

THE OTHER ASIAN

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INT. ANNIE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - 1998 - DAY

YOUNG ANNIE CHEN - 8 years old, first-generation Chinese immigrant child, sits at a tiny dinner table arranged in front of a small TV, her attention rapt.

ANNIE (V.O.)
My entire life, I've been obsessed
with white people dinner.

On the screen, she watches as a young MICHELLE TANNER on *Full House* sits at a dinner table with her TV family.

The dinner spread on TV is the epitome of all-American - there's turkey and mashed potatoes and whatever else white people eat for dinner. To Annie, it looks magical.

Annie's MOM places a bowl of rice in front of her. Followed by a whole cooked fish. Annie's face: *this is bullshit*.

YOUNG ANNIE
Do we have to eat rice every night?

ANNIE'S MOM
When I was your age, I had to pick
rice from the fields every day. My
mother and I would haul sacks to the
market to sell by the pound.

She loads food and guilt onto Annie's bowl.

ANNIE'S MOM (cont'd)
Every grain of rice in your bowl is
work from the fingers of a little
girl you will never meet. Because her
parents are too poor to bring her to
America for a better life.

Annie looks the fish on the table in the eye.

YOUNG ANNIE
I feel like it's watching me.

Annie's Mom *POPS OUT THE FISH'S EYE AND EATS IT!*

ANNIE'S MOM
I fixed it. Now eat.

Off Annie's traumatized face...

ANNIE (V.O.)
I had this wild dream. That someday,
I'd meet a nice American boy...

INT. ANNIE'S COLLEGE DORM ROOM - 2009

COLLEGE ANNIE - 19 years old, makes out with COLLEGE ETHAN - 19 (we'll get to him later) - in a twin XL dorm room bed.

ANNIE (V.O.)
... and we'd fall in love and I'd
finally get to eat white people
dinner with the nice white parents I
never had.

Annie and Ethan break apart for a breathless beat.

ANNIE
Tell me about your parents. What did
they feed you as a kid?

ETHAN
Uh... pasta?

ANNIE
(sexy)
I love carbs...

ETHAN
(sexy)
Oven-roasted chicken and onions...

ANNIE
I bet you had to brush your teeth
afterwards...

ETHAN
Yeah, my mouth was so dirty...

INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM - PRESENT DAY

ANNIE CHEN, 30, charming in a sleep-deprived way, sits at a dining table. The dinner spread is gorgeous - like something out of a Norman Rockwell painting.

Annie smiles at JERRY, 35, generically handsome white dude.

ANNIE
So... is this what dinner looked like
in your house growing up?

JERRY
My mom didn't really cook. We ate a
lot of McDonald's.

Annie looks disappointed. Jerry is eager to please.

JERRY (cont'd)
But my grandma did. We had a lot of
potatoes at her house.

Annie holds up a WALKIE TALKIE.

ANNIE
Can someone get me a pretty plate of
potatoes? Also where's my actress?

An ART PA places a plate of potatoes before Annie. Annie
stands - we widen to reveal she's on a TV SET. Annie is a TV
director - her vibe is ship captain meets traffic cop.

EVE - 28, British, an apologetic snob, hurries in.

EVE
I was at crafty, sorry. We really
must get better tea on set.

Annie directs her actors.

ANNIE
This is a magical scene. The
culmination of a whole season's worth
of sexual tension. Every frame of
this is going to get GIF'd within an
inch of its life on Tumblr.

Eve and Jerry nod. Annie's professional face cracks.

ANNIE (cont'd)
And we've got like, an hour before
I'm late for dinner with my
boyfriend's family and we're supposed
to meet his new stepmom tonight. So
let's get this done in one, shall we?

EVE
Can do, boss.

JERRY
Yep.

Annie walks backwards towards video village, calling out -

ANNIE
You're champs. And I love you both.
And we're rolling. And action.

The crew starts up again in a hurricane of activity, Annie
the center of it. She fist bumps the FIRST AD.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. ANNIE AND ETHAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Annie explodes in through the door and immediately starts stripping off her set clothes.

ETHAN, 30, goofy-cute, marriage material, pokes his head out of the doorway. He wears an apron, he's been baking.

ETHAN
Hey, my girlfriend's stripping. Sexy.

ANNIE
I'm on my period.

ETHAN
I could still get into it.

ANNIE
(genuine)
Aww. No, thank you. Where's the thing
I was going to wear tonight?

He tosses her a dress and she throws it on as she slips into heels. This routine is second nature to them, Ethan has adapted to life with Hurricane Annie.

ANNIE (cont'd)
What are we bringing?

ETHAN
Soufflé. Since my dad met this
mystery woman in France.

He feeds her a spoon-sized sample while she fixes her hair. It's delicious.

ANNIE
You are a magic cook. French me.

INT. ROBERT'S SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

ROBERT, 58, salt and pepper handsome with professorial vibes, pours drinks for everyone in the sitting room. It's old money, wood and wallpaper.

Also seated are Ethan's sisters ROSE, 22, lovably ditzy with a heart of gold, and DARCY, 34, the reluctantly responsible eldest sibling.

ROBERT

Now, I'm sure you're well aware, we have a happy occasion to drink to and someone - very special - I would like you to meet.

He glances towards the dining room nervously. As he looks away, we see a GROUP TEXT THREAD bubble up.

Rose: Did Dad dye his hair?

Darcy: His silver is suspiciously even.

Robert turns back and everyone tucks away their phones.

ROSE

Daddy, did you change your hair?

ROBERT

They call it "a touch of gray." I'm told Anderson Cooper is a fan of the style.

He pats his hair self-consciously.

ROBERT (cont'd)

Now, before we do introductions, I want to go over a few things. First - I absolutely adore this woman. We met while I was traveling in Paris. It was totally unexpected but I fell madly in love with her. I think she fell in love with me too.

DARCY

Think?

ROBERT

Think. Just as I once *thought* your mother fell in love with me, but clearly I was wrong on that score.

ETHAN

Let's not bring Mom into this.

ROBERT

The point is, I can only *think* I know what goes on in my partner's brain, but I *know* I know what's happening in my heart.

ANNIE

Makes sense.

ROBERT

I don't expect you to treat her as a stepmother. But I hope you will welcome her into the family with the same generosity of spirit I would extend to your loved ones.

ANNIE / ETHAN

That's very nice. / Sure.

ROSE / DARCY

Of course we will. / Why not.

Robert claps his hands together.

ROBERT

My heart rate is up, I'm practically shaking, I'm so nervous. But you're going to love her, I promise.

He stands, heads towards the dining room, then hesitates and turns. With great import -

ROBERT (cont'd)

One more thing. I want you all to know - your mother and I, we tore at each other's spirits.

A long beat. His kids wait for him to say more.

ROBERT (cont'd)

Now, shall we have dinner? Annie, I think you especially will enjoy it.

He presses his hands together and gives her a little half-bow before he turns and leads the way. Annie gives Ethan a "what the fuck was that?" look as they follow.

INT. ROBERT'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone approaches the dinner table. It's been set with distinctly Chinese food.

ROBERT

Petal? Come in! Kids, meet Fei - she is the yin to my yang.

His new wife makes her entrance - FEI, Chinese, looks like she could be 25 or just as easily 35. She's beautiful, brisk and blunt. Fei holds a fish dish, like Betty Crocker would hold a pie.

Annie is already horrified. *Who. Is. This? Why is she Asian? Why is she so young?? Is she prettier than Annie??*

Fei speaks in accented, rehearsed-from-lesson-tapes English. She turns to Ethan first.

FEI
Hi. How are you?

ETHAN
Fine, thanks for asking.

FEI
I'm glad to hear it.

Robert smiles, charmed by every word out of her mouth.

ROBERT
She taught herself English by listening to audio tapes. Fei, I want you to meet my oldest, Darcy, my youngest, Rose, and my son, Ethan.

Fei nods at them.

ROBERT (cont'd)
And this of course is Annie, Ethan's girlfriend of six years.

ANNIE
Ten.

She shakes Fei's hand as she corrects Robert with a smile.

ROBERT
Annie is also from China.

Fei lights up. She speaks in RAPID, UNSUBTITLED MANDARIN.

FEI
Really? What part of China are you from? When did you move here?

Annie panics - she has a five year old's vocabulary and this is the worst pop quiz in the world.

ANNIE
(trying)
Dui bu qi, wo de... zhong wen shi...
(giving up)
I don't really speak Mandarin, sorry.

Fei nods: *I get it, you're a bad Asian.*

ANNIE (cont'd)
It's nice to meet you, though!

What a liar. Robert smiles around the table.

ROBERT
Sit, sit! We don't want dinner going cold.

Everyone takes their seats. Annie and Ethan are sitting directly across from Robert and Fei.

ROBERT (cont'd)
It's cuisine from Fei's home province in China.
(over-enunciating)
Si-chuan.

FEI
(correcting him)
Sichuan.

ROBERT
(mispronouncing)
See-chuan.

FEI
Sichuan.

ANNIE
So how did you two meet?

FEI
We were at a gas station.

She doesn't offer anything else. Fei pops the fish eye out and eats it, just like Annie's mom.

ROBERT
There I was, pumping gas into a rental car when I looked up, and I saw the most beautiful woman in the world.

FEI
He said hello.

ROBERT
And suddenly my heart started drumming and I thought to myself, "If I don't talk to her, I might die."

DARCY
Maybe it was your arrhythmia.

ROBERT

I had all this anxiety - what if she thinks I'm an idiot, I'm old enough to be her father, this is a beautiful madness - and then the most amazing thing happened.

FEI

He asked for my number and I gave it to him.

ROBERT

The funny thing is, neither of us was meant to be there at the time. I was on vacation in Brussels and she was on a work trip in Zurich, but we both made an impromptu daytrip to Paris and four weeks later, we were married. It was a gas station of fate.

FEI

Yes. Fate.

It doesn't sound romantic when she says it. But Robert grins, besotted.

ROBERT

You're my fortune cookie from Cupid.

Annie looks like she might throw up. Robert smiles.

ROBERT (cont'd)

But enough of our news. This is family dinner, tell me what's going on in your lives.

No one talks. Annie clears her throat.

ANNIE

Ethan got promoted at TGIFriday's.

ETHAN

Yeah. Come by anytime and you can have all the free fries you want, courtesy of the new head chef.

ROBERT

Oh, who's the new head chef?

ETHAN

... Me. I'm the new head chef.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone says their goodbyes on the porch. Robert and Fei stand across from Ethan and Annie. Robert chuckles good-naturedly.

ROBERT
It's almost like looking in a mirror,
isn't it?

ETHAN
What?

FEI
Because you are father and son. And
we are both -

ANNIE
Good night!

Annie slips her arm through Ethan's and marches to the car.

ROBERT
*(in cheerfully bad
Mandarin)*
Zai jian!

INT. CAR - NIGHT

They climb into the car. Ethan looks like he just got back from war. Annie has moved past shell-shocked to suspicion.

ANNIE
There is no way that woman is in love
with your father. Something is very
off about her.

ETHAN
We don't know that, maybe it's like,
a Chinese cultural thing.

ANNIE
Ethan, that is so racist, not
everything is a Chinese thing just
because the people involved are
Chinese.
(beat)
What if she's a mail order bride?
That's totally a Chinese thing.

ETHAN

Dad would never do that. He closed his Match.com account because he didn't want to give Mom the satisfaction of knowing he had to pay to find love.

ANNIE

She's definitely older than me, right? By at least a couple months.

ETHAN

You know I can't tell how old you people are.

(off Annie's glare)

That's not racist! That's a fact!

Annie shakes her head. Ethan drives, glances at her.

ETHAN (cont'd)

Don't be mad. You're the yin to my yang.

ANNIE

I will leave you.

EXT. TGIF - NEXT DAY

Establishing. Early morning over a strip mall TGIFriday's.

INT. TGIF KITCHEN - DAY

Annie hands Ethan a card that reads "Congrats on your Retirement!"

ETHAN

(reading)

"Congrats on your retirement...

(opens card)

From not being the head chef. You're going to crush your first day! Please make me an egg scramble, love Annie." Aww, thanks, boo.

ANNIE

I meant it. The egg scramble part.

Ethan fries up an egg scramble. Annie hangs out next to him, on her phone.

ANNIE (cont'd)
What if they got married because Fei caught him in a pregnancy scam? She seems like she'd be pretty fertile.

ETHAN
Dad had a vasectomy after Rose.
(beat)
Can we talk about something else?

ANNIE
No. I found their honeymoon photos.
Look at this.

Annie turns her phone to reveal a photo of a shirtless Robert in a traditional Chinese silk robe and Fei in a stars-and-stripes American flag bikini.

ETHAN
I don't need to see that.

ANNIE
Your dad is pretty ripped though.
Sorry. You're more ripped.

She pats him on the stomach reassuringly. Ethan addresses his FRY COOK, MICKEY, 40's.

ETHAN
Hey, Mickey, you good here? I'm gonna take breakfast with the lady.

MICKEY
Yeah, boss. You mind telling your friend out there we can't give endless refills on her fries? This is like, the sixth plate we're sending over.

Ethan frowns, takes the fries. Annie follows him with her scrambled eggs plate.

INT. TGIF - DAY

Fei sits at a booth, eating french fries. Ethan and Annie stealthily observe her from a distance, Scooby Doo-style.

ANNIE
Who eats french fries at seven am?
She's obviously a psychopath.

ETHAN

Maybe it's a coincidence that she's here.

ANNIE

Yeah. Or maybe she's seen that you're into Asians and she's decided to divorce your dad, seduce you, and murder me.

(beat)

I should really get life insurance.

Ethan approaches the booth, Annie follows.

ETHAN

Fei?

FEI

Ethan. Annie. Hello. How are you?

ANNIE

(over-casual)

We good. Whatcha doing here?

FEI

I have been eating the french fries. They are free because Ethan works here, yes?

ETHAN

Uh, yeah. Mind if we join you?

Fei indicates the seat across from her in the booth.

FEI

I have never been inside this restaurant. I walked by it many times, in China.

ETHAN

You guys have TGIFriday's in China?

FEI

Yes. It is very fancy there. Anything Western - Pizza Hut, Burger King, Ruby Tuesday's - they make it a very fancy restaurant over there.

Ethan glances at Annie. She shrugs.

ANNIE

That's true. My mom's cousin got married in a Sizzler's.

FEI
I come from a very poor village, so I
never thought I would get to eat in
TGIFriday's.

Annie and Ethan watch her dip the french fries in ketchup.

ETHAN
Did you have a job, before you
married my father?

FEI
I worked for a Beijing travel agency
as a tour guide. We go to different
places around Europe by bus.

Annie is suspicious.

ANNIE
And did you meet a lot of wealthy
foreign business men like Robert as a
"tour guide"?

FEI
Sometimes. It was not very good
working conditions. I sleep on back
of bus every night.

ANNIE
I guess you're not in a hurry to get
another job when you can hang out and
eat free fries during the day, huh?

FEI
I will get job. But first I must wait
for paperwork with US Immigration
Services to go through.

ANNIE
(can't hold it in
anymore)
Is your marriage with Robert real?

FEI
Yes, there is a marriage license.
Would you like to see it?

ANNIE
No, that's not what I meant -

Fei holds her phone up, open to a photo of a marriage
license. Annie looks at it politely.

ANNIE (cont'd)
That looks very authentic.

FEI
We are out of the french fries.

ETHAN
I'll get more.

Annie and Ethan slide out of the booth and walk away.

ETHAN (cont'd)
Okay, yeah, you're right, something
is definitely off about her.

ANNIE
Look, all we have to do is find a way
to break up this sham marriage.

ETHAN
Or we could do nothing. That's an
option I'm comfortable with.

ANNIE
Maybe I can seduce your dad. Just
kidding. I'll think of something
else.

ETHAN
What? No -

ANNIE
Gotta go, see you after work, love
you, bye.

Annie pecks Ethan on the lips and leaves in a flurry.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - LIVING ROOM SET - DAY

Jerry and Eve slow-dance together in the living room set.

EVE
I could dance in your arms forever,
darling.

JERRY
What if you did?

Suddenly, he PLUNGES A SYRINGE into her neck!! Eve's eyes flutter in shock and betrayal before she goes down.

Annie watches at a monitor off stage.

ANNIE
... Cut!

She turns to the WRITER next to her.

ANNIE (cont'd)
I felt good about that. You feel good
about that?

WRITER
(shrugs)
It's season twelve.

ANNIE
That's a wrap!

Annie packs up her bags and whips out her cell phone as she walks out the door.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Annie sits in a golf cart, her phone to her ear.

ANNIE
So Jerry was playing everyone and now
Eve's sexy twin is going to have to
save her from his evil clutches.

We INTERCUT or sometimes SPLIT-SCREEN in fun ways.

INT. DARCY'S OFFICE - DAY

Darcy online shops for pantsuits (she's a lawyer).

DARCY

Whaaaaaat, you have to get me a set visit when you tape the season finale. Speaking of plot twists, Fei is clearly a golddigger and we need to save Dad from himself, yeah?

ANNIE

Definitely.

INT. ROSE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rose does yoga in her bedroom with her cat.

ROSE

Poor Daddy. I wish he hadn't eloped, we could have done something.

INT. TGIF KITCHEN - DAY

Ethan organizes produce.

ETHAN

What exactly could we do, then or now? They're both grown ups. (beat) Right? I mean, I still don't know how old she is.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE / INT. ANNIE'S CAR - DAY

Annie hops off the golf cart and gets into her car.

ANNIE

I have an idea. We parent trap them.

ROSE

Like we turn the parental locks on all their TVs and they get so annoyed they... break up? I don't get it.

DARCY

What? No. Parent Trap. It's a movie. With Lindsay Lohan.

ROSE

Oh. Never heard of it.

ANNIE
I'm saying we break them up by
getting your parents back together.

A silent beat on the phone line. Then, at once - Darcy,
Rose, and Ethan all LAUGH.

ETHAN
Mom and Dad haven't talked in years.

ROSE
Unless you count when she says, "Hi,
shithead," every time she drops me
off at his house.

DARCY
You know Mom almost married some guy
named Emmett before they met? She
tells that story a lot whenever Dad
comes up.

ANNIE
So she still has strong feelings
about him after all this time? That's
not nothing. Look, here's my pitch,
unless anyone has a better plan -

We are WHISKED INTO Annie's Ocean's 11-esque plan-in-action.

INT. TGIF KITCHEN - DAY

ANNIE (V.O.)
Ethan, reach out to your mom about
dinner tonight at eight.

Ethan sends a text to his mom.

ETHAN (V.O.)
Hey mom! Wanna grab dinner?

MOM (V.O.)
Yes! When / where?

ETHAN (V.O.)
Pergoletta at 8pm.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

ANNIE (V.O.)
Rose, get your dad to show up to the
same restaurant at the same time.

Robert receives a text from ROSE.

ROSE (V.O.)
Hey daddy! I have something important
to tell you. Dinner? 8pm at
Pergoletta?

ROBERT (V.O.)
Okay.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FANTASY

FANTASY ROBERT and CAROL (50's, blonde, always immaculate),
sit at a romantic dinner table together, chatting it up.

ANNIE (V.O.)
You guys never show up, they fall
back in love, and I find a way to get
Fei to see it. She realizes she can't
bamboozle Robert any longer, the
marriage is over.

FANTASY FEI arrives with Annie, sees Robert and Carol. She
gives an over-exaggerated shrug, casts off her wedding ring,
and leaves.

INT. TGIF KITCHEN - DAY

Ethan listens, skeptical. Annie's closing argument:

ANNIE
You'd be surprised how often things
you see in movies work in real life.

Ethan sighs.

ETHAN
Sure. Why not. Let's try it.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Fei pours different mini-bottles of free hotel shampoo into
one big shampoo bottle. Fei's phone RINGS. She picks up.

FEI
Hello.

ANNIE
Hey, Fei. It's Annie. Ethan's
girlfriend, remember?

FEI
How are you?

ANNIE
I'm fine.

FEI
I'm glad to hear it.

ANNIE
Right. So I was wondering if you
wanted to hang out. Just us girls.
Get to know each other a little.

FEI
I am going grocery shopping.

ANNIE
Oh. I could help?

FEI
Okay.

ANNIE
... Great! I'll come pick you up.

Fei hangs up. Sniffs the big shampoo bottle. It's gross. She carries on anyway.

INT. ANNIE AND ETHAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Annie hangs up, triumphant. The plan is a go.

EXT. PERGOLETTA ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rose and Darcy hang shiftily outside an Italian restaurant.

Robert approaches and the girls duck behind a trellis immediately. They pop back up as he enters the restaurant.

Rose types up a text to the group thread -

Rose: eagle has landed. [eagle emoji]

Ethan: who?

Rose: dad!

Darcy: code names are not necessary.

Rose: but they're fun.

Rose: momma bear is here! [bear emoji]

Darcy looks up as CAROL strides into the restaurant.

ROSE
What do we do now?

DARCY
Spy on them, obviously.

EXT. WHOLE FOODS - NIGHT

Annie and Fei pull into a Whole Foods parking lot.

INT. WHOLE FOODS - NIGHT

Fei stands by a watermelon display. She taps watermelons with her hand, listening for something.

ANNIE
What are you doing?

FEI
If they sound hollow, worms have gotten into them.

ANNIE
This is a Whole Foods, there aren't worms in the watermelons.

FEI
That's what they want you to think.

Fei keeps tapping watermelons. OTHER CUSTOMERS notice, a YOUNG HIPSTER COUPLE starts tapping watermelons too. Annie flusters. Suddenly, we FLASHBACK TO -

INT. GROCERY STORE - 1998 - DAY

YOUNG ANNIE in the grocery store with her MOM. Annie's mom takes the disposable plastic produce bags and tears off a long length of them. She stuffs a bunch into her purse.

ANNIE'S MOM
(in subtitled
Cantonese)
*These will be good for the trash cans
in the bathroom. Open your backpack.*

Young Annie realizes OTHER CUSTOMERS are watching them. They give Annie odd looks, Annie's mom smiles and waves them off.

ANNIE'S MOM (cont'd)
Hello! How are you? We are fine.

Annie is mortified.

We FLASHBACK TO PRESENT DAY -

Annie smiles tightly at the other customers.

ANNIE
She's not from here. And we're not related. In case you were wondering that.

As Fei continues her hunt for a wormless watermelon, Annie whips out her phone and texts the group thread:

Annie: how's operation parent trap going over there?

INT. PERGOLETTA ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Robert sits at a table and patiently checks his watch. Carol is led to a table beside his.

She drinks her water, then looks up and sees Robert. Robert looks up just at the same time.

ROBERT
Carol. What a coincidence.

CAROL
Robert.

ROBERT
I'm waiting on Rose for dinner. Would you like to join us?

CAROL
No, thank you.

Carol looks around, annoyed and impatient.

Rose: they've been seated next to each other.

Darcy and Rose watch their parents from behind their menus, conspicuous spies at a table just within earshot, on the other side of a potted plant.

ROBERT
So you're really just going to sit
there, one table away, and pretend
I'm not here.

Carol doesn't answer, holds up her menu pointedly. Darcy and
Rose exchange glances. This isn't great.

ROBERT (cont'd)
You don't care that our youngest
daughter might be pregnant.

CAROL
Don't be ridiculous. She has an IUD.

ROBERT
She said in her message she had
something important to tell me.

CAROL
That she didn't tell me first?

Carol snorts.

ROBERT
It's been five years, Carol. I always
thought once we got over the storm
and drang of the divorce, we'd go
back to being... friendly co-parents.

CAROL
How very big of you.

Robert bites back a retort. Instead, a peace offering -

ROBERT
You know, Rose reminds me of you,
when we first met. Always determined
to "find yourself". Usually somewhere
in Greece or the Amalfi Coast.

CAROL
There you go. She probably just wants
money to travel abroad again.

ROBERT
God, you're probably right.

Carol sniffs.

CAROL
You keep indulging her and she's been
five credits short of graduating for
three semesters now. It's getting
embarrassing.

Rose gasps, offended. Robert sighs.

ROBERT
You're right, of course.

CAROL
Of course I'm right.

ROBERT
That's what I just said.

CAROL
Whatever.

INT. WHOLE FOODS - NIGHT

Annie and Fei browse the frozen foods section.

FEI
Whole Foods... more like whole
paycheck!

Fei chuckles at her own joke.

ANNIE
So will you start looking for work,
once the immigration paperwork comes
through?

FEI
Robert says he would like to spoil me
for a while. And that I should only
do work that fulfills me.

ANNIE
That sounds nice.

FEI
Do you find your work fulfilling?

ANNIE
I love my work.

FEI
And Ethan? He is happy at TGIFridays?

ANNIE
Ethan is still figuring things out.
It takes men longer.

FEI
He is thirty. You know there is an
ancient Chinese saying -

Fei says something in Mandarin that kind of rhymes.

FEI (cont'd)
It means a man should know what he's
doing with his life by the time he is
thirty.

ANNIE
That sounds fake, but I don't know
enough Chinese to call you on it.

INT. PERGOLETTA ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ethan, dressed incognito in sunglasses, a baseball cap, and
a scarf, slips in through the door and sits down at Rose and
Darcy's table.

DARCY
What are you doing? You look
ridiculous.

ETHAN
I didn't want Mom or Dad to see me.

He holds up a menu in front of his face.

ETHAN (cont'd)
What are they talking about?

ROSE
Us.

She jerks her head in the direction of Carol and Robert, who
have now migrated to share the same table.

CAROL
Ethan has such a generous spirit and
he's obviously talented.

Ethan preens at the praise. Darcy and Rose roll their eyes.

CAROL (cont'd)
But he's been with that Annie for so long, and she's just... not what I had in mind for him.

ROBERT
I know what you mean. I love Annie, but she doesn't push him. Maybe she's too ambitious for him.

CAROL
I always thought he'd do more than manage a TGIFriday's. He graduated from business school, for chrissake.

This lands at the table of eavesdroppers. Darcy and Rose avoid eye contact awkwardly.

ROBERT
At least Darcy turned out fine.

CAROL
We should have stopped after one.

ROBERT
Maybe we'd still be happily married.

CAROL
And Darcy would support us in our old age.

ROBERT
We're not in old age yet. You don't look a day over... what you should.

Carol bristles, charmed against her will.

CAROL
Yes, well. Every year, I hope you'll get ugly and go bald, and every year you continue to disappoint me.

Was that a compliment? Robert winks roguishly.

At the kids' table, they exchange looks incredulously.

ROSE
Are they... flirting?

Ethan: the parent trap is actually working

Rose: time to initiate phase three!

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

ANNIE
What time is it?

Fei glances at her smartwatch.

FEI
This is a very expensive watch from Robert. It does not tell time easily.

Fei hits some buttons on her watch. It makes ALERT SOUNDS.

FEI'S SMARTWATCH
The time is now eight-twenty-seven.

FEI
It is eight twenty-seven.

ANNIE
I totally forgot to eat dinner. Do you mind if we stop somewhere?

FEI
If you are paying. Otherwise I have bread.

INT. ANNIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Annie drives. Fei holds her groceries.

FEI
What part of China is your family from?

ANNIE
Guangzhou.

FEI
So you speak Cantonese?

ANNIE
My parents do. I kind of lost the language when we moved to America.

Fei studies her critically.

FEI
You must be a great disappointment to them.

ANNIE
(defensive)
I'm living the American dream my
parents had when they first moved
here. They're proud of me.

FEI
I think there must be sadness too. I
would be sad if my daughter abandoned
her culture.

This lands on Annie - is Fei right? Oblivious, Fei plugs her
phone into Annie's car. On the speakers, her language audio
tapes start playing. Fei recites along to the English parts.

CAR SPEAKERS	FEI
<i>Ni hao ma. Hello. How are</i>	Hello. How are you? (beat)
<i>you? Wo hen hao. Ni ne? I'm</i>	I'm fine. And you?
<i>fine. And you?</i>	

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Carol and Robert share a bread plate and a laugh.

ROBERT
I forgot how nice it was to laugh
with you. Where do you think we went
wrong?

Carol sips her wine.

CAROL
You've always enjoyed navel-gazing
and I for one have never seen what's
so fascinating about belly-buttons.

ROBERT
I'm not navel-gazing, I'm self-
reflecting. It's how you learn from
the past, *Carol*.

CAROL
If you say so, *Robert*.

The air is thick with ghosts of past arguments. Maybe this
isn't going so smoothly after all. Annie and Fei arrive.

ANNIE
This is better than TGIFridays, I
swear.

Just then - Annie and Fei spot Robert and Carol.

FEI

That is Carol. Robert's first wife.

ANNIE

What a complete random coincidence.

Fei frowns. Robert looks up.

ROBERT

Fei? Petal, what are you doing here?

Carol registers "petal", whips her head around at Annie and Fei. She spies the giant sparkling ring on Fei's hand. Whips back around, pins Robert with a piercing stare.

CAROL

Robert, you *idiot*, what did you do?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Back to our tableau: Annie, Fei, Robert, and Carol.

ROBERT
Fei. This is Carol. Carol, this is my wife.

FEI
(rushing through it)
Hello. How are you? I'm fine, and you?

She realizes she messed it up. Panics. Doubles down.

FEI (cont'd)
I'm glad to hear it.

CAROL
You married one of Annie's friends?
That's sick, Robert.

ANNIE
She's not one of my friends.

ROBERT
This has nothing to do with Annie.
Fei and I met abroad. We fell in love
and eloped.

Carol stares at Robert, disgust growing.

CAROL
Is this why you have salon-fresh
hair? For chrissake, Robert, she
looks sixteen. You pervert.

ROBERT
She's *thirty*, and you know what -

Robert and Carol turn on each other, taking out decades of marital baggage on each other.

FEI
Excuse me. I will go wait in the car.

She leaves. Annie catches sight of Ethan. Ethan gives her a "What's going on?" look. Annie shrugs back, and chases after Fei out the door.

Ethan, Rose, and Darcy exchange looks and stand up - their parents are still mid-argument.

CAROL
- *I should have married Emmett.*

ROBERT
I. Wish. You. Had.

Carol SLAPS Robert. Ethan clears his throat. They turn.

ETHAN
Mom. Dad. Hi. Can we join you for dinner?

INT. ANNIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Annie and Fei drive in silence. Annie glances at Fei.

ANNIE
You shouldn't take anything Carol says too personally. I've been dating her son for going on ten years and she still hasn't accepted my friend request on Facebook.

Fei doesn't speak.

ANNIE (cont'd)
So thirty, huh? You have really great skin.

Fei looks out the window, sees a CHINESE RESTAURANT.

FEI
I want to eat here.

ANNIE
Okie dokie, artichoke. Sorry, I get nervous when people are quiet.

Annie pulls over.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A hole-in-the-wall strip mall Chinese restaurant. Annie and Fei exit the car. Annie texts Ethan.

Annie: getting Chinese food up the street!

Annie glances at Fei, who still doesn't talk.

Annie: Fei went all quiet and might murder me.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Annie and Fei at a table. Fei pours tea.

ANNIE
So. How ya doing?

Fei sips her tea silently. Shrugs. A CHINESE WAITER arrives.

Fei orders her food in RAPID MANDARIN. She glances at Annie, then adds something in Mandarin, waves the waiter off.

FEI
I told him to bring you some things
white people like.

Annie smiles uncomfortably at this. Fei drops her head.

FEI (cont'd)
(unsubtitled Mandarin)
What am I going to do? I'm so stupid.

ANNIE
Fei? What's um... what's going on?

FEI
Robert. He told me - "No more
feelings for ex-wife." But tonight,
he get so angry. That is not "no
feelings". But I cannot go back to
China to a total loss of face. I will
not be "Poor Fei, 30-year-old
spinster with dried husk of womb who
cannot make even her husband love
her." And here I have no one.

ANNIE
Whoa.

FEI
(accusing)
You said I am not your friend.

ANNIE
Oh. No, I just didn't want *Carol* to
think we were friends.

That doesn't sound great out loud.

ANNIE (cont'd)
It's just - she's always wanted Ethan
to meet an All-American girl-next-
door type. Blonde hair, blue eyes.
And you and I are not that.

Fei shrugs.

FEI
You seem very "All-American" to me.

ANNIE
That's because you're very China-
Chinese. No offense.

FEI
When you say "American", you mean
"white". What is so bad about being
China-Chinese?

Annie frowns. Retreads her words.

ANNIE
Nothing, it's just that... um...

Then: a catastrophic ripple of self-awareness for Annie.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Oh. Oh *no*. I'm being so racist. I
hate myself.

FEI
That is obvious.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Robert and Carol share a table with their kids.

ROBERT
Well, this has been an unexpected
evening of revelations.

Carol snorts. Rose, Ethan, and Darcy look disgruntled.

ROSE
I'm just three credits away from
graduating this semester, for the
record.

CAROL
Of course, Rosie dear. I'm sure this
time it'll take.

ETHAN
Why didn't you say something sooner,
if you were disappointed I was still
working at a TGIFriday's?

Robert and Carol exchange looks.

CAROL
We're not disappointed.

ROBERT
We're very proud, son.

ETHAN
Maybe if you guys weren't so
supportive of my mediocrity, I would
have turned out more like Annie -
who, for the record, is not too
ambitious for me, which you would
know if you'd ever seen our couples'
Halloween costumes.

ROSE
It's true, they commit.

ROBERT
Ethan, you're a grown adult, stop
blaming your parents for your lot in
life. If you're unhappy, be a man and
change things.

ETHAN
I will. I have long-term plans.

CAROL
(indulgent)
Of course you do.

Ethan frowns, thinking. He's on the cusp of a Realization
when Darcy suddenly bursts out -

DARCY
I have HPV and it might be cancerous!

Everyone turns to her.

DARCY (cont'd)
You guys never worry about me and
maybe you should. I could *die*.

CAROL
Well, don't.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Annie and Fei sit before a spread of Sichuan cuisine.

FEI

In China, we do not stay friends when we break up. Robert tells me he is the same here with his ex-wife. He say, "She will not be part of our lives together." "Okay", I say. But tonight - she is there. He is telling me lies. I cannot trust him.

ANNIE

Sure, but... they have three kids together. She's going to be around sometimes.

Annie nibbles a beef scallion roll. Her eyes widen.

ANNIE (cont'd)

I've never liked Chinese food this much before.

FEI

Because you do not know what to order. (beat, resolved) I will wait until I have my green card and I can work, then I will leave him.

Annie blinks. Fei is kind of scary.

ANNIE

That's, uh... did you just decide that right now?

FEI

Maybe I will not leave him right away. Maybe I will wait and see.

Annie looks at the food. Attempts to de-escalate.

ANNIE

You're so funny! We should do this more often. Chinese food dates. I could learn how to stop being a self-hating Asian through the power of food. And you could... vent to me about Robert.

FEI

I am very busy.

ANNIE
I thought you didn't have a job yet.

FEI
I do not have much time for people
who do not like me.

ANNIE
I don't dislike you. I just think you
might be an opportunist. Forget I
said that. We could be friends.

FEI
What do I get out of it?

Annie casts around for ideas. She looks up at a TV in the
corner - it's playing a wedding episode of "Friends".

ANNIE
I could help you plan a wedding.

FEI
I am already married.

ANNIE
You eloped. If you want Ethan's
family to really accept you and
cement your place over his ex-wife
Carol - a wedding would help.

Fei considers this. The door suddenly BURSTS OPEN - Ethan
enters, a gleam of excitement in his eyes.

ETHAN
Annie! I'm ready to start the next
chapter of my life, and I want you to
be a part of it.

He takes her hand, pulls her up - romantic music swells.

ETHAN (cont'd)
Let's buy a food truck.

ANNIE
Oh.

FEI
I thought he was going to propose.

Ethan and Annie turn to look at her, then each other. Where
does this leave us now? Off their faces...

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - NIGHT - 2009

Annie and Ethan make out in his dorm bed.

ANNIE
Tell me what you'd eat at
Thanksgiving.

This is their weird foreplay.

ETHAN
Turkey...

ANNIE
Yeah...

ETHAN
Stuffing...

ANNIE
Mmm, I love it...

ETHAN
Cheese grits and corn...

ANNIE
Grits...

ETHAN
Cracked pepper dinner rolls...

ANNIE
I bet you buttered those rolls,
didn't you?

ETHAN
Uh-huh...

Above them, Ethan's ROOMMATE, STEVE, 18, glasses, is wide-
awake and deeply disturbed in the bunk bed.

ANNIE
(orgasmically)
Tell me about your sweet potato
casserole!

ETHAN
We baked it in pyrex!

END OF SHOW