarin)

Ah Ma, this is my good friend, Rachel Chu.

Rachel steps forward, replies in perfect Mandarin.

RACHEL

(in subtitled Mandarin)

Thank you for inviting me to your beautiful home.

Ah Ma looks at Rachel, studying her, then:

AH MA

(in subtitled Mandarin)

You speak Mandarin very well. And your accent is Fujian?

RACHEL

(in subtitled Mandarin)

That's where my mother is from.

AH MA

(in subtitled Mandarin)

My father's family was from that province also.

(then; low)

It's hard to have a conversation here with so many craning necks around us. Would you like to come for tea next week?

RACHEL

(beaming; in subtitled Mandarin)

It would be my pleasure.

Ah Ma smiles and nods. The audience is over. As Nick and Rachel leave, guests in the area start WHISPERING, reporting what was said - it spreads like wildfire.

CROWD MURMURS
(mix of English and Chinese
dialects)
Ah Ma invited her to tea! / By
herself? / Who is she again?

ANGLE ON the second floor balcony overlooking the courtyard, where Eleanor looks down on the proceedings. Jacqueline joins her - the whispers have reached Eleanor.

JACQUELINE
Ah Ma invited her to tea.

If Eleanor is displeased, she's working hard not to show it. Jacqueline looks down and sees Nick and Rachel embracing, laughing, KISSING. Looking every bit the couple in love.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
She's a nice girl. And Nick looks
very happy...

It's said as a compliment, but it's meant to bait Eleanor. And Eleanor knows it.

ELEANOR
When does your Amanda get in?

JACQUELINE
Tonight.

ELEANOR
Good.
(looking at Nick; ominous)
When children are away from home too
long, they forget who they are.

ANGLE ON Rachel and Nick, happy, unaware of the gathering storm and that the *tan hua* flowers around them have already started to WILT.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

Astrid steps out of the elevator, wearing the same clothes from the *tan hua* party. She carries takeout tray of COFFEE CUPS and a bag of LEFTOVERS. She walks through the newly set up office - furniture is still wrapped in plastic and computer equipment is strewn about.

ASTRID

Michael?

The place is empty and most of the lights are off. She sees a HIGH HEELED SHOE on the ground. Odd. As she picks it up, she hears MURMURINGS from behind a door. She puts her ear to the door, trying to hear. She can make out a WOMAN'S VOICE. As she presses against the door, trying to hear more, the door GIVES WAY, and Astrid falls in to see:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael, working with FOUR EMPLOYEES around a conference table littered with papers and laptops. They're tired, disheveled. Sleeves are rolled up, shoes are off.

Seeing Astrid stumble in, the Employees react, starstruck -- she's still a vision at 2AM. They straighten up, try to pull themselves together.

ASTRID

(covering)

I brought coffee!

Michael smiles. A homely FEMALE EMPLOYEE lights up to see Astrid is clutching the shoe.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

You found my shoe!

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MICHAEL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is empty except for Michael's open laptop and a pile of binders in a corner. Astrid and Michael sit on the floor, eating picnic style. Astrid has laid out a selection of party leftovers: noodles, fried bananas, chicken curry. All Michael's favorites.

MICHAEL

--The core team is going 24/7, but payroll only kicks in next week so we're short-staffed for a few days.

ASTRID

I could lend a hand.

(off Michael's look)

With bringing in coffee, setting up furniture...

MICHAEL

Isn't Araminta's bachelorette trip tomorrow?

ASTRID

Yes. And helping you is the perfect excuse to get out of it--

MICHAEL

(eyes her; amused)

Helping me? The glamorous Astrid Leong getting coffee and doing donkey work. Your family would love that.

ASTRID

My family hasn't done anything new in decades. You transformed a floundering tech company into Singapore's hottest startup. I am SO proud of you--

MICHAEL

Your cousin Eddie thinks I'm a joke.

ASTRID

Eddie is a moron.

(playful)

He's just jealous you have better abs.

MICHAEL

Ah Ma has better abs than Eddie.

Astrid and Michael grin, sharing a moment, but it's interrupted by a TEXT on his phone. He checks it, annoyed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

A client's freaking out. I'll get Chan to handle it.

Michael walks out, taking his phone with him. Astrid hears a DING from Michael's laptop. Then another DING. Astrid looks and sees TEXT MESSAGES from "HK2347" on a desktop messenger.

ON SCREEN

HK2347 (TEXT)

I need you ASAP.

Then, there's a response.

MICHAELTEO (TEXT)

What's going on?

Astrid casually registers this and continues eating, when there's another DING. She glances at the screen:

HK2347

The bed feels empty without you.

Astrid is stricken. Her face blanches. Another DING.

MICHAELTEO (TEXT)
Can't talk, A is here.

HK2347 (TEXT)
Bye :(

On Astrid, her whole world caving in. She looks around, unsure what to do. What to think. TIME CUT TO:

ON the door as Michael enters, putting away his cell.

MICHAEL
 Astrid?

ANGLE ON ROOM. Everything is as he left it, but Astrid is GONE.

EXT. JET QUAY CIP TERMINAL - MORNING

It's morning and a JET comes in for a landing on the tarmac at Singapore's private airport. The THUMPING BEAT of Willow's "FIREBALL" kick in as we PULL BACK to REVEAL:

TWO 737-700 JUMBO JETS sit parked next to one another. Both jet doors are open and gold carpet runs out of each, running down matching passenger stairs, and stopping at a common reception area.

In front of the planes, we PAN DOWN A LINE OF BALLER LUXURY CARS: the latest fully customized Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Maybachs, Maseratis, Bugattis. More cars pull in every minute as Singapore's JET-SET CROWD pile out and greet each other, while UNIFORMED WAITERS serve champagne on silver platters. Unlike the tasteful conservative scene at Tyersall Park, the moneyed young people here have come to show off. It's a Fast and Furious wet dream - nobody outspends the rich Chinese when it comes to cars.

Rachel and Nick step out of a silver metallic BMW, a jalopy in comparison, and take in the sight. Rachel, in cutoff denim shorts and simple top, looks agape at the fashion spread ready BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMEN in high-end resort wear: caftans, shiny aviators, jeweled sandals and physics-defying bikinis.

RACHEL
 Any chance I can back out of this now?

NICK
 (reassuring)
 It's only 36 hours. It could be fun.

RACHEL

Sure. What's more fun than being around size zero rich girls, while your boyfriend's off getting lap-dances from Vietnamese hookers?

NICK

This is a high-end, sophisticated affair... so it'll probably be Russian hookers.

(off Rachel)

I'm kidding.

ARAMINTA (O.S.)

Rachel!!!

Rachel turns to see Araminta heading for her. Unlike the plain, bespectacled thing at the airport, Araminta is in full force, wearing a MATTE GOLD JUMPSUIT and GOLD STILETTOES, looking every inch the exotic supermodel she is.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

SO happy you're joining! Come, come, I'll intro you to my posse.

(re: Rachel's outfit)

This GAP look is brilliant.

Rachel gives Nick a last desperate look as Araminta pulls her away. Colin, in rumpled Comme des Garçons, finds Nick.

COLIN

(relieved)

Thank God you're here. Bernard stacked this stag party with HNWIs.
(pronounced hun-wees.)

Colin and Nick look over to where a group of DANDIES, dressed expensively if garishly, throwing faux gang signs as they pose in front of the jet for pictures.

CHYRON ON DANDIES: *H.N.W.I.s = High Net Worth Idiots.*

NICK

(surprised)

Bernard Tai organized this?

COLIN

The jackass insisted. And his jackass dad is the largest minority shareholder in my family's corporation. I didn't have a choice.

Colin looks genuinely anxious. Nick pats him on the shoulder.

NICK
It'll be all right.

COLIN
(sees something)
No, it won't.

Nick turns to see what Colin is looking at. A POMBRON BLACK SHARK, an obnoxious luxury SUV made to look like a futuristic military armored vehicle, SCREECHES onto the tarmac, barely avoiding a collision with a luggage truck as it swerves toward them. BERNARD TAI (30s), obnoxious and a touch overweight (think Korea's Psy crossed with American Pie's Stifler) exits, dressed in over-the-top Versace. Bernard yells to the luggage truck DRIVER.

BERNARD
BASTARD, look where you're going!!
(turns to our guys)
Whassssssaaap, *lan-chiaos*?!!!!

Off Nick and Colin, realizing the weekend they're in for.

INT. JUMBO JET - DAY

As the crew prepares for takeoff, Rachel makes her way through the plane, passing Araminta, who's holding court with her girls. They're seated in an area that looks more like a mod bar lounge than the interior of an airplane.

ARAMINTA
We're going to my mother's private island resort off Sumatra. She closed it down just for us!

As Rachel approaches a private suite, she overhears a conversation inside:

FRANCESCA (O.S.)
Did you hear? She was just *pretending* to be a Taiwan Plastics Chu.

Rachel hangs back. She peers in to see the two bitchy women from last night, Celine and Francesca, talking to PARKER, a beautiful EURASIAN WOMAN with an Australian accent.

PARKER
So, who is she?

FRANCESCA
A nobody New York gold-digger.

CELINE

When I saw them at the JFK lounge,
she was grilling Nick about his
family's businesses and money!

FRANCESCA

Some people have no shame.

Rachel steps back, STUNG, when she sees a young woman at the galley, making herself a drink. It's AMANDA, 29, in a fetching caftan, bronzed and striking.

AMANDA

Don't listen to them. They're trust
fund airheads whose only hobbies are
plastic surgery and tearing down
anyone who isn't them.

She hands Rachel a drink, a perfect sidecar, complete with a lemon twist. Rachel downs it, grateful, when an announcement comes over the INTERCOM:

PILOT (INTERCOM)

Ladies, if you would take your seats.
We'll be taking off shortly.

Amanda gestures for Rachel to join her in the cabin area. Grateful, Rachel does. As they sit in the roomy leather cabin chairs and fasten their belts.

RACHEL

I'm Rachel.

AMANDA

I know. Amanda. I work for Nick's
family.

RACHEL

What do you do?

AMANDA

I head up the company's in-house legal
counsel.

RACHEL

That's impressive.

AMANDA

Our families have been friends
forever. So, really, it's nepotism.
(then)
So, how did you and Nick meet?

RACHEL

A friend introduced us. At first I thought he was this snobby academic with a posh accent. But really, he's a dork who knows the words to every Talking Heads song.

(joking)

A real catch.

Amanda grins at this sweet story.

AMANDA

Of all the people in Singapore and Manhattan, I think it's amazing you found each other.

Amanda holds up her drink. Rachel clinks glasses with her, happy to have actually found a friend.

EXT. HONEYCOMB TOWER - MORNING

We rise up to the top floor of the newly constructed building in Singapore's financial district. The skyscraper is decidedly modern, with a curved HONEYCOMB DESIGN reaching seventy floors into the sky. Through the window of the penthouse office, we see Eleanor taking in the view.

INT. HONEYCOMB TOWER - PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The spanking new office is HUGE, but unoccupied. Eleanor looks out the window to a LARGE DECORATIVE WALL that's part of the building structure. WIDER to reveal an ITALIAN ARCHITECT (50s) and his 3-person team, as well as various Asian office AIDES wait anxiously for Eleanor's reaction. After what seems like an eternity:

ELEANOR

There is supposed to be a ten meter hole in that wall.

ITALIAN ARCHITECT

The expense to do that would be prohibitive. And it would affect the aesthetics of the building.

ELEANOR

That wall stands between the hills to the north and the sea to the south. Our *Feng Shui* experts say there must be a passage for the dragons in the hills to access the water.

The Italian Architect turns to his team in frustration.

ITALIAN ARCHITECT
(in subtitled Italian)
She wants to knock a hole in the wall
because of some stupid Chinese
superstition--

As the team ARGUES among themselves:

ELEANOR
(calmly; in subtitled
Italian)
I assure you our superstitions have a
very real impact, whether or not you
believe in them.

As the Italians react, surprised.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
This office is for my son, the next
chairman of Young Family Holdings. I
won't risk him losing business with
Hong Kong, Taiwan and China because
they think his office is unlucky.
(then)
I don't care about the cost or your
aesthetics. Put a hole in the wall.

The Architect stews, knowing it's a fight he's not going to
win, and leaves with his team. An AIDE walks up to Eleanor.

AIDE
Mr. Wu is here to see you.

The Aide gestures to a man in the corner, MR. WU (50s). He's
dressed respectably, but has a streetwise energy.

The Aide and the remaining people in the office exit, closing
the door behind them. Eleanor and Mr. Wu are alone.

MR. WU
I looked into Rachel Chu. There's
nothing in her past that would
interest you.

Eleanor contains her disappointment, but moves on.

ELEANOR
What about her mother? I understand
she immigrated from Fujian without a
husband. See what you can find.

Mr. Wu nods and exits. Off Eleanor, looking out the window at that infernal wall...

EXT. HONG KONG HARBOUR - DAY

"Like a G-6" by Far East Movement POUNDS over a SLO-MO sequence of Bernard Tai and his Versace posse, all in shades, as they board 388-foot luxury yacht. In the rear are Colin and Nick, trying to attract as little attention as possible.

EXT. PARTY DECK - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

We follow Bernard's POV as we enter main deck of the yacht. They they walk in to see a BEVY of BEAUTY QUEENS in bikinis. The posse is pumped.

The Beauty Queens are dancing, but more like cruise ship entertainers than girls having a good time. They pull the posse in as Nick and Colin, react, uncomfortable.

NICK
(rebuffing beauty queen;
uncomfortable)
I'm not much of a dancer.

BERNARD
They're all 100% legit beauty contest winners from Europe, South America and Korea!

Bernard grabs Colin in a chokehold hug.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Only the best for this *lan-si* face!

Bernard SNAPS his fingers and a previously unseen SKETCHY MAN, holding an ALUMINIUM BRIEFCASE, and his BEEFY BODYGUARD, step forward. The Sketchy Man puts the briefcase on the coffee table, opens it.

COLIN
(nervous)
Hey man, I told you, no drugs--

Bernard tosses a FAT ENVELOPE full of cash to Sketchy Guy, who steps aside with his Bodyguard.

BERNARD
Drugs? No man. This is a hundred times better than drugs or pills!

Bernard takes a DECANTER OF WHISKEY from the briefcase.
Floating in it is what looks like a LARGE PICKLED SAUSAGE.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Tiger penis!

As Bernard pours into a bunch of SHOT GLASSES:

NICK
You're not serious?

BERNARD
It's like Viagra on acid. On speed.

On the Sketchy Man who's counting his money as he has an aside
with his Bodyguard, who glances at the delighted Bernard.

SKETCHY MAN
(in subtitled Mandarin)
Moron really thinks it's tiger penis.
What did you put in there?

BODYGUARD
(shrugs; in subtitled
Mandarin)
Dried sausage.

Bernard hands out shots to his posse, who down them.

COLIN
(to Nick)
If he comes near me with that stuff,
I'll kill him.

NICK
(to Bernard)
We're good.

Bernard shrugs. The women start a CHOREOGRAPHED DANCE. A cross
between the electric slide and a Miss World pageant opening
number. It's supposed to be entertaining, but the effect is
weird and unsettling. Bernard and gang are into it, but Nick
and Colin exchange looks -- it's going to be a long weekend.

EXT. SAMSARA ISLAND RESORT - DAY

WE FLY ABOVE SPARKLING TURQUOISE WATERS, finding a white
catamaran as it speeds towards a small island resort.

QUICK CUTS OF: Rachel, Amanda, Araminta and the other
bachelorette party guests as they step off the catamaran onto
the dock.

ARAMINTA (V.O.)
 Welcome to Samsara Island. In
 Sanskrit, the word means "to flow on."

They accept cocktails from the waiting RESORT STAFF and take in the gorgeous surroundings: LUXURY VILLAS on stilts over the clear waters. Rachel looks over the dock and sees various MULTI-COLORED FISH darting in the crystal clear water.

On Araminta, as she addresses the girls standing around her in the main area of this tranquil resort paradise.

ARAMINTA
 (serene)
 --The island is ours, so I hope you
 will find your bliss with me...
 (yelling; psyched)
 Starting with an all-paid shopping
 spree at the fashion boutique!!

The women SCREAM with excitement! SMASH TO:

INT. RESORT BOUTIQUE - DAY

FRANCESCA
 BITCH, I SAW THIS CAFTAN
 FIRST!

CELINE
 IT WON'T FIT AROUND THOSE FAKE
 WATERMELON TITS OF YOURS!

We are inside the chic resort boutique. Perched on the counter, Araminta shouts out to the twenty girls, who furiously search through the racks and fight over clothes.

ARAMINTA
 Three more minutes! You keep what you
 can carry!

With little time to spare, women take their clothes off in the middle of the floor and try on new outfits.

A dressing room curtain PULLS ASIDE, revealing Rachel in an understated but elegant outfit. Amanda looks on, approving.

AMANDA
 You have a good eye. Sure you don't
 want anything else?

Rachel looks at the SHAMELESS GRABFEST going on around her.

RACHEL
 I'd feel weird.

AMANDA

Then a final touch...

Amanda selects a CORAL NECKLACE from a jewelry display, puts it on Rachel. Rachel looks at herself in the mirror - Amanda is right - it's the perfect accent. She looks amazing.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Nick is a lucky man.

RACHEL

(re: other girls)

You're literally the only person who thinks that.

AMANDA

They're just jealous. It's obvious he's into you. I mean, you're the reason he put off coming back to Singapore for so long.

RACHEL

I'm sorry, what?

AMANDA

You know. He was supposed to take over the family business six months ago. His parents freaked out. But now that he's back, I'm sure all is forgiven.

Rachel reacts as this lands on her. Then:

RACHEL

Nick's not back for good. We're just here for the wedding--

Amanda looks at her, sympathetic.

AMANDA

I get it. It's hard knowing where you stand with a guy like Nick. He has so much pressure from his family and what's expected from him. You don't know if you have a real relationship, or he's just using you as a distraction...

Rachel stares at Amanda, who "realizes" she's out of line.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry - didn't mean to speak for you. I'm going off my own experience. Nick told you we dated, right?

Rachel hardens, realizing Amanda isn't the friend she's pretending to be...

RACHEL
He never mentioned you.

AMANDA
Really? We went out for three years.
Our families thought we'd get married
for sure. But I guess we weren't
ready then.

Rachel reels at this revelation, but Amanda isn't done:

AMANDA (CONT'D)
You know, I admire your bravery.
Coming to Singapore when you had to
know Nick's family, his mother
especially, is dead set against you.
(innocent smile)
Or is that something else Nicki forgot
to mention?

Rachel is rattled by Amanda. To her relief, she spots ASTRID, who's just arrived, in the distance. Rachel takes off.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
(calls after)
Was it something I said?

INT. RESORT VILLA SUITE - EVENING

Rachel enters with Astrid. She pulls off the necklace Amanda picked out for her, throws it in the trash.

RACHEL
I'm so happy you came. I feel like all
the women here hate me--

ASTRID
I'm sure that's not true--

Rachel catches sight of something and SCREAMS.

ANGLE ON the bed, where a LARGE GUTTED FISH is splayed, its blood and guts all over the crisp white sheets. On the wall-mounted mirror by the bed are words scrawled in lipstick: "CATCH THIS, YOU GOLD-DIGGING BITCH!" Astrid is shocked.

ASTRID (CONT'D)
I take that back.
(then)
(MORE)

ASTRID (CONT'D)
It's all right. I'll call security -
we'll find out who did this-

RACHEL
No.

Astrid reacts, surprised. Rachel pulls herself together.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I'm not going to make a scene. I'm
not giving whoever did this the
satisfaction.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Araminta, Francesca and the rest of the drunken bachelorette party, dance as a DJ spins tracks.

FURTHER DOWN THE BEACH, unseen by the bachelorette party, Rachel and Astrid dig a LARGE HOLE in the sand. Beside them is a bundle of BLOOD-SMEARED sheets containing the dead fish.

ASTRID
We could have just called
housekeeping.

RACHEL
No. This way it's like it never
happened.

Rachel puts the wrapped fish into the hole, starts filling it.
Astrid looks over to see Amanda.

ASTRID
Bet it was Amanda.

RACHEL
She's too smart. She probably got her
sidekicks to do it.

Angle on Francesca and Celine, who dance with Amanda.

ASTRID
You're right. Amanda is brilliant, if
totally mental. I was so happy when
Nick dumped her.

RACHEL
(surprised)
He dumped her?

ASTRID

(guessing)

She said it was mutual? She's messing with your head. She's been trying to get him back for ages.

Rachel looks at Astrid, wondering, then:

RACHEL

She also said that Nick was supposed to move back to Singapore, and that your family, his mother, will never accept me. She lying about that, too?

Astrid pauses, not wanting to lie to Rachel. Instead:

ASTRID

Forget Amanda. It's about you and Nick. Our family was against Michael when we first started going out, too. Said he was an army officer with no prospects. But when they saw I was ready to walk away from everything, to follow him anywhere...

Astrid trails off, tears up. Rachel reacts, concerned.

RACHEL

Astrid, what's wrong?

Astrid hesitates, but is desperate for someone to talk to:

ASTRID

Michael's cheating on me. I found out yesterday. I didn't know what to do, so I just... ran.

Despite Astrid's best efforts, the tears won't stop.

RACHEL

What are you going to do?

ASTRID

What generations of women in my family have done. Pretend nothing's wrong. Hope he comes to his senses.

Rachel looks at Astrid, surprised, unable to understand how the funny, confident force of nature she knows is the same scared, uncertain woman in front of her.

RACHEL

You have to talk to him. You can't spend your life uncertain, unhappy--

ASTRID

It's hard for you to understand, but we're not like other people. It's not about being happy, it's about stability. Putting the family before everything else. That's what matters.

Rachel looks at Astrid's determined face, fully realizing for the first time the gulf between her and Nick's family.

INT. YACHT - NICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's late, and there's the MUFFLED SOUND OF POUNDING MUSIC OUTSIDE as Nick enters. He finds Colin, who rubs his head, exhausted.

NICK

Bernard's looking for you. They're cranking up the foam machine--

COLIN

I told him I didn't want any of this crap--

NICK

So let's get out of here--

COLIN

We can't. If I piss off Bernard, it'll piss off his dad, and my dad will be all over my case--

Nick thinks a moment, processing this, then:

NICK

I have an idea.

Colin looks at Nick, hopeful, desperate.

EXT. YACHT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

A BLINDFOLDED Bernard and the princelings in SPEEDOES, dive into a POOL OF FOAM, chasing the squealing beauty Queens.

BERNARD

Marco!

BEAUTY QUEENS

Polo!

The game is interrupted by the SOUND OF A HELICOPTER LANDING. Bernard takes his blindfold off to see a CHOPPER on the landing pad, as two PARAMEDICS alight, pulling a GURNEY.

BERNARD

What's going on?

Before Bernard can question the paramedics, Nick stops him.

NICK

Colin's sick. We need to get him medevac'ed right away--

BERNARD

I have the best doctors in Macau and Hong Kong--

NICK

It's best if I handled it. I think it was the tiger penis cocktail you gave him. If Colin's dad or yours finds out - they'll be bloody furious. At you. Especially if Colin doesn't recover in time for the wedding.

BERNARD

Good thinking. Thanks, man.

Bernard watches helplessly as the two Medics wheel a sickly-looking Colin to the landing pad, followed by Nick.

EXT. YACHT LANDING PAD / INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Nick and Colin, who's magically "recovered" get into a waiting HELICOPTER. As they strap in:

COLIN

You're a bloody rock star. You know that, right?

NICK

What's a best man for?

Nick signals the Helicopter pilot and they TAKE OFF. As the helicopter rises, Colin and Nick look at the landing pad below, where Bernard, in a Speedo, half covered in foam, waves them off. For the first time since the bachelor party began, Colin and Nick LAUGH.

EXT. QINGYUAN MOUNTAIN - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Nick and Colin sit at a SCENIC OUTLOOK. It's serene, quiet except for the sound of birds chirping - the breeze through the forest. A 180 from the insanity on Bernard's yacht.

COLIN

How'd you find this place?

NICK

Ah Ma brought me to Fuzhou when I was a kid. She was visiting the village her father came from.

They see the OLD MAN laugh as he talks to a few FARMERS. Their children, YOUNG BOYS with shaved heads, play nearby.

NICK (CONT'D)

My great-grandfather left China and everything he knew to give his family a brighter future. A new life. Pretty astounding if you think about it.

COLIN

It paid off. Your great-grand *chor-kong* built a bloody empire in Singapore.

(re: Nick)

Too bad his heir is too busy hiding in New York to enjoy it.

NICK

Hiding? What are you talking about?

COLIN

I'm just pointing out the obvious. Your entire life was planned out for you from the day you were born. But now, for the first time you have a hard choice to make. Your family and the future your *chor-kong*, Ah Ma, and parents worked so hard to get you. Or your life with Rachel in New York.

NICK

Why can't I have both?

COLIN

That's not how it works. And you know it. That's what you're hiding from.

Off Nick, not wanting to admit it, but knowing Colin's right.

EXT. RAFFLES HOTEL - DAY

Nick exits a cab and returns to the Raffles hotel, heavier hearted than when he left it.

INT. RAFFLES HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Nick walks in the door to find Rachel reading in bed. He goes over, kisses her on the head.

NICK

God, it's good to see you.

He puts a gift bag on the bed.

NICK (CONT'D)

Brought you some pork pies from Fujian. How was the bachelorette party?

Rachel puts the book down.

RACHEL

Which part? The part where the girls talked about how I'm only after you for your money? Or when your ex-girlfriend, Amanda, who you never once mentioned, said your family's expecting you to move back to Singapore any day now? Or the highlight of the trip, finding a DEAD FISH bleeding all over my bed with the words "Catch this, you gold-digging bitch" written over it in big serial killer letters?

Nick blanches, horrified.

NICK

Rachel, I'm so sorry.

RACHEL

Sorry? No, I don't want an apology. I want an explanation; why did you bring me here? Did you think it would be funny for me to get tortured by your relatives or their bitchy friends or your psychotic ex?

NICK

Of course not--

RACHEL

Or do I not even matter enough to get an explanation? Because *Amanda* thinks I'm just some distraction to you, before you return to your rightful place as Singapore's golden prince--

Nick stops her, takes her by the shoulders.

NICK

That's insane. You know that, right?

Nick looks at Rachel, realizes he needs to convince her. He searches for the words, then:

NICK (CONT'D)

My whole life, everyone's expected me to be something, to act a certain way.

(beat)

Then I met you. And for the first time, I could just be myself. And I didn't want that to change--

Rachel looks at Nick, wanting to believe him.

RACHEL

But your family--

NICK

We've always said we'd figure out our relationship together. That hasn't changed.

Nick goes to her, takes her hand:

NICK (CONT'D)

C'mon. I want to show you something.

Off Rachel, unsure.

EXT. MACRITCHIE RESERVOIR - DAY

Rachel and Nick make their way through an OVERGROWN TRAIL, passing enormous banyans and under widespread canopies of rain trees. Unlike other recreational spots, the area has been untouched for decades. They come to a clearing, where there's a STONE BATH. Rachel steps into the clearing, amazed.

RACHEL

What is this place?

NICK

In World War Two, the Japanese soldiers built a shrine here. Rumor was they buried blood treasure around it. When Colin and I were kids, we'd tell our parents we were studying, then come here and try to find the treasure. We must have dug a hundred holes...

Nick looks around the bath, searching for something.

NICK (CONT'D)

We wrote our names to stake our claim in case we found anything, which we never did.

(finds it)

Here--

Rachel goes over as she sees initials carved into the wall of the bath: "C.K." and "N.Y."

NICK (CONT'D)

I never told anyone about this place. That way it would just belong to Colin and me.

He finds a sharp rock and carves a "R.C." into the rock.

NICK (CONT'D)

Now it belongs to you, too.

RACHEL

(touched)

I'm really glad you brought me here.

Nick pulls her in, kisses her. Rachel softens, kisses back.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Why can't the whole trip be like this? Just you and me.

NICK

It will be.

(then)

After your tea with Ah Ma and a few more family things before the wedding--

RACHEL

Your mother hates me--

NICK

She doesn't. The thing you have to understand is she didn't have it easy either. Ah Ma thought she wasn't good enough for my father. She wouldn't give him the family ring when he wanted to propose. So my father had to have a ring made.

RACHEL

It's a hell of a ring.

NICK

It's also a constant reminder that my mother's never been totally accepted by Ah Ma. Still, she worked hard to keep the peace and earn her place in the family. She did it for my father's sake. And for mine.

RACHEL

So now she's taking it all out on me? And the Chinese mother-in-law circle of destruction continues?

NICK

She just wants what's best for me. And eventually she'll realize what's best for me... is you.

Nick pulls her in, they embrace, close.

INT. TYERSALL PARK - VERANDAH - DAY

CLOSE ON hands fussing over an elaborate English high tea service: tea being poured through silver strainers, sugar cubes being handled with ornate mini tongs, the three-tiered tray with delicate sandwiches, cakes and scones.

WIDER to see the hands belong to Ah Ma's two Thai servants, who serve the tea as Rachel and Ah Ma sit across from each other at a little table. Rachel tries not to look uncomfortable as Ah Ma placidly STARES at her. Finally:

AH MA

(in subtitled Mandarin)

The bridge of your nose is high and straight.

On Rachel, not knowing quite how to respond.

AH MA (CONT'D)
 (in subtitled Mandarin)
*That means you will have success in
 your career and in wealth. It's
 lucky.*

RACHEL
 (in subtitled Mandarin)
*Thank you. Although I haven't felt
 lucky lately.*

AH MA
 (in subtitled Mandarin)
*I was one of fourteen children. But I
 was my father's favorite because a
 fortune teller said my face would
 bring my family good fortune.
 (then; intently)
 I can see your face. I know you will
 bring your family luck, too.*

Off Rachel, feeling hopeful.

EXT. ELEANOR & PHILLIP'S HOUSE - NIGHT

On a large bungalow, a sprawling glass and steel structure
 locals call the "Star Trek House." A silver BMW pulls up in
 front of it and Nick and Rachel step out.

RACHEL
 I'm more nervous about dinner with
 your parents than I was for my
 doctoral presentation.

NICK
 Relax. It's just a small family thing.

Rachel looks up at the imposing facade as they enter.

INT. ELEANOR & PHILLIP'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel and Nick enter the main room to see it is FULL of WELL-
 DRESSED PEOPLE; family members we saw at Tyersall as well as
 bitches from the bachelor/ette party. Rachel is not amused.

RACHEL
 Does "small family thing" mean
 something different here?

Eleanor walks up, Nick kisses her. He looks around, confused:

NICK
Mum, why the big party?

Eleanor ignores the question, eyes his outfit critically.

ELEANOR
Jeans? You're becoming too American.
(just noticing Rachel)
Rachel. I need my son for a moment.
You don't mind?

Before Rachel can respond, Eleanor whisks Nick away.

RACHEL
(to herself)
Not at all.

Eleanor leads Nick to the front of the room, where Phillip DINGS on a glass, getting everyone's attention.

PHILLIP
Thank you all for joining us tonight.
We asked you here because we have an
announcement...
(beat)
In a few months, I will be retiring as
chairman of Young Family Holdings.

The crowd reacts, MURMURING their surprise.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
It's been a wonderful run, but it's
time for the next generation to take
the reins.

Nick shifts, uncomfortable as eyes turn to him with APPLAUDS and HOOTS. Eleanor steps forward, addresses the crowd.

ELEANOR
Young Holdings would not be what it is
without the dedication and loyalty of
our family and our closest friends.

Eleanor gestures to a few guests.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Like Uncle Steven, who's been our CFO
for thirty years. And Nadine, who
expanded our company in Australia.

Eleanor then gestures to Amanda, who happens to be right up front, looking effortlessly gorgeous.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Even the younger generation like Mandy, who we've known since she was in her mummy's tummy. Now she's head of our legal team and has a bright future at Young Holdings. Someone with her accomplishments and appreciation for our values--

Eleanor locks eyes with Rachel for a brief moment.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

--is exactly what our family and company needs to thrive.
(raises her glass)
To the future generation!

The crowd holds glasses aloft.

HAPPY CROWD

To the future!

On Rachel, seeing the crowd ostensibly toast Nick and Amanda.

PEIK LIN (PRE-LAP)

She did what?

EXT. UNDER-BRIDGE WALKWAY - DAY

Rachel is with Peik Lin in a pedestrian area built under a bridge. It's dotted with bars and food vendors. Rachel is stress eating a local fruit salad from a bag.

RACHEL

I know it sounds crazy, but I think Nick's mom threw a whole party just to make me leave town.

PEIK LIN

That's such a Korean soap-opera move. What did Nick say?

RACHEL

He told me to ignore her. That's just his mom's way of testing me.

PEIK LIN

Chinese sons think their mothers fart Chanel No. 5.

RACHEL

I was gonna stick it out, but I don't need to be where I'm not wanted.

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(idea)

You know what would be way more fun?
Instead of the wedding, you and I
should hit the town.

PEIK LIN

What?

RACHEL

We'll party it up. Remember the raves
we went to in college?

Peik Lin leans back, eyes Rachel.

PEIK LIN

Yeah. You were a crap dancer. But at
least you weren't a coward.

RACHEL

(offended)

A coward?

PEIK LIN

You're retreating in a moment of
crisis. Not going to the wedding just
proves Eleanor was right about you.

RACHEL

So what am I supposed to do? Go and
fight? For Nick? That's desperate--

PEIK LIN

This isn't about Nick. This is about
you. You've always been the good
hardworking girl. Over-perform, under-
represent. But that won't work with
these animals. You need to show them
they're wrong about you.

RACHEL

I want to, believe me. But how does
going to a wedding prove anything?

PEIK LIN

You leave that to me. Call Nick, tell
him you're staying over. We have a lot
of work to do.

(dials her phone; speaks
into it)

Patric? Clear your schedule. I'm
coming in and I'm bringing a friend.

INT. PATRIC'S - DAY

In a large, dark room, Rachel stands on a glowing circular platform in nothing but her underwear. PATRIC (40s) wearing a white lab coat over a dramatically high-collared shirt and tie, scrutinizes her intently, as Peik Lin stands to the side.

PATRIC

You're very long-waisted.

RACHEL

Is that a good thing?

PATRIC

(yelling to the air)

Pull the plum Balenciaga, the naked peach Chlo  , the Giambattista, all the Marchesas, the vintage Givenchy and that Jason Wu with the deconstructed ruffles.

Rachel looks around, not sure who Patric is talking to, when out of the shadows, a DOZEN ASSISTANTS all in black T-shirts, jeans, and wearing ear pieces like secret service agents, descend on Rachel; each one carries a single dress. Patric dismisses some dresses on sight, others he allows to be put up to Rachel before dismissing.

PATRIC (CONT'D)

Slit's too high, she'll give the choir boys erections.

(next dress)

That green chiffon looks like molested bok choy.

(next dress)

You brought me a white dress? She's going to a wedding. You're fired. Go!

Patric folds his arms, he's not happy.

PATRIC (CONT'D)

None of them are perfect. The Giambattista is the closest, but it's not quite...

Peik Lin nods, agreeing. She pulls out her cell, DIALS.

PEIK LIN

We need reinforcements.

INT. PATRIC'S - LATER

Peik Lin, Rachel and Patric wait, impatient, when the DOUBLE DOORS OPEN TWO MEN, BACKLIT, their faces obscured, enter. Rachel recognizes one of the men instantly.

RACHEL
Oliver? And who's that with him?

PEIK LIN
(awed; whispers)
Giambattista.

RACHEL
The dress Patric liked?

PEIK LIN
The *designer* of the dress Patric liked.

Oliver and Giambattista approach. As Giambattista takes Rachel in, Peik Lin has an aside with Oliver.

PEIK LIN (CONT'D)
(to Oliver)
Good work.

OLIVER
Giambattista was with a client in Kuala Lumpur, but I told him we had a potential Pippa situation...

Giambattista concludes his evaluation of Rachel.

GIAMBATTISTA
Her torso *is* amazing.

Patric smiles, happy to be validated. Giambattista walks around Rachel, getting all the angles.

GIAMBATTISTA (CONT'D)
It's a rare opportunity to have a fresh face show off your work to so many people...

Giambattista sees something surprising.

GIAMBATTISTA (CONT'D)
...what do we have here?

Patric comes to see what has piqued Giambattista's interest.

PATRIC
How did I miss that? You're a genius.

RACHEL
What is it?

Peik Lin and Oliver join Giambattista and Patric.

PATRIC
You have a great ass.

OLIVER
It's a rare thing in this part of the world.

PEIK LIN
Like Haley's comet. Or black people.

GIAMBATTISTA
(dead serious)
Together, we're going to launch butts in Asia.

RACHEL
I just want a great dress.

GIAMBATTISTA
I don't do anything else.

EXT. SINGAPORE - MORNING

A LIGHT ORCHESTRAL SCORE plays as dawn breaks over the red-bricked, Gothic facade of First Methodist.

FOUR MASSIVE TRUCKS pull into the back driveway. The back doors open and TEAMS OF EVENT WORKERS PILE OUT, unloading equipment, over-the-top decorations and HUNDREDS of flower arrangements.

MUNICIPAL WORKERS set up barricades around the church as DOZENS OF PRESS MEMBERS set up by the entrance.

INT. ELEANOR'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eleanor, in a robe, stands before an open ELABORATE JEWELRY case. She sips from a cup of Chinese tea as she selects the perfect brooch. WIDER TO REVEAL a team of STYLISTS, MAIDS and FASHION ATELIER ASSISTANTS waiting patiently in the b.g. A Maid comes in with a package.

MAID
From Mr. Wu.

Eleanor pulls a document from the package, scans it. A small smile forming on her lips.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SINGAPORE STREETS - DAY

As we see BUMPER TO BUMPER TRAFFIC, we hear a TALK RADIO DJ:

TALK RADIO DJ
All of Singapore's abuzz as the
wedding of the year is underway.
Downtown has come to a standstill--

INT. BENTLEY - DAY

Astrid and Michael, dressed for the wedding, sit at opposite ends in the back of a chauffeured Bentley that's stuck in traffic. Michael chatters on as Astrid listens in silence.

MICHAEL
--Our investors in China are getting
nervous. I'll have to go to Shenzhen
on Monday to talk them down.

This gets Astrid's attention.

ASTRID
That's Cassian's birthday.

MICHAEL
I know. I hate to miss it, but this is
important.

ASTRID
Being at your son's birthday is
important. Get someone else to handle
it...
(can't help herself)
Unless there's another reason you're
out of town.

MICHAEL
What are you talking about?

Astrid presses a button on the console, RAISING THE PARTITION between them and the driver.

ASTRID
I know you're having an affair.

Michael reacts, uncomfortable, but he doesn't deny it.

MICHAEL
Jesus, Astrid.

ASTRID

Let's just get through the wedding.
We'll deal with it after. I don't
want to make a scene.

Michael looks at her, incredulous.

MICHAEL

You find out I'm sleeping with another
woman, and you're worried about making
a scene?

ASTRID

You'd prefer I scream and carry on?

MICHAEL

Honestly, yes. It would show you
cared about something more than what
people thought of you and your family--

ASTRID

Don't turn this on me. I'm not the
one who screwed up.

MICHAEL

(simply)

No. You never are. You're always the
prettiest, richest, most perfect girl
in the room. And I'm the lucky
bastard who'll never measure up.

ASTRID

Don't say that--

MICHAEL

I'm tired of having nothing I do
matter. Including having an affair...

ASTRID

Of course what you do matters. And
we'll get through this. I'll get over
it somehow, for our family, for us--

Michael hits the roof of the car.

MICHAEL

(loudly; to driver)

Pull over.

As the driver pulls over, Astrid reacts, thrown.

ASTRID

What are you doing?

MICHAEL
 (looks at her; then)
 I'm sorry, I can't do this anymore.

And just like that, he's gone. Off Astrid, in shock, what the hell just happened? She pulls herself together.

ASTRID
 (to driver)
 Change of plans. Take me to Tyersall.
Now.

EXT. FIRST METHODIST CHURCH - DAY

It's a festive, bustling scene. A long line of stately cars lead to the entrance, which is flanked by barricades, holding back PRESS and throngs of people hoping to catch sight of arriving celebrities. Among the MEMBERS OF HIGH-SOCIETY, SULTANS and FOREIGN MINISTERS, is an assortment of Asia's brightest celebrities/couples: Angela baby & Huang XiaoMing, Jay Chou & Faye Wong, Fan Bing Bing, Song Jun Ki, etc.

Alistair poses with Kitty Pong, who's delighted by the number of cameras pointed in their direction. She grasps her clutch in front of her, shoving up her ample décolletage even more.

IN ANOTHER AREA Eddie, Fiona and their three boys, again dressed identically in adorable matching suits, pose on the steps as press photographers take pictures. Eddie is beaming, until he notices his youngest son's suit.

EDDIE
 (hissing)
 How many bloody times have I told you?
Never fasten the last jacket button--

Eddie trails off as the photographers look over his shoulder. He turns to see--

--a custom CHERRY RED BENTLEY MULSANE, where a WOMAN is being let out of the back seat by a CHAUFFEUR. It takes a second, but we quickly realize THE WOMAN IS RACHEL. She is stunning.

Rachel walks past Amanda, Celine and Francesca, mouths agape. They can't believe this woman is Rachel.

INT. FIRST METHODIST CHURCH - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Rachel crosses the threshold, and the sight takes Rachel's breath away. The interior of the church has been transformed into an ARTFUL ABSTRACT FOREST. And the guests, a SEA OF GLITTERATI, are its otherworldly inhabitants.

IN ANOTHER AREA, Eleanor, Jacqueline and Felicity hold court with other SOCIETY WIVES by the front pews. Eleanor looks at the decor, the FLOATING TREES overhead, disapproving.

ELEANOR

I don't understand. Is this a wedding or are we camping?

JACQUELINE

These new money families are too much. I heard Araminta's mother spent 40 million on the whole event.

FELICITY

Aiyah, it's unseemly. We're Methodists.
(then; noticing)
Who is that?

They turn to see Rachel, walking down the aisle. She's confident, luminous, elegant, turning heads as she walks by.

ELEANOR

(eyes narrowing)
Rachel.

As Rachel reaches their pew.

RACHEL

Aunties.

ELEANOR

Rachel. You look lovely. I'm so sorry, but our pew is full.

Eleanor gestures to the pew, which the Aunties fill up.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

There might be some seats in the back?

Rachel smiles, placid.

RACHEL

I'll find my own place, thank you.

Rachel scans the crowd and spots an open seat by an IMPOSING LOOKING BRUNEI PRINCESS, 40s, flanked by BODYGUARDS. As Rachel heads over, Eleanor sees this and smirks.

On Rachel and the Princess, who's pointedly ignoring her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Princess Intan of Brunei? I'm so excited to meet you.

The Princess glances at Rachel, dismissive.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I recognized you from last year's ASEAN summit. You did a presentation on the microloan program you started. Giving women from lower economic classes interest-free loans to become entrepreneurs?

The Princess reacts, surprised.

PRINCESS INTAN

You saw it?

RACHEL

Saw it? I wrote a research paper on it for NYU. I think if more emerging countries followed your example, they could revamp their economies.

The Princess breaks into a small smile. She gestures for Rachel to sit. Rachel smiles.

IN THE BACK ALCOVE: Nick searches the crowd, sees Rachel with Princess Intan, they're talking like old friends. She looks LUMINOUS.

Nick stares at Rachel, seeing her in a new light.

A HUSH falls over the crowd as they turn to see Astrid, statuesque, gorgeous, enter with AH MA, in a beautiful gossamer gown, her two Thai servants following behind. Eleanor watches, curious.

FELICITY

Ah Ma's here? She never comes to anything!

ON Astrid and Ah Ma as they walk down the aisle.

ASTRID

(subtitled Mandarin)

Thank you, Ah Ma.

AH MA

(subtitled Mandarin)

Family never says thank you.

(then)

We've caused a stir. But no one will wonder why Michael isn't with you.

On Astrid, not knowing the answer to that herself. But she puts on an elegant smile, masking her pain.

She sees Rachel sitting up front - Eleanor on the opposite side. Eleanor makes room for them, but Astrid leads Ah Ma to sit with Rachel. On Eleanor - annoyed at the unsubordination.

From the side alcove, Colin, Nick and four GROOMSMEN enter, wearing dark grey linen suits with silvery blue ties. Individually they're dashing, as a pack, they're a force.

Rachel looks at Nick, her heart swelling with pride. In this setting, in that suit, among his people...

The crowd MURMURS as YO-YO MA appears with two other string musicians. A hush falls over the crowd as they start to play APPALACHIA WALTZ, a hauntingly beautiful piece.

Araminta enters, and an AUDIBLE GASP ripples through the crowd. In a classically-inspired Valentino wedding gown with a resplendent train, she looks like a Pre-Raphaelite maiden floating through a sun-dappled forest. Rachel is surprised to find herself swept up in the moment.

On Colin and the Groomsmen. Colin stares at Araminta, fully engaged in this heightened moment.

Nick and Rachel's eyes meet. She lights up, smiles. Something comes over Nick, and he mouths "I LOVE YOU."

On Rachel as a warm glow over comes over her. RACK FOCUS to reveal Eleanor, who's clocked all of it. As the strings hit a heart-breaking CRESCENDO...

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

The hall has been transformed into a MAGICAL FOREST for the reception. Guests find their seats at tables set among copses of trees.

The lights dim and ORCHESTRAL MUSIC PLAYS as a PROCESSION OF HUNDREDS OF WAITERS make a dramatic entrance, each carrying a large tray aloft, with smoke emanating from it.

Guests look, amazed, as their dishes are placed before them - amalgams of haute cuisine and molecular gastronomy.

Eleanor, Jacqueline and the other Society Wives are not as impressed. Jacqueline eyes her dish: a sculptural arch hanging over a WOBBLING BUBBLE.

JACQUELINE

I don't know whether to eat it or put it in my bathroom.

But Eleanor is distracted by the sight of RACHEL and NICK at a nearby table. They're laughing, intimate.

At ANOTHER TABLE, Astrid sits next to an EMPTY SEAT. She's feeling the weight of Michael's absence, when

MAN (O.S.)

Is this seat taken?

Astrid looks up to see a man, 30s. Not handsome per se, but he has a kind face and there's a lively intelligence in his eyes. Astrid lights up, recognizing him.

ASTRID

Charlie Wu? I don't believe it.

She gestures for him to sit, he does.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

How long has it been?

CHARLIE

Since you broke my heart and sent me packing? Four thousand, two-hundred thirty-five days. Give or take.

(then)

I'm not stalking you, it's my thing with numbers.

ASTRID

(smiling)

I remember. People called you the Texas Instrument.

CHARLIE

Never liked that nickname. Always felt like my schoolmates were taking the piss with me.

(then; appreciative)

You never called me that.

ASTRID

Well, now Time's calling you the Asian Steve Jobs. So your old schoolmates can suck it.

Charlie looks around.

CHARLIE

Where's Michael?

ASTRID

(lying)

He had a last minute work emergency.
He couldn't make it.

CHARLIE

(smiles)

Good.

Charlie isn't a dick or skeezy. He's a tech savant who has no use for guile, and a dear old friend. And Astrid realizes that's exactly what she needs right now. TIME CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

On an elevated stage, K-POP female supergroup WONDER GIRLS, conveying immaculately sexy 50's chic, performs "NOBODY." The stage is in the middle of a large gleaming surface. It's the DANCE FLOOR - giving the effect that GUESTS are dancing on a LAKE.

All eyes are on Araminta, now in a bejeweled cocktail dress, and Colin as they let loose, surrounded by bridesmaids, groomsmen, plus Bernard & posse. Nick pulls Rachel to the dance and they join in. The scene feels like a stylistic MUSIC VIDEO: retro-chic by way of Shanghai.

But it's not all class. Amid this, we find KITTY PONG, twerking on Alistair, who has a silly grin on his face.

ANGLE ON Oliver, who watches from the sidelines, amused. He's joined by Eleanor.

ELEANOR

Enjoying yourself, Ollie.

OLIVER

I am, Auntie Elle.

ELEANOR

I was just thinking about our ski lodge in Gstaad and how you like borrowing it every winter.

OLIVER

Your generosity is always appreciated.

ELEANOR

Good.

(re: Kitty and Alistair)

So be a dear and take care of that, would you?

Eleanor leaves. Oliver looks at Kitty grinding on Alistair. Not relishing what he's been ordered to do.

ON Kitty and Alistair as Oliver walks up.

OLIVER

Alistair, your father's looking for you. Something about an overdrawn discretionary account.

Alistair's face falls and he takes off. Oliver holds his hand out to Kitty, who takes it. As Oliver leads her in a dance, handling her expertly:

OLIVER (CONT'D)

How do you like the wedding?

KITTY

Wah, it's so glaaa-morous. When it's Alistair's and my turn, I want one just like this.

OLIVER

Oh, sweetie. You'll be lucky if Alistair's parents give you a tea ceremony.

Kitty look at Oliver, confused.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

You know Alistair is only the fourth son, right? He'll get next to nothing. Not like Bernard Tai...

Angle on Bernard, drinking from a champagne bottle as he does Gangnam style with his posse.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Only son. Spends water like money. Heard he gave his last girlfriend a jet.

(then)

But who needs jets when you have true love. You'll get to wake up to Alistair's sweet puppy dog face every morning.

As Kitty absorbs this, FAYE WONG takes the stage and sings a soulful Chinese ballad, "LEGEND." Nick pulls Rachel in for a slow dance.

NICK

You're spectacular, you know that?

RACHEL
It's the double Spanx.

NICK
I don't know what that means. But it's
not just how you look. It's...
everything.
(then)
After the bachelorette party and my
family's insane behavior, I thought
you'd be over Singapore.

RACHEL
Your family is a lot to handle, but...
I think it's all growing on me.

NICK
You have no idea how happy that makes
me.

Nick looks at Rachel in this close, intimate, heightened
moment. They're about to kiss when:

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Master Nicholas.

Nick and Rachel pull apart to see one of Ah Ma's Thai
servants. She speaks with a gentle Thai accent:

THAI SERVANT
Your grandmother would like to speak
to you.
(to Rachel)
And Miss Rachel as well.

On Nick and Rachel, wondering what it's about. We go to:

OVERHEAD POV as Nick and Rachel leave. Reveal Charlie and
Astrid looking down from a balcony, in their own world.

CHARLIE
Remember when we were Freshers at
Cambridge and went to Paris for Easter
Break?

ASTRID
It was my first time there without my
parents.

CHARLIE
It was my first time in a real French
boutique.
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

The look on those snooty womens' faces
when this little Chinese *siew cheh*
walked in, speaking perfect French,
and bought up the whole store.

Astrid smiles at the memory. Charlie smiles at her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You were fearless. I never saw
anything like it.

ASTRID

It was a long time ago.

CHARLIE

You know, you were the inspiration for
my first start-up in California.

ASTRID

Find that hard to believe.

CHARLIE

I thought if one 18-year-old
Singaporean girl could take on Paris,
I could face the geeks in Silicon
Valley.

Charlie looks at her. Hesitates, then:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

The day my company went public, I
called your house. I thought I'd
finally become the kind of man who
could ask Astrid Leong to marry him.

(then)

Your mother answered and shared the
happy news - that you'd gotten engaged
to Michael Teo.

Astrid reacts, surprised, touched.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to Barcelona for a few days.
I have a vineyard there...

(then)

I know it's a long shot, but... would
you like to join me?

On Astrid, the temptation to escape with Charlie playing on
her, but...

ASTRID

I can't.

(then)

(MORE)

ASTRID (CONT'D)
But thank you. For reminding me who I
used to be.

INT. GARDEN ALCOVE - NIGHT

The Thai servant shows Rachel and Nick into a small area,
where Ah Ma and Eleanor are having tea at a table. Ah Ma
gestures for them to sit. They do.

NICK
Ah Ma. Mum. What's going on?

ELEANOR
Ah Ma called you both here because she
wants to say something to Rachel.

Ah Ma turns to Rachel.

AH MA
(subtitled Mandarin)
*Rachel. I've only known you a short
time, but I can see you are an
accomplished, intelligent young woman.
And you have a face that will bring
luck to your family--*

Nick smiles at Ah Ma's seeming endorsement of Rachel.

AH MA (CONT'D)
(subtitled Mandarin)
*However, you are not our family. And I
will not permit you ruin my grandson
and this house with your ambition.*

Rachel is stunned. Nick, reacts, shocked.

NICK
(subtitled Mandarin)
Ah Ma, how can you can say that.

AH MA
(subtitled Mandarin)
*You're a clever boy, Nick, but naive
in the ways of the world. And
deceptive women like her.*

Nick gets to his feet, incensed.

NICK
Rachel is the most real, honest person
I know.

ELEANOR

Honest? She hasn't even told you the truth about her family.

RACHEL

What are you talking about?

ELEANOR

Would you like to tell Nick about your father, or shall I?

RACHEL

(confused)

My father died before I was born--

ELEANOR

I had an investigator look into Rachel's family. Her father's alive, serving a life sentence in Yangqing prison in China.

NICK

This is insanity. You've gone too far--

RACHEL

(stunned)

That's not true. It can't be.

Eleanor looks closely at Rachel.

ELEANOR

I can understand why your mother told you a lie over the truth; that your father is a criminal. It's all there.

Eleanor gestures to a FOLDER on the table. Rachel looks at it as if it's poison. Eleanor takes out document after damning document: Chinese news articles, featuring a man's mug shot, a MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE with Kerry's picture as a young woman.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Your father owned a factory. According to local newspapers, the working conditions were terrible. Inhumane. Some workers even died as a result. Your mother must have known the kind of man she married. She obviously benefitted from it -- using his money to get herself and you to America. Of course, it's not your fault, you were a baby. But we can't have Nick bringing you and your mother into our family--

Rachel gets to her feet, reeling.

RACHEL
I have to leave.

NICK
Rachel--

Rachel takes off. Nick moves to leave, but Ah Ma grabs on to his arm. She speaks with surprising firmness.

AH MA
(in subtitled Mandarin)
You will not debase yourself chasing
that woman. I forbid you.

Nick looks at Ah Ma and his mother, yanks free and leaves.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Rachel, disoriented, makes her way through the hall. The vibe is different -- it's late and the overpriced wine is beginning to take effect on people. From Rachel's POV: the laughter and drinking and jewels and excess takes on a garish aspect. She gets caught in a SURGE of guests who are heading outside.

IN ANOTHER AREA, Nick scans the crowd, searching for Rachel. Amanda intercepts him, emboldened by a cocktail or two.

AMANDA
Nicki. I've been looking for you.
(wraps arms around his
neck; suggestive)
I miss you, and I know you miss me--

Nick pulls her arms off.

NICK
Stay away from me.

Nick follows the stream of Guests heading outside, leaving Amanda bereft, angry.

EXT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

It's a melee as the crowd gets ready to send off the bride and groom. THOUSANDS OF SPARKLERS are lit and distributed among the guests, who jostle for a vantage spot.

Rachel tries to push her way through the crowd when she hears a SCREAM. She turns to see several guests POINTING and LAUGHING.

They've discovered a half-naked Bernard and Kitty, behind a structure. Bernard is completely drunk and paws at Kitty, who's mortified at being discovered.

The crowd LAUGHS, derisive, as Kitty struggles to pull her dress up as she flees.

CROWD MURMURING

Serves her right / She can go back
where she came from / Gold digger...

It's sickening to Rachel - it feels like people are talking about her as much as Kitty.

At the other end of the gathering, Nick, who's made his way out, gets grabbed by the Groomsmen to stand in a line - they're sending off Colin and Araminta. Nick is distracted, not wanting to spoil his friend's moment, but still desperately looking about for Rachel.

As Colin and Araminta emerge from the hall, the crowd SHOWERS them with SILVER CONFETTI. They head for a SILVER BENTLEY and enter it as the crowd CHEERS. Through the SPARKLERS and FALLING CONFETTI, Nick catches a glimpse of Rachel...

He pushes through the crowd, when ELEANOR steps in front of him.

ELEANOR

Nick. You have to go back. Apologize
to Ah Ma.

Nick stares at his mother, incredulous. He moves to leave, but Eleanor goes after him.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Don't do this. You can't let some
woman come between you and your family-

Nick swings around, confronts Eleanor.

NICK

Rachel isn't "some woman." I love her.
And what you and Ah Ma did--

ELEANOR

What I did was for your own
protection. Rachel is not good enough--

NICK

Don't you dare talk about Rachel. She
showed up tonight because I asked her
to. Despite the disgusting way you and
our whole family have treated her.

Eleanor grabs his arm, pleading.

ELEANOR

I know you're angry. But if you walk away now, everything your father and I did for you -- the sacrifices I made -- will be for nothing. I won't let you throw away your future--

NICK

You don't control my life. Not anymore.

(then)

I'm done. I'm done with this whole goddamn family. And I'm done with you.

With that, Nick stalks off. Eleanor tries to go after him, but she can't keep up.

ELEANOR

Nick... Nick, please. Don't walk away... NICK!!!

Eleanor SHOUTS after her son, coming undone. As Nick disappears into the night, Eleanor suddenly becomes self conscious... she sees people around her, staring, whispering. She realizes she's CRYING. As she wipes the tears from her face, FIREWORKS GO OFF IN THE SKY BEHIND HER...

EXT. GOH HOUSE - NIGHT

A PAIR OF BARE FEET walks up to the Goh Family front door. A MANICURED FINGER pushes the door bell and a LOUD GONG chimes. Peik Lin opens the front door wearing her pajamas.

We reveal Rachel, her once flawless hair, makeup and dress are all now a mess. She carries her HIGH HEELS IN HER HANDS.

Peik Lin opens her arms. Rachel bursts into tears and collapses into her friend.

INT. GOH HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM - DAY

It's dark. There's a knock at the door. No answer. The door opens and Peik Lin enters. She sees Rachel on the bed, unmoving.

PEIK LIN

Rachel? Come have breakfast. It'll make you feel better.

But Rachel doesn't move. Peik Lin exits, closing the door behind her. The room falls back into darkness and we kick off a TIME LAPSE SEQUENCE:

- It's NIGHT: the door opens again. It's Peik Lin with a dinner tray. She sees Rachel is in the same spot. Peik Lin senses she doesn't want to be disturbed, and leaves the dinner tray on a side table.

- Darkness gives way to light as a new day dawns, but Rachel is still in bed, unmoving. On the bedside table, her PHONE RINGS. It's NICK, but Rachel barely registers it.

EXT. RAFFLES HOTEL SUIT - BALCONY - DAY

Nick is on the phone, leaving Rachel a message.

NICK

Hey, Rachel. I stopped by Peik Lin's house again. She said you still don't want to see me.

(then)

Rachel, please talk to me. Call me anytime, whenever. Please.

Nick hangs up. He puts his phone down, when it BUZZES. Nick picks it up, hopeful, but his face falls when he sees it's a call from MUM. Nick's face tightens, dismisses the call.

INT. ELEANOR & PHILLIP'S HOUSE - DAY

Eleanor is on her cell, getting Nick's voicemail. She hangs up, despondent.

INT. GOH FAMILY HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM - DAY

Peik Lin enters the dark room, sees Rachel's form on the bed and the TRAYS of UNTOUCHED FOOD left on the wide table. Days have passed.

PEIK LIN

Rachel, you have a visitor.

Rachel stirs, weak, numb.

RACHEL

Tell Nick I don't want to see him.

PEIK LIN

It's not Nick.

Rachel lifts her head as someone steps in from behind Peik Lin. It's KERRY. On Rachel, not believing her eyes.

RACHEL

Mom?

Kerry rushes to her daughter, hugging her. Rachel tears up, finally with the person she needed the most.

INT. GOH FAMILY HOUSE - BALCONY - DAY

Rachel and Kerry sit at the balcony. Rachel looks a little better as Kerry fusses over her, putting dumplings on her plate.

KERRY

(encouraging)

One more. There's no blood in your face.

Kerry looks on concerned as Rachel nibbles on her dumpling.

KERRY (CONT'D)

Aiyah, what did these people do to do you? As soon as you get better, I'm going to take you home--

RACHEL

Mom. You told me my dad died when you were still in China. Before I was born. Is that the truth?

Kerry hesitates, then:

KERRY

No.

RACHEL

Why did you lie? I would have understood, even if he is a criminal in prison--

KERRY

Criminal?

(realizing)

No. NO. Your father is not in prison.

Kerry sighs, it's time for the truth to come out.

KERRY (CONT'D)

I always meant to tell you the truth. At first you were too young.

(MORE)

KERRY (CONT'D)

Then when you became older, I thought what was the point? The past is so far away.

(lost in thought; then)

That man in prison was my husband. He wasn't a good man. He was abusive to his workers, abusive to me...

Rachel reacts, she's never heard this before.

KERRY (CONT'D)

Some nights it would be so bad, I'd run out of the house. If it wasn't for a neighbor, a student with a good heart, who hid me, protected me, I wouldn't be alive today. I fell in love with him. And I became pregnant with his baby. With you.

Kerry strokes Rachel's hair.

KERRY (CONT'D)

I knew if my husband found out, he'd kill us both.

RACHEL

What about my father? My real father?

KERRY

I loved him, and he loved us. Very much. But sometimes love is not enough. So I made plans for us to go to America. Where you could grow up safe, happy.

(then)

It was hard when we first got there. Staying in small rooms with so many other people, working from morning to night in restaurants. But I was so happy, because I had you.

On Rachel, tears streaming down her face.

RACHEL

Oh, mom.

KERRY

I never had any regrets. From the first step you took as a baby, to graduating, to becoming this brilliant professor in New York University -- I knew I made the right decision. My daughter deserved all the happiness in the world.

(MORE)

KERRY (CONT'D)

(then)

When Nick came into your life, I
thought maybe you found love.

Rachel looks in the distance, remembering, hurt.

RACHEL

Like you said. Sometimes love isn't
enough.

KERRY

You should know, Nick was the one who
called me and told me what happened.

On Rachel, surprised.

KERRY (CONT'D)

He bought my plane ticket, sent a car
for me. He took care of everything.
All this, because he cares for you.
(then)
Talk to him.

INT. ASTRID'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Astrid watches wordlessly, half-listening as Michael packs up
his belongings.

MICHAEL

I'll send for the rest of my things
later. My lawyer says you need to get
back to him about the visitation
schedule for Cassian. My schedule is
hectic, but I don't want to miss out
on time with him.

Astrid opens a kitchen cabinet and takes out the TEA CADDY,
from which she pulls out the EARRINGS she purchased. She puts
them on. She sees her reflection in a mirror - SEES THE WOMAN
SHE ONCE WAS. Then, with her chin a little higher, she goes to
the hallway, takes her handbag and keys. Turns to Michael.

ASTRID

Don't worry about packing your things.
You bought this apartment, you keep
it. I'll leave--

MICHAEL

(confused)

What are you talking about? Where will
you go?

ASTRID

I have fourteen residential buildings that I own, so probably one of those. And you'll see Cassian when it's good for him, not when it's good for you.

Astrid starts to leave, when Michael takes her arm, holding her back.

MICHAEL

There's no need to be petty. It's no one's fault things didn't work out between us--

Astrid pulls her arm away, looks him squarely in the eyes.

ASTRID

Let's be clear. The problem with our marriage isn't my family's money. It's that you're a coward. I gave up job offers, social work, making sure I wasn't being too showy, just so you wouldn't feel lesser than.

(then)

But I've just realized it's not my job to make you feel like a man. I can't make you something you're not.

As she walks out.

ASTRID (CONT'D)

I'll send for the rest of my things later.

EXT. EAST COAST BEACH - DAY

Nick waits by a bench, anxious. He lights up when he sees Rachel walking towards him. He pulls her into an embrace. Rachel hugs him back, then pulls away.

NICK

I've missed you.

RACHEL

Me, too.

NICK

I'm sorry. For everything. For my family. For letting them make you feel for one second that you were less than--

RACHEL

It's not your fault--

NICK

It is. For going along with my family,
for asking you to put up with them.

(then)

I didn't realize how blind I've been.
I've let my mother and Ah Ma dictate
my entire life. And that's not what I
want--

(touches her face)

What I want is you.

Rachel looks at Nick, a tear runs down her cheek.

NICK (CONT'D)

Let's go back to New York, leave all
this behind and give ourselves a real
chance--

RACHEL

I want to. But I can't.

NICK

Why not?

RACHEL

Because there is no leaving this
behind. I know how much your family,
your life here means to you--

NICK

Not anymore. I'm done with them. For
good. I'll prove it to you--

RACHEL

You don't need to prove anything--

NICK

I love you and I know you feel the
same way about me--

RACHEL

I do. More than I thought possible.
But it's not enough.

(then)

Don't you get it? If I'm the reason
you lose your family, we will never
recover from that.

NICK

Rachel, don't do this--

RACHEL
I'm flying back to New York with my
mom tomorrow morning. I think it's
best if we don't see each other--

Rachel fights to hold back her tears.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Nick.

With that, Rachel turns and walks away. Unseen by Nick, her
face CRUMPLES. Off Nick, devastated, lost.

INT. GOH'S HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM - DAY

Kerry and Peik Lin are helping Rachel pack.

PEIK LIN
You sure you won't stay a few more
days?

RACHEL
I've imposed on you and your family
long enough.

PEIK LIN
(hesitates; then)
Nick called. He asked if he could get
your plane tickets for tomorrow or
send a car for you and your mom.

RACHEL
Tell him thanks, but we've got it
covered.

Peik Lin nods, gets it. As she moves off, Kerry helps Rachel
zip up her suitcase.

KERRY
(gently)
Nick was always so good about taking
care of you.

RACHEL
I'll be all right on my own.

KERRY
I know you will.
(then)
But who will take care of him?

This lands on Rachel, who realizes there's one last thing she
needs to do...

EXT. ANN SIANG HILL ROAD - NIGHT

It's one of the oldest commercial streets in Singapore that hasn't been developed. Eleanor, wearing sunglasses, walks by the row of old terraced shophouses, pausing when she hears a familiar CLACKING sound. She looks up to see the a traditional Chinese wooden sign over a storefront with the English translation: "Hokkien Benevolent Association."

INT. MAHJONG HALL - DAY

Eleanor enters to see it's a MAHJONG HALL, with a dozen tables going, populated mostly by SENIORS. Eleanor sees Rachel sitting at a back table with two other little SENIOR LADIES.

Eleanor takes a seat at Rachel's table. She glances at the two little old ladies.

RACHEL

Don't worry about them. They're half deaf and only speak Hokkien.

Rachel gestures for Eleanor to join in. It's a FLUID, RHYTHMIC RITUAL -- the staccato stacking of tiles, the ballet of stacks being formed and moved like clockwork. Eleanor is surprised to see Rachel folds in effortlessly with the old timers.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

My mother taught me. She said learning mahjong would teach me important life skills. Negotiation, strategy, cooperation. It's probably the reason I got into economics and game theory.

Rachel throws the dice, and wordlessly, the four women begin to move their tiles and set up their cards. (Note, the game goes on throughout the conversation. With cards thrown, picked up, chips exchanging hands, etc.)

ELEANOR

You asked me here. I'm assuming it was for more than a mahjong lesson.

(grabs a card)

Pung.

Eleanor puts down a power card combo. The old women toss RED CHIPS to her.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

My mother taught me, too.

Rachel tosses her a red chip. As they continue playing:

RACHEL

Why do you hate me? I know Nick told you the truth about my father. But you didn't like me before that. I know I'm not from here, or rich--

ELEANOR

--You're American. And all Americans think about is how to make themselves happy. Your life is all about what you want. Pursuing your dreams.

RACHEL

What's wrong with that?

ELEANOR

That's all it is. A dream. All these people chasing the illusion of happiness. But at the end of the day, they're left with nothing.

RACHEL

And your way is so much better?

ELEANOR

Real Chinese people understand how to build something that lasts. We sacrifice our own happiness for the sake of our children, our family. Something you know nothing about.

RACHEL

You don't know me.

ELEANOR

I know you're not what Nick needs.

RACHEL

That's not what Nick thinks. He wants to spend his life with me.

(then)

Pung.

Rachel lays down a combination of her own.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

He said he was willing to walk away from his family. From you. Forever.

Eleanor's face tightens, not wanting to let on how much this hurts her. Then:

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I turned him down.

Eleanor reacts, surprised.

ELEANOR

You made the right decision.

RACHEL

No, I didn't. But this game we're playing? Neither of us can win - you made sure of that. We both have bad hands. If I got Nick, he'd lose his family. If you got Nick, he'd spend the rest of his life resenting you.

ELEANOR

And still, you turned my son down.

RACHEL

I wouldn't have if I thought there was a *chance* you'd come around. But you won't.

(then)

Nick told me about you and Ah Ma. About your ring. Ah Ma never liked you, not really. But still, she picked Nick, your son, out of all her grandchildren as her favorite, to inherit the family fortune. Why? Because of your sacrifice - you let Ah Ma raise Nick, knowing she'd fall in love with him. You did it because you wanted more for him. Because that's how much you love him.

(then)

I'll be fine, but Nick needs you. He needs his family.

Rachel gets up.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Make things right with your son.
You've given up too much to lose him.

On Eleanor, staring at her cards as Rachel leaves.

INT. CHANGI AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - DAY

Rachel looks out the glass wall at the Singaporean skyline with conflicting emotions. Kerry touches her on the shoulder.

KERRY

Time to board.

As Rachel and Kerry go to the gate, Kerry looks around. Unlike the other gates that are packed with SCORES OF HARRIED TRAVELERS, there's NO ONE at their gate.

KERRY (CONT'D)
Not many people on this flight.
(shrugs)
Good, then we can get extra pillows...

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Rachel and Kerry board the plane and quickly realize IT'S TOTALLY EMPTY. As they walk down the aisles, concerned...

KERRY
Was there a bird flu scare we didn't know about?

They reach their seats when Rachel sees a STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING on her seat tray table.

KERRY (CONT'D)
Oo, free cake.
(then)
Where's mine?

Rachel sees the pudding is attached to a RIBBON, which leads to another pudding in another row. She FOLLOWS the TRAIL OF PUDDINGS, which leads to the galley, where NICK is waiting for her. Kerry sees this, gets it.

KERRY (CONT'D)
I'll go wait at our seats.

As Kerry leaves, Rachel turns to Nick.

RACHEL
You bought out the plane?

NICK
I gave everyone upgrades. They were chuffed.

RACHEL
Nick, look--

NICK
No, you look. I get that you broke up with me because you think it's the right thing to do. But that doesn't really work for me.

Nick hands her a PINK CONFECTION BOX.

RACHEL

I told you, I can't. I won't get
between you and your family--

NICK

Just open the box.

Despite herself, Rachel opens the box, revealing yet another pudding, but this one has ELEANOR'S RING sitting on it. Rachel looks to Nick - does that mean what she thinks it does? Nick nods - it's a symbol of Eleanor's approval.

Nick takes the ring and gets on one knee.

NICK (CONT'D)

Rachel Chu. Will you do me the honor
of letting me get you snacks for the
rest of your life, and being my wife?

On Rachel, tearing up.

RACHEL

Yes!

Nick puts the ring on her finger - a perfect fit. He gets up and pulls her into his arms as he kisses her. An ORCHESTRAL SCORE SWELLS, buffeting the impossibly romantic moment, when Rachel suddenly pulls away.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(re: music)

What's that?

We realize the music isn't score, it's something Rachel hears.

KERRY (O.S.)

Look!

Rachel and Nick turn to see Kerry looking out a window. Nick smiles as Rachel joins her and looks out to see:

An ORCHESTRAL BAND playing on the tarmac outside the plane. A RED CARPET leads from the plane's stairs, through the band and to a WAITING LIMOUSINE.

Rachel turns to Nick, who grins.

NICK

I was betting you'd say yes.

EXT. TARMAC - DAY

As the band continues to play, Nick and Rachel exits the plane and walk toward the car. Kerry follows, delighted, taking selfies with the band and plane behind her.

Rachel looks up at the glass windows of the departure gates -- the formerly harried passengers we saw before are now SMILING and waving at them, delighted by the spectacle. Rachel LAUGHS and waves back.

The LIMO driver opens the car door for them. As they get in:

RACHEL

This is crazy. Where are we going?

(then)

Nevermind. I don't care. I love you
Nick Young.

NICK

I love you, Rachel Chu...

They KISS as the limo pulls away.

CREDITS ROLL as we go to:

EXT. SINGAPORE - MARINA BAY SANDS - SKY DECK - DAY

Rachel, Nick and Kerry arrive at an ENGAGEMENT PARTY at this mind-blowing location, perched high above the city.

Peik Lin rushes up to hug Rachel, as Astrid greets Nick. Charlie is there with Cassian. Everyone has shown up: Eddie and his three boys, Phillip, Alistair, Oliver, Colin, Araminta, Wye Mun, Neena, ALL THE GOHS.

And at the far end, looking over it all is Eleanor. Rachel smiles at her. Eleanor pretends not to see her, but there's a GLIMMER of a smile on her face. As Nick and Rachel dance with the revelers, we PULL AWAY...

FADE OUT.

THE END