

# WENDI

Written by

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Based on a true story.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE HOLDING ROOM - DAY

It's a lavish room. The decor, fit for a queen. A WOMAN (Asian, 44), graceful, prominent. She sits at a vanity, reciting a speech.

WOMAN  
Thank you all for being here today.

Sounds of news reporters and cameras fighting for a prime position outside.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
It is with great sadness that  
Rupert and I stand here today to  
announce our joint decision--

She stops. Clears her throat.

She stands up a little flustered. Her navy Chanel pant suit cascades past her ankles.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
(shouts)  
RUBY!

From outside the door--

RUBY  
(muffled)  
Yes Mrs Murdoch?

WOMAN  
WATER.

There's a panic to her voice.

RUBY (early 20s), the woman's assistant, stumbles in with a jug. Swiftly pours a glass. As quickly as she entered, Ruby disappears back outside.

The Woman drinks. The water calms her.

She looks back into the mirror. Practices smiling. She's regaining composure.

But then she stops. Just a second. And we see a glint of sadness behind her eyes.

PRE-LAP: Heavy rain against pavement.

**EXT. BUSY STREETS OF XUZHOU - DAY****1973, XUZHOU, CHINA**

\*All dialogue in italics are in mandarin.

Communist China. The rain splatters hard against the mud. Street vendors throw tarps over their exposed fruits and vegetables.

Three sisters bolt through the crowd, almost knocking an OLDER GENTLEMAN off his bike.

The oldest - LI HUA (12) covers her hair with a piece of cardboard.

WEN GE (5), the precocious one, rubs her big eyes, straining to see past the rain. She runs, pulling on her older sister MEI (7) to keep up.

**INT. THE DENG HOUSEHOLD - DAY**

The three sisters RUSH into the house; completely drenched.

The house is more of a shack. The shoes on the rack reveal 4 pairs of kids shoes and 3 pairs of adult shoes.

Li Hua runs to the--

**INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wen Ge watches her sister wring out her long, wet hair in front of the mirror. She carefully brushes it so its nice and untangled.

Li Hua catches her snooping. Slams the door in her face.

**INT. OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wen Ge bangs on the door.

WEN GE  
*I need to pee!!*

BANG BANG BANG.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
*Li Hua!! I need to pee!!*

Mei, the quiet, responsible one, grabs Wen Ge's hand.

MEI  
*Come on. Let's pee outside.*

**INT/EXT. BACK DOOR - CONTINUOUS**

Mei holds a drenched piece of cardboard over Wen Ge. She hikes down her cotton pants and squats above the dirt. Her stream of pee mixes in with the rain water.

The two of them giggle as a NEIGHBOR (70s), wrinkly grandmother type, shouts from nearby--

NEIGHBOR  
*I'M TELLING YOUR MOTHER ABOUT  
 THIS!!*  
 (under her breath)  
*Ai yah...filthy children...*

They snicker under their breaths.

**INT. DENG HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN - NIGHT**

A tiny table in the centre of the room. It's dim and dingy. But it doesn't take away from the spirited atmosphere.

The 4 kids squeeze on one side and the 3 adults sit on the other. Wen Ge's AUNTY (47) with deep frown lines, shush the children.

Wen Ge pretends to eat from her empty bowl as her MOTHER (XUE QIN, 35) serves her brother, FU (4) first. Fu always gets the biggest portion because he's a boy. This doesn't sit well with the girls.

Li Hua is still brushing her hair.

Wen Ge hands her bowl to her dad, DEHUI (38) who gives her an extra piece of meat. He winks at her. They share a special bond.

LI HUA  
*Why does Wen Ge get the extra  
 piece?*

Wen Ge tries to grab the hairbrush from her. Dehui holds both girls down.

DEHUI  
*Stop it. Wen Ge has her big test  
 coming up on Monday. She needs the  
 extra nutrients.*

Wen Ge pokes Li Hua on her side.

Li Hua pokes her right back.

MEI  
*What's the prize tonight, baba?*

Dehui smiles.

**EXT. BACK ALLEY (BEHIND DENG HOUSEHOLD) - LATER**

Wen Ge opens the back door and pours dirty dish water outside. It SPLASHES on the pavement.

**INT. DENG HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

The four kids are frantically completing their chores. Mei and Wen Ge are by the sink, washing and drying the plates.

Li Hua and Fu mop the floor and wipe down the table with vigor.

Wen Ge's competitive nature is taking over.

WEN GE  
(at Mei)  
*Wash faster!!*

Her father watches from the side with amusement.

Wen Ge wipes the final plate and jumps up in the air.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
*FINISHED! WE'RE FINISHED!*

Fu groans.

LI HUA  
*It's not fair! They always win!  
Cleaning plates is so much faster!*

WEN GE  
*We win when we're mopping too!  
We're just faster and more superior  
than you!*

Wen Ge wiggles her tongue at her eldest sister.

Dehui takes out a page taken from an American appliances catalogue. And hands it to Wen Ge. She contains a squeal. It's like she's received the Nobel prize.

Her and Mei run into their bedroom.

**INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT**

We catch a glimpse of the 'master' bedroom. A twin bed that sleeps both parents and their son.

**INT. WEN GE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Moonlight illuminates two twin beds, squeezed inside a tiny room. Cramped.

There's an old, musty smell exuding from the sheets that have been passed down for generations.

Li Hua tosses and turns next to their grumpy aunt. We hear Wen Ge and Mei in the other bed, giggling under the sheets.

AUNTY

*Go to sleep. Your giggling is giving me a headache.*

MEI

(muffled)

*Sorry Aunty.*

They giggle some more.

AUNTY

*Shhhhh!!*

Their aunty TURNS harshly on the bed.

Mei and Wen Ge go silent. Beat. They peer over their bedsheets. Their aunty snores loudly.

From under the covers, Mei reveals a tin box with a dancing hula girl on the lid.

It's a treasure box filled with Western paraphernalia. There are catalogues of Ford cars, pictures of Caucasian ladies posing next to houses.

They hold up their latest acquisition up towards the moonlight. Wen Ge touches the fridge catalogue. A blonde, slim woman of about 21, stands next to her smiling husband, dressed in a suit. Both wear cheesy grins.

WEN GE

*I want to be tall and slim like her.*

MEI

*You won't be if you keep eating  
like a pig!*

WEN GE

*Baba says I'm still growing!*

MEI

*We must learn to be disciplined to  
be beautiful.*

Wen Ge flips the page over to a family, complete with two kids and their parents, stocking up a pale blue fridge.

Wen Ge points to the fridge.

WEN GE

*What is that?*

MEI

*It's a fridge.*

WEN GE

*What does it do?*

MEI

*It keeps food cold.*

WEN GE

*I want one.*

MEI

*You'll have to find an American  
husband to buy you one.*

WEN GE

*Ewwww grosssss!! Husbands are  
gross!!*

MEI

*You need a husband to buy you a  
fridge.*

WEN GE

*Why can't I buy a fridge?*

MEI

*Nonsense.*

Mei moves the picture close to her lips and kisses the handsome blonde husband.

WEN GE

*Ewwww!!*

MEI  
*You try it.*

Wen Ge pushes the picture away with disgust.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*Come on!*

WEN GE  
*Gross!!!*

Their aunty stirs in her sleep. The girls freeze.

The girls lay in the moonlight, dreaming of what their futures will bring.

Off Wen Ge's face--

**INT. CHINESE CLASSROOM - DAY**

**5 YEARS LATER (1978)**

A blackboard with an improper fraction written in chalk. MR WU (32) handsome, young and spunky looks around at a room full of clueless kids.

A single hand is raised. It's Wen Ge, now **9 years old** with short hair. She wears an old hand-me-down dress that hangs off her small frame.

All the kids appear older than her.

Mei (now 12), sits behind her sister. With a blank expression.

MR WU  
 (ignoring Wen Ge's waving hand)  
*Mei?*

MEI  
*Yes?*

MR WU  
*What's the answer to this problem?*

Wen Ge's hand is detaching from her body.

WEN GE  
*I know!*

Mr Wu ignores her.

Mei is struggling. She feels everyone's eyes on her.

MEI  
*Uhhh...*

She's sweating.

WEN GE  
(whispers)  
49. *It's 49 Mei.*

Before Mei can answer--

MRS WU  
*That's correct Wen Ge.*

Wen Ge beams.

MR WU  
*Now, why is it that Wen Ge is 3 years younger than all of you here. But she is the ONLY one who did her homework? Hm?*

Mei's cheeks are burning now.

#### EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

A concrete slab with no grass or play equipment. But the children make it work.

Wen Ge and Mei sit on the outskirts, munching on sweet potato. Both wear clothes that are filled with holes. Is it possible they got even poorer?

In the distance, Li Hua (15), popular, laugh loudly with her friends. Wen Ge watches HONG (16), handsome with kind eyes, play with Li Hua's long hair. Wen Ge waves. Li Hua ignores them.

Wen Ge bites into the sweet potato and makes a face.

MEI  
*Pretend it's a cheeseburger.*

Wen Ge bites again.

WEN GE  
(imitates an American accent)  
Mmmmm. Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions - on a sesame seed bun.

Mei chuckles.

She bites down on her sweet potato. Spits it out.

MEI  
*Ugh, it's rotten!*

Wen Ge smells it.

WEN GE  
*Here.*

Wen Ge breaks her sweet potato in half and shares it.

SPLAT. A BOY (12) runs past. Throws a fistful of mud right at Wen Ge's face.

BOY  
*Smarty pants.*

Wen Ge grabs Mei's rotten sweet potato. HURLS it at him.

WEN GE  
*OY! Get back here!*

Wen Ge BOLTS off, chasing him down.

CUT TO:

**INT. VICE PRINCIPAL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wen Ge is smeared in mud from head to toe. A nasty bruise forms over her left eye. Mei sits quietly to the side having been in this situation before.

VICE PRINCIPAL ZHANG (35), long lashes with an hour glass figure puts a giant SAFETY PIN on Wen Ge's dress. It barely stays up.

ZHANG  
*You must be more careful little miss genius.*

She gives Wen Ge an ice pack.

ZHANG (CONT'D)  
*You are very special.*

Mei looks around the room. Sees a PICTURE of Wen Ge receiving a trophy from a politician. She's intimidated.

ZHANG (CONT'D)  
 (to Wen Ge)  
*It's important for young ladies to  
 be maintain a certain elegance.  
 Boys only like girls who are smart  
 and graceful. Do you understand?*

Wen Ge smells herself.

**INT. DENG HOUSEHOLD - WEN GE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

It's late. Even the moonlight is sleepy.

Li Hua puts on her only pair of shoes and sneaks out the back door.

Wen Ge peers out her window. Below, Li Hua runs into Hong's arms. Her long, silky hair glistens in the dim moonlight.

Careful not to wake her snoring aunt, Wen Ge tip toes across the creaking floorboards. She reaches underneath Li Hua's bed and pulls out a single red lipstick.

She smears the rouge all over her lips, picks a provocative dress from Li Hua's wardrobe. Puts it on.

From her pockets, she takes out a picture of a Caucasian girl posing with her husband. Wen Ge imitates her stance.

She sticks out her chest, pouting and throwing kisses at the mirror.

**INT. SCHOOL HALL - DAY**

A small stage with the Vice Principal Zhang (now 41) at the centre. Beneath sits the entire school alongside a sea of parents.

A big banner hangs over the wall - **END OF YEAR AWARDS - 1983**

Mei (now 17), with long hair sits quietly next to her parents and two siblings. She watches Wen Ge (now 15) on stage.

Wen Ge's still draped in a hand-me-down dress but with a more feminine bob cut. She sits next to BO (18), chiselled jawline. She looks at him, wishing he'd look back.

PRINCIPAL  
*The award for Excellence in English  
 goes to Wen Ge.*

Thunderous applause.

Dehui and Xueqin beam with pride.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
*Number 1 in Mathematics also goes  
 to Wen Ge.*

Mei forces a smile as she claps.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
*First in Chemistry...Wen Ge!*

As Mei watches her sister collect award after award, her claps slow down. And her smile begins to waver.

**INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT**

An end of year gathering. Teenagers from 14-18yo drink soda pretending to be cool.

Wen Ge is on the couch, feeling awkward. Bo fidgets on that same couch. They have a hard time hearing each other over the music.

BO  
*I said your parents are smart for  
 teaching you English. Are they  
 academics?*

WEN GE  
*No. What about your parents?*

BO  
*They're both teachers.*

Awkward pause.

WEN GE  
*I like your jacket.*

Bo gestures that he can't hear her.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
*I said, I like your jacket.*

BO  
*Oh, thanks.*

He looks at her outfit but refrains from commenting. Ouch.

Wen Ge touches his sleeve.

BO (CONT'D)  
*You want a soda?*

Wen Ge nods. He's so devastatingly handsome.

Time passes.

People are beginning to thin out.

Still no sign of Bo.

Wen Ge grows impatient. She gets off the couch, turns the corner--

**INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

Wen Ge stops in her tracks. Her mouth turns dry.

Bo and Mei are in an embrace, passionately making out.

She blinks rapidly, hoping it's a dream. But they continue kissing, completely oblivious.

Wen Ge storms towards them. Rips them apart. SLAPS Bo hard across the cheek.

**INT. SIDE STREETS - NIGHT**

Wen Ge storms down the footpath. RIP to anyone who gets in her way.

Mei catches up, out of breath.

MEI

*Hey! Where are you going?*

Wen Ge storms harder.

MEI (CONT'D)

*Slow down!*

WEN GE

*You knew I liked him.*

MEI

*What? No, I didn't!*

WEN GE

*I was talking to him all night!*

MEI

*I wasn't with you all night! He just came up to me and said he liked my long hair.*

WEN GE

*Liar!*

MEI

*I swear.*

WEN GE

*He was MINE. You know I've liked him since the beginning of last year!*

MEI

*I didn't know it was the same guy.*

WEN GE

*LIAR.*

Wen Ge brushes her off.

**INT. WEN GE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mei is fast asleep. The moonlight caresses her innocent face.

A shadow creeps up towards her. It's Wen Ge. She holds a pair of scissors.

Wen Ge carefully collects Mei's hair into a bundle. With one SNIP, she cuts her sister's beautiful, long hair off.

CUT TO:

**INT. UNIVERSITY DORM ROOM - AFTERNOON**

**1987, GUANGZHOU COLLEGE**

Intensity. Passion. Lust. Wen Ge (now 19yo) with long, silky hair mounts ZHANG WEI (mid 20s), boy band hair and a 6 pack. Wen Ge's red lipstick is smudged, her hair, wild. She dominates him the way a man tames a horse.

Wen Ge wrestles Zhang Wei's muscular arms, trying to keep them pinned to the bed. They pant in unison.

Zhang Wei and Wen Ge seem to climax at the same time before collapsing on the bed.

Zhang Wei rolls over to cuddle Wen Ge but she's not interested.

A wad of 20 dollar bills sits on the bedside table.

WEN GE

*For moi?*

ZHANG WEI

*For last week's and this week's  
paper.*

Wen Ge shoves the money in her back pack. She puts on jeans.

WEN GE

*When's your next paper due?*

ZHANG WEI

*Next Wednesday.*

WEN GE

*I'll see ya Tuesday then.*

Wen Ge pats down her long, silky hair in the mirror and vanishes out the door.

**EXT. UNIVERSITY BUILDING - AFTERNOON**

Students hustle and bustle around campus, wrapped in coats and fingerless gloves.

**INT. LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS**

A medium sized room with 10 rows of wooden seats.

It's empty except for two people at the front.

Wen Ge holds out her paper, clearly upset at her PROFESSOR (late 60s). It's comical seeing a teenager tell her professor off for negligence.

WEN GE

*I know I deserve 100%. I can speak  
English better than you can.*

PROFESSOR LEE, a short man with hunched shoulders tries to reason with his student.

PROFESSOR LEE

*Wen Ge, I never give out 100%  
scores. They don't exist in my  
class.*

WEN GE

*I need 100% to get that scholarship  
to Yale.*

Professor Lee sighs.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
*The higher the mark, the better  
chance I have at getting that  
scholarship.*

Wen Ge shoves the paper up to the professor's nose.

A knock at the door. JAKE CHERRY (50) and his wife JOYCE CHERRY (42), stand awkwardly by the entrance. Joyce is plump and dressed like a man. Jake looks worn down.

JAKE  
Is this a bad time?

Before Professor Lee can even speak, Wen Ge marches up to the couple.

WEN GE  
(in English)  
You are both American. Will you  
read this and tell me if I deserve  
100%?

Joyce takes the paper and skims it.

JOYCE  
It seems like a 100% paper to me.

PROFESSOR LEE  
(in English)  
Yes but doesn't the English  
language also hinge on taste?

JOYCE  
Well, depends what you're writing.  
Literature relies on taste. But if  
it's an essay about...

Joyce reads the title.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
The unrestricted free market in the  
United States.

Jake gives off an awkward laugh.

JAKE  
We shouldn't question the professor  
here, honey. This is *his* student.

Ignoring Jake--

JOYCE  
(at Wen Ge)  
What's your name?

WEN GE  
Wen Ge.

JOYCE  
Wen Ge here is obviously a very  
talented student. I think she  
deserves the marks.

Wen Ge snatches up her paper and grins.

WEN GE  
Thank you!

Wen Ge holds out her hand.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
Who are you?

JOYCE  
I'm Joyce Cherry and this is my  
husband Jake Cherry.

WEN GE  
Why are you here?

PROFESSOR LEE  
(in mandarin)  
*Watch your manners Wen Ge.*

Wen Ge ignores him.

JAKE  
Your professor here is our  
translator while we're on business.

WEN GE  
What business?

JAKE  
Refrigerators.

WEN GE  
Refrigerators?

JAKE  
Refrigerators.

WEN GE  
What's that?

PROFESSOR LEE  
(in mandarin)  
A *fridge*.

The professor tries to shoo Wen Ge out of the classroom but she won't budge.

WEN GE  
FRIDGES? I love fridges!

PROFESSOR LEE  
*That's enough Wen Ge.*

Professor Lee points to the door.

**EXT. CAMPUS GROUNDS - NIGHT**

Wen Ge chases down Jake and Joyce as they walk towards their car.

WEN GE  
Hey! Hey! Joyce! Jake!

Joyce turns around. She's amused. Jake, a little hesitant.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
I have a proposal. How about you teach me English and in return, I will be your translator free of charge!

JAKE  
We already have a translator--

JOYCE  
Oh, shut it Jake. Let her speak.

WEN GE  
I am better at English than he is and I'm a business major.

Joyce listens while Jake tries to leave.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
I love English. And I love America.  
What more do you need?

**EXT. SIDE STREET VENDORS - DUSK**

Mei (now 21), short hair and demure as ever sits alongside Wen Ge. A lifetime of being second best has taken a toll on Mei's confidence.

The ground is filthy. In front of them is a pile of chalk drawings of American brands and Caucasian people. It's laid out to sell.

A PASSERBY steps on one and leaves a huge footprint.

WEN GE  
(screams)  
*Eh! You devil! Come back and pay  
for this!*

The passerby ignores them.

Wen Ge picks up the ruined drawing. It's of a young Caucasian girl looking up at a refrigerator.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
*Is this new?*

MEI  
*Yeah. You like it?*

WEN GE  
*I'll buy it from you one day for a  
thousand dollars.*

A bicycle rides by and splashes dirty water on the sidewalk. It barely misses the drawings.

MEI  
*It's getting dark.*

Mei begins to pack up her things.

WEN GE  
*Guess what?*

MEI  
*What?*

Wen Ge has a grin on her face.

#### **INT. TINY APARTMENTS - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS**

Cave like interiors. Moisture sticks to the walls. Everything looks old and decrepid. A string of rusty bicycles line the ground floor.

#### **INT. WEN GE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

A cramped studio with one twin bed squished against the back. The walls are peeling.

Near a dusty window, a pile of books are stacked sky high.

On closer look, the books are all American catalogues. Catalogues for Tiffany and Co, Chanel Handbags, Chevy Cars, a Michael Jackson "Bad" CD.

Mei breaks a mantou in half. Hands it to Wen Ge. It's plain and a little chewy.

WEN GE

*Lee was being a real bastard. He wouldn't give me 100%.*

MEI

*You can't expect 100% every time.*

WEN GE

*Why not?*

MEI

*It's just--nevermind.*

Wen Ge retrieves the tin box from their childhood.

WEN GE

*They're all just threatened by my intelligence. They know I could be teaching them if I really wanted to.*

From Wen Ge's pocket, she takes out a fridge catalogue with a white couple posing on the front page.

WEN GE (CONT'D)

*Ok, so their names are Joyce and Jake. And they're real Americans! They work for this company here--*

She points to the brand: **CHAMBERS**

Wen Ge grabs her sister's small, dainty hands.

WEN GE (CONT'D)

*They're going to be our teachers.*

*Mei's lifeless eyes spark up.*

WEN GE (CONT'D)

*We are going to go to America one day and all of this  
(she looks around her)  
...will seem like a dream.*

**EXT. JAKE+JOYCE CHERRY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

A thick fog hovers just below a small apartment block. This is a wealthier part of town. There are no bicycles here, only cars and motorcycles.

Wen Ge and Mei, dressed in thick, puffy jackets marvel at the cleanliness.

**INT. CHERRY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Joyce, dressed in a shabby dress opens the door to two, red cheeked girls.

Wen Ge takes off her puffy jacket and drops it on the ground. Mei picks it up and hangs both her and Wen Ge's jackets on the coat rack.

Thick, velvet drapes block all the windows. A shiny cabinet full of Swarovski crystals in various shapes sits next to the TV.

Wen Ge walks around the room, touching everything she can. Mei stands by the door, timid.

Wen Ge follows Joyce into the--

**INT. CHERRY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Two giant, state of the art refrigerators sit side by side, taking up a quarter of the space.

Wen Ge can hardly contain her excitement. She runs towards the first fridge, opens it up and marvels at the interiors.

**INT. CHERRY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Joyce hands over a cup of tea for each girl. Mei blows on the tea while impatient Wen Ge burns her tongue.

JOYCE

Make yourselves at home, girls.

(passive aggressive)

Jake hasn't been helping me around the house lately so I apologize for the mess.

Jake doesn't pay attention. Instead, he's fascinated by Mei. She's the exact opposite to Joyce's abrasive personality.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
Jake will be teaching you girls.  
But when he's busy, I'll take over.

Jake watches Mei sip her tea quietly.

**INT. JAKE CHERRY'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS**

Mei sits legs crossed in a chair. Wen Ge walks around the room, touching everything again.

Jake smiles at Mei.

JAKE  
Your sister there has quite the  
mouth.

MEI  
(smiles)  
Yes, I'm aware.

JAKE  
Do you like America as much as she  
does?

MEI  
I do.

JAKE  
What do you like most about  
America?

MEI  
I like the culture. I like the  
people. I like that it's the land  
of opportunity.

Mei looks up at Jake. They share a smile oblivious to Wen Ge.

**EXT. CHINESE STREETS - AFTERNOON**

The fog has dissipated. But now the air is smoky from all the street vendors.

Mei looks the other way, mind preoccupied.

WEN GE  
*Why do you have that look?*

MEI  
*What look?*

WEN GE  
*This one right now.*

MEI  
*It's nothing.*

Mei goes back to staring into space.

WEN GE  
*You like him don't you?*

MEI  
*What? No! He's married!*

WEN GE  
*I know.*

MEI  
*Stop it! You shouldn't speak of such evils.*

WEN GE  
*What's wrong with that? Love is love.*

MEI  
*I don't like him.*

Mei hides her flushed cheeks.

**INT. JAKE CHERRY'S STUDY - NIGHT**

A little black board, filled up with homophones - *Flower, Flour. Bear, Bare.*

Mei stares lovingly at Jake Cherry's back. He writes two more words - *Male, Mail.*

JAKE  
 Anymore?

MEI  
 What about Two and Too?

JAKE  
 Very good Mei!

MEI  
 And to! With one "o".

Wen Ge racks her brains for an example. Before she opens her mouth--

JAKE

I think you'll do just fine in the United States. If you choose to go.

Mei blushes.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I have an important business meeting tonight and I'd like for you to accompany me. As my translator.

Wen Ge swallows hard.

**INT. WEN GE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Enclosed in darkness, blinds drawn, Wen Ge faces a corner of the room. She plays with the telephone cord, twirling it around her fingers.

WEN GE

*You don't understand, baba. I'm the smart one. I asked the couple for classes. Without me, there'd be no classes.*

Wen Ge picks at a crack in the wall.

DEHUI (O.S.)

*She's your sister Wen Ge. Her success is your success.*

WEN GE

*An opportunity to go to America would be wasted on her. She wouldn't know what to do.*

DEHUI (O.S.)

*Why is staying in China so awful to you girls?*

WEN GE

*You don't understand baba.*

DEHUI (O.S.)

*You have Yale. Let her have her route.*

O.S. We hear the front door open and shut.

WEN GE

*I gotta go.*

Wen Ge hangs up quickly.

Mei walks over to Wen Ge's bed in a daze. Closes her eyes and falls back onto the mattress.

MEI  
*I think I'm in love.*

Wen Ge switches on a light. Mei's eyes are glazed.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*Joyce is always ordering him around. He needs someone gentle.*

WEN GE  
*What happened?*

MEI  
*We kissed Wen Ge. And it was perfect. We went to that chocolate stand after dinner! It was so romantic.*

WEN GE  
*Did anyone see?*

MEI  
*We were careful.*

Beat.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*He says he wants to take me to America with him.*

Wen Ge's heart skips a beat.

WEN GE  
*That's wonderful.*

Wen Ge hugs her. It's forced. Mei senses her sister's discomfort.

MEI  
*I know he's married. But I love him.*

WEN GE  
*Just be careful.*

Wen Ge panics in secret. Her stomach, churning with jealousy.

**EXT. JAKE+JOYCE CHERRY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

Winter is here. A soft, fluffy coat of fresh snow has fallen over the city.

**INT. JAKE CHERRY'S STUDY - AFTERNOON**

Jake leans against Mei's desk.

JAKE

Open up your books.

Wen Ge watches a mouse run towards the foot of the table. It begins to groom itself right between Jake and Mei's feet.

Jake's leather shoes reach under Mei's skirt and caresses her leg.

WEN GE

What are we learning today?

Jake's distracted.

Wen Ge bangs the table. Points to the blank white board.

JAKE

We'll be mapping out the States  
within the USA.

Mei opens up her notebook diligently, holding onto his every word.

The mouse beneath Mei's feet has scurried away.

Wen Ge is wreaking with resentment.

**EXT. STREETS - AFTERNOON**

CLOSE on Wen Ge and Mei's boots, crunching on dirty snow.

MEI

Have you heard from Yale yet?

WEN GE

Any day now.

They walk in silence. The cold seeps through their bones.

WEN GE (CONT'D)

You're going to get hurt.

Pause.

MEI

*You're not the only one with dreams, you know. I want to go to America too. You have your brains and your looks. What do I have? I'm just the older sister who makes \$2 a day selling drawings. This is my one chance...*

Wen Ge thinks.

WEN GE

*You're better than this.*

They reach their decaying apartment. Mei hesitates.

WEN GE (CONT'D)

*Let's go inside. I'll make us a hot cup of tea. Talk about this like adults.*

MEI

*No, I think I'll go for a walk.*

Mei stomps off in the snow.

**INT. WEN GE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

Wen Ge watches the snow covered world through her bedroom window. She looks for any sign of her sister. But instead, spots the MAILWOMAN (50s), drop off the mail.

Wen Ge disappears and returns with a letter.

It's from Yale.

Her heart's in her throat.

She rips it open and reads the first two lines.

*Dear Miss Deng,*

*The Yale Admissions Committee received a record 10,000 applications this year. At this time, we regret to inform you that you have not been approved for a scholarship to Yale School of Management, Class of 1988.*

Wen Ge stops reading.

Her eyes glaze over.

The letter HITS the ground.

**INT. WEN GE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

A soft glow coming from a candle. Wen Ge holds the rejection letter close to her face, eyes scanning each line over and over again. Obsessing.

She holds the paper over the fire. It starts to burn. The edges crumple to ash.

We hear faint mumbling coming from outside.

Keys jingle.

**INT. MEI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wen Ge is in her pyjamas, pretending to sleep. Mei, drunk, face plants onto the bed.

WEN GE  
*Where were you?*

Wen Ge rolls Mei's droopy body over on her back.

Incredibly drunk--

MEI  
*Men are pigs.*

Mei blows into a tissue.

WEN GE  
*What happened?*

MEI  
*He wanted to have sex...*

Pause.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*And I just...I thought about his wife and his family. And I just couldn't do it. You were right.*

Mei closes her eyes. Cuddles up to Wen Ge on the bed.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*I hope he doesn't hate me.*

Wen Ge caresses Mei's hair.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*Maybe we're both destined to be stuck here. Forever.*

Wen Ge holds Mei in her arms, cradling her head. Her mind, churning.

WEN GE  
*We'll find a way.*  
*(pause)*  
*We'll find a way.*

A raging fire burns behind those eyes.

**EXT. CHERRY'S HOUSE - EVENING**

Wen Ge pedals quickly. She hops off her bike, out of breath.

**INT. CHERRY'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

CLOSE on Wen Ge's fist hitting the door. KNOCK KNOCK.

**INT. CHERRY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

There are boxes scattered around. Some of the furniture are in bubble wrap.

Joyce scurries around, shoving her dresses inside a box that's already filled to the brim.

JOYCE  
Now's not really a good time Wen  
Ge.

WEN GE  
I just wanted to see how you were.  
And if you needed help with  
anything.

JOYCE  
I'm a little busy as you can see.

Wen Ge saves a pile of clothes that's falling off a chair.

WEN GE  
Can I ask you something?

JOYCE  
Depends what it is.

WEN GE  
I just loved learning English from  
you and your husband. Is there an  
opportunity for me to continue  
learning...

She takes a deep breath.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
Perhaps in America?

Joyce stops stuffing her clothes.

JOYCE  
Did my husband say something?

WEN GE  
No! Of course not! I just wanted to  
know if that was a possibility. To  
come to America in study.

Joyce disappears into her bedroom and comes out with her work  
shirts. She opens up an empty box.

JOYCE  
Absolutely not.

Wen Ge is hurt.

WEN GE  
It's just, your husband told my  
sister that he knows people in  
education...

JOYCE  
No. The answer is no.

Wen Ge knows better than to push back.

WEN GE  
Where is all of your husband's  
stuff Mrs. Cherry?

JOYCE  
Jake's not coming with me. He's  
going to finalize some deals we  
have going on here.

Wen Ge acts shocked to hear this.

WEN GE  
He's staying here?

JOYCE  
Yes.

Joyce stuffs too many shirts in the box. It bursts open. She  
curses under her breath.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. WEN GE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Wen Ge draws very precisely on her lips.

A slim, tight fitted dress hugs her body. Seductive, yet sophisticated.

She peaks out to the living room. Mei is cuddled up on the couch, reading an English novel (think *Pride and Prejudice*) with an English dictionary open.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wen Ge's heels CLANK on the concrete floor. Mei--without looking up--

MEI  
*Who you meeting?*

WEN GE  
*Just some delinquent. From class.*

MEI  
*Poor boy...*

Mei smirks.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*Bring a coat. It's cold out.*

**EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

Heavy rain hammers down on Wen Ge's tattered umbrella. She shivers, curses herself for not bringing a coat.

Jake appears, holding a much larger umbrella.

He's reluctant. Wary of Wen Ge.

JAKE  
Thank you for helping out. It  
should be very quick. You should be  
home by 9.

Wen Ge steps into the light and he gets a glimpse of her dress. She's absolutely gorgeous.

They enter--

**INT. FANCY CHINESE RESTAURANT (RECEPTION) - CONTINUOUS**

A slim HOSTESS wearing a red, traditional *qipao* smiles graciously.

HOSTESS  
Do you have a reservation with us today?

JAKE  
Yes. Under Jake Cherry.

HOSTESS  
Oh yes. There are 2 gentlemen already seated inside.

Jake looks confused.

JAKE  
Two?

The hostess turns--

HOSTESS  
Come with me please.

**INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS**

Wen Ge struts through the elite crowd, past the glares of Caucasian men and their wives.

The hostess shows them to their table. MR WANG (late 50s) and MR CHIN (early 60s), both with red, round faces, dressed in business suits, stand up to shake Jake's hands.

They sway a little from the alcohol.

JAKE  
I am so sorry we are late.

WEN GE  
(translates)  
*Jake wants to apologize for being late.*

MR WONG  
(in mandarin)  
*Don't worry, don't worry! Mr Cherry, meet Mr Chin. He is the owner of CHIN Refrigeration. China's largest appliance corporation.*

Jake glances over to Wen Ge. He's confused why Mr Chin has accompanied his dinner guest.

MR CHIN  
*Please sit!*

Mr Chin passes Jake a menu.

MR CHIN (CONT'D)  
*The sea urchin is a delicacy. You must try it!*

Wen Ge translates.

JAKE  
(in English)  
Can you tell Mr Chin that I am allergic to sea urchin?

Mr Chin first looks offended by this news. But then, he starts to make choking noises. His face goes red and his eyes roll back.

Jake scans the room for help...

Mr Wong and Mr Chin erupt in laughter.

Jake realizes it's a joke. He laughs along - halfheartedly.

MR WONG  
(shouts)  
*SHOTS! LETS GET A ROUND OF SHOTS!*  
*WAITRESS!!*

A petite WAITRESS rushes over.

MR WONG (CONT'D)  
*ANOTHER ROUND!*

Mr Chin and Mr Wong erupt in laughter once again.

MR WONG (CONT'D)  
*Mr Cherry. We like American brands.*  
*We just think they are too expensive. The Chinese will always like cheap things!*

JAKE  
I understand Mr Wong. But the quality you get from American refrigerators is unparalleled to anything the Chinese can offer.

Mr Wong's eyes grow large. He's offended.

MR WONG

*The Chinese make the best fridges  
in the world. At a fraction of what  
you charge Mr Cherry.*

JAKE

Of course, of course Mr Wong. I did not mean to offend. Mr Chin's products are of the highest quality. But our products are guaranteed a 5 year warranty. Can you say the same for your products?

Wen Ge whispers into Jake's ears.

WEN GE

(whispers)

Mr Cherry, I think what you said may offend them.

JAKE

But its the truth.

WEN GE

May I try something?

Jake looks at Wen Ge. An 18 year old girl with no experience in business. And yet, she speaks with pure conviction.

WEN GE (CONT'D)

You want to expand in China. But they will not accept you unless they get something in return.

JAKE

They get our wonderful fridges!

WEN GE

Yes but then they'll just see you as stealing their business.

JAKE

Ok...

WEN GE

What they want is to expand into America.

JAKE

But their cheap fridges won't sell there.

WEN GE

But that's not your problem. Your job is to just sell your refrigerators in China. Whether or not their fridges sell in America does not matter.

JAKE

They just want to expand?

WEN GE

Why do you think Mr Chin is here? Mr Wong brought him here as a bargaining chip. Mr Chin represents the Chinese brand. You represent the West. Give and take.

Jake gives Wen Ge a little nod.

WEN GE (CONT'D)

(to Mr Wong)

*We would like to offer you a partnership. 1000 of our units in your flagship stores Mr Wong. And in return, we will sell Mr Chin's units in America.*

Mr Wong looks from Wen Ge to Jake. A satisfied look on his red, drunk face.

**INT. JAKE CHERRY'S FORD (MOVING CAR) - NIGHT**

A soft hum omits from the radio.

Jake and Wen Ge sit in silence, still a little buzzed from the evening affairs.

Jake turns the radio down.

JAKE

Where did you learn to do that?

WEN GE

I just know how the Chinese think.

Jake is trying to suppress his growing attraction.

JAKE

Thanks you for tonight. This was a huge deal. Joyce will be happy.

WEN GE

Anytime.

Jake pulls over to the curb. Wen Ge's apartment is just outside.

Wen Ge looks up at her sister's window. The lights are out. She thinks for a brief moment.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
I don't want to go home just yet.

There is a speck of food smeared on the side of Jake's lips. Wen Ge reaches over and wipes it off.

Jake enjoys the touch. An intimate moment.

**EXT. JAKE+JOYCE CHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The snow has started to melt. An incandescent street lamp casts a warm spotlight on Jake's car.

All is still.

**INT. JAKE+JOYCE CHERRY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Jake hands Wen Ge a beer.

Wen Ge sees that the fridge is still in the kitchen. She marvels at it.

WEN GE  
What made you want to get into  
refrigeration?

JAKE  
My father. He was known as Mr  
Freeze back in the 40s. He was one  
of the first guys to have home  
freezers as a separate compartment  
rather than its own item.

Wen Ge studies Jake's face.

WEN GE  
You are very handsome, you know  
that?

Jake blushes.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
Except for your big nose.

Jake laughs.

Wen Ge leans in and kisses Jake on the lips. He savors the moment but pulls away. He's unsure...

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
Did you know I fell for you the first time I met you? In the lecture hall. Do you remember?

JAKE  
Yes. That poor professor.

WEN GE  
You looked so successful and handsome. I knew Joyce didn't deserve you.

Wen Ge strokes Jake's hair.

Jake loosens up.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
And when Mei told me she liked you, I was devastated. But she's my sister. What could I do?

Wen Ge edges closer.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
But right now. I have never been happier. Being here with you. In this moment.

Jake touches Wen Ge's hand. The two of them kiss. Jake doesn't pull away this time.

CUT TO BLACK:

**INT. WEN GE'S OLD HOME - DAY**

**6 MONTHS LATER**

Red origami decorations hang around the walls. The words - *HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR* in Mandarin characters hang above the dining table.

Outside, crackles and fireworks explode in the streets.

Wen Ge's mother (Xue Qin) rushes around the kitchen, checking on the dumplings. A grilled fish sits in the pan, sizzling loudly.

Fu (Wen Ge's younger brother) tries to taste the fish. Xue Qin swats his hand away.

XUE QIN  
(at Fu)  
Go check on the wantons.

Fu dips his fingers into the wanton soup.

**EXT. BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS**

De Hui sits on a stool, with a needle and thread, mending his wife's dress.

He holds it up, pleased. The tear is gone.

Wen Ge sits nearby. A pile of to-be-mended clothes, next to her.

DEHUI  
*Hand me your mother's pants, will you?*

WEN GE  
*Which ones?*

DEHUI  
*The grey ones.*

Wen Ge fishes a pair of grey pyjamas with several holes on the pant leg.

WEN GE  
*Chinese New Year is for new clothes, dad.*

DEHUI  
*What are you talking about? See?  
Brand new!*

Dehui holds up the dress.

WEN GE  
*One day, I'll buy you and mom the most expensive clothes ever made.*

Dehui chuckles.

DEHUI  
*Your mother and I are simple people. We'd want you to spend that money on yourself.*

Beat.

Dehui gets up and goes to his bedside table. He takes out an envelope. Hands it to Wen Ge.

It's a wad of cash.

DEHUI (CONT'D)  
*Your mother and I have been saving  
since you were very young. We both  
knew you'd do something spectacular  
with your life.*

Wen Ge is speechless.

WEN GE  
*Dad, I can't take this.*

DEHUI  
*Nonsense! Make sure you pay for the  
groceries to lessen their burden.  
The Cherrys are good people for  
taking you in.*

Pause.

DEHUI (CONT'D)  
*Just remember to always be honest  
and hard-working. That's all.*

Dehui motions for Wen Ge to pass another pair of pants to mend.

**INT. WEN GE'S OLD BEDROOM - AFTERNOON**

We hear CRACKLES from fireworks.

Wen Ge packs quietly. Mei sits in a corner, drawing.

An uncomfortable silence.

WEN GE  
*What are you drawing?*

A long pause.

MEI  
*Nothing.*

Wen Ge grabs her socks and underwear. Folds it neatly into her bag.

WEN GE  
*Can I see?*

Mei ignores her.

Pause.

Mei holds the drawing up. It's a self portrait. But Mei's hair looks like it's just been cut off. And she's wearing a tattered dress.

Wen Ge looks away.

She continues to pack.

WEN GE (CONT'D)  
*I like your hair short.*

MEI  
*I kept it short after you cut it off.*

Beat.

WEN GE  
*You knew I liked him.*

A tense moment. Mei shakes her head in disbelief.

MEI  
*It's ok Wen Ge. You've won. It's ok.*

Wen Ge goes to say something but can't get the words out.

**EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT**

The fireworks have died down but there are still celebrations nearby.

Red streamers and glitter confetti litter the streets. Children run around playing tag. Laughter fills the air.

**INT. AROUND THE DINING TABLE - NIGHT**

A Chinese New Year banquet. Chopsticks fight for the remaining dumplings. A giant fish bone. It's dead eyes stare up at Wen Ge.

Wen Ge watches her family chew on leftovers and laugh with their mouths full.

DEHUI

*Let us give thanks to the New Year!  
And to Wen Ge. We wish her every  
success. Cheers!*

The family clink their glasses.

But there is a somber tone to the celebrations.

Because Mei is absent.

Wen Ge forces a smile and drinks her wine.

CUT TO BLACK:

**INT. JAKE'S FORD (DRIVING) - DAY**

CLOSE ON-- Wen Ge grabbing Jake's hand. She squeezes it. The shadows of trees cast strange shapes on their arms.

Wen Ge looks up towards the sky-- a skyline of palm trees that stretch out as far as the eye can see.

48 Wen Ge's shabby luggage sits in the back seat. 48

She peers out the window. A limousine passes with tinted windows.

We wonder who's inside.

Billboards, Rodeo drive, the Hollywood sign.

*TEXT OVER AERIAL SHOT OF SUNNY LA:*

**LOS ANGELES, 1988**

**EXT. CHERRY'S HOUSE LA - DAY**

A one-storey house with white picket fences.

Wen Ge steps out onto the perfectly groomed lawn.

A NEIGHBOR (40s, Caucasian) mows his lawn with precision. He waves to Jake enthusiastically.

Jake smiles awkwardly, walking with haste towards the front door.

JAKE

(whispers to Wen Ge)

That's Henry. He works at your University.

The neighbor looks suspiciously at Wen Ge as they disappear inside the house.

**INT. CHERRY'S LIVING ROOM LA - CONTINUOUS**

A neat and tidy space with cream furniture. The house is dark and quiet.

Jake leads Wen Ge into the--

**DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM**

Where Jake sets Wen Ge's luggage down. It's a young child's bedroom with fairy stickers across an entire wall. Most of the room is pink except the drapes, which are a jade green.

WEN GE

I love it.

JAKE

I'm sorry you have to share.

Wen Ge touches Jake's cheeks and kisses him with passion.

Their two bodies slide onto the ground, kissing on top of a heap of Barbie Dolls and Lego. Wen Ge lies in Jake's arms, kissing his neck. He reaches inside her jeans.

**INT. ALL AMERICAN DINER - DAY**

A bustling room, packed with families out for their weekly routine of chocolate milkshakes and greasy burgers.

A giant cow dressed in rodeo clothing greets guests at the entrance.

Amongst the flurry, we FOCUS IN on The Cherries and Wen Ge. Their young daughter, CAROLINE (5yo) has ketchup smeared all over her face.

Joyce looks tired. Frumpier than ever. A little neurotic.

JAKE

So, Wen Ge! We have to come up with an English name for you!

WEN GE

Why?

JAKE

So it's easier for Americans to pronounce. Trust me, it'll be easier in the long run.

WEN GE

Wen Ge is not very hard to pronounce.

JAKE

But it's not an English name. In America, you must adopt an English name.

WEN GE

Did you have a Chinese name in China?

Pause.

JAKE

Well, no...

Caroline is playing with the salt and pepper shakers.

JOYCE

(at Caroline)

Stop that.

JAKE

How about Wendi? It's close to Wen Ge?

Wen Ge ponders the name.

WEN GE

Wendi...

**INT. CHERRY'S HOUSE - WENDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Wendi's back is to us. She's on the phone.

Caroline sleeps on the second tier of a bunk bed behind her.

WENDI

(in mandarin)

*I don't know how I feel about it.*

(listens)

*Wendi.*

(listens)

*I guess I don't know any famous Wendi's...I'll be the first...*

Caroline turns in her sleep.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*I gotta go dad.*

Wendi stands up and puts on a wide brim hat. She poses in front of the mirror, waving to non existent adoring fans.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Hello everyone! My name is Wendi.  
Wendi Deng.

She blows a kiss at herself.

Suddenly, footsteps. Wendi takes the hat off and slips into bed. She closes her eyes just in time.

Joyce opens the door.

She stands there in the doorway, eyes filled with hate. Whatever it is, she does NOT want Wendi here. The door shuts abruptly.

**INT. CAL STATE LECTURE ROOM - DAY**

**CAL STATE, NORTHRIDGE**

MRS. GRAHAM (50s), balding with round glasses points to a slideshow. A picture of every brand owned by the Murdoch Empire.

MRS GRAHAM  
The Murdochs. Net worth of 17 billion dollars.

Wendi is the only one scribbling down notes.

DAVID GOLDMANN (20), greasy black hair and bushy eyebrows watches her tenacity with interest.

DAVID  
(whispers)  
What are you writing?

Wendi looks at him suspiciously.

WENDI  
None of your business.

Up the front, Mrs Graham has changed to the next slide.

MRS GRAHAM

Political manoeuvring, leveraging public opinion, customizing media content to fit their intent. I would dare say Rupert Murdoch is one of the most powerful men in the Western World. There's not much else he does not control.

Wendi's hand shoots up. Mrs Graham is taken aback.

MRS GRAHAM (CONT'D)

That wasn't a question...but yes.  
The girl in the front.

WENDI

He doesn't control China.

MRS GRAHAM

Excuse me?

WENDI

China has the world's largest population. Whoever controls China is the most powerful man in the world. And Rupert Murdoch does not control China.

MRS GRAHAM

Yet.

**INT. CAL STATE, CORRIDORS - DAY**

Wendi walks with purpose, head deep in thought. David catches up next to her.

DAVID

You know my father works for Murdoch?

WENDI

Is that a pick up line?

DAVID

I swear.

WENDI

Where?

DAVID

Star TV. It's Murdoch's venture into Chinese TV.

WENDI  
I know what Star TV is.

Wendi's brashness would scare most people but not David. He's infatuated.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Get me a job there.

DAVID  
Excuse me?

WENDI  
I don't believe you. Get me a job  
and I'll believe you.

DAVID  
Are you even legally allowed to  
work?

WENDI  
Soon.

Wendi walks out the front doors.

**INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Wendi BANGS on the walls. B-52's hit *Love Shack* plays loudly next door.

Jake lays naked on a pile of cheap sheets, his socks still on.

Wendi continues to BANG loudly. BANG BANG BANG. She waits. BANG BANG BANG.

JAKE  
I think it's getting louder.

Wendi puts on her slippers. Is about to walk out the door when-- Jake jumps up and cuddles her. Tries to calm her down.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Come to bed. Tell me about school.

WENDI  
I'm sick of these hotel rooms. I  
don't want to be a secret anymore.

Wendi throws the sheets off the bed.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
I'm sick of sneaking around.

JAKE

Well, what do you want?

WENDI

I want to get married.

Jake sits up. The mattress creaks like its a thousand years old.

JAKE

Wendi, we've talked about this.

WENDI

Joyce isn't stupid. She knows what's going on.

JAKE

I can't do it to Caroline.

WENDI

Do what? You're in a loveless marriage, Jake. You and Caroline will be much happier with me.

JAKE

She'll hate me.

WENDI

Caroline will hate you for staying. She will grow to resent you. Trust me.

JAKE

I just need more time.

Wendi can feel her rage rising, but she suppresses it.

She sits down beside Jake and cradles his head on her lap, caresses his beard.

WENDI

You know I love you and will wait for you forever.

(Pause)

But the longer you take, the harder it'll be on everyone.

Beat.

WENDI (CONT'D)

Just think about it. You, me and little Carrie. We'll be the perfect family.

Wendi bends down and kisses Jake's forehead.

**EXT. CAL STATE, NORTHRIDGE CAMPUS LIBRARY - DAY**

A multicolored hacky sack gets kicked around a circle of hippie looking TEENS.

David hurries past.

**INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS**

David walks towards Wendi, who is buried inside a thick textbook.

He takes out a security pass and badge. Hands it to Wendi.

DAVID  
You start Monday.

Wendi looks up. A little shocked.

WENDI  
What's my job?

DAVID  
Just an intern. That's the best I could do...for now.

WENDI  
That'll work.

Wendi turns the security pass around in her hands.

**INT. STAR TV LOBBY - DAY**

Wendi struts with purpose towards the security gates. When her hair is down, she means business. She flashes her badge and walks straight into the elevators packed with the suits and stilettos.

**INT. STAR TV RECEPTIONIST AREA - DAY**

The elevator DINGS open. The top floor of the building. Wendi steps out onto an open floor plan. A blonde RECEPTIONIST sits by the glass door.

WENDI  
Hi. I'm Wendi and today's my first day!

Wendi shakes the receptionist's hand almost crushing her.

RECEPTIONIST  
And who are you here to see?

WENDI  
Bruce Goldmann.

RECEPTIONIST  
Please take a seat over there.

The receptionist points to a cushy couch surrounded by orchards.

Within seconds, another skinny brunette, KATE (21) impeccably dressed greets Wendi.

KATE  
You must be Wendi! I'm Kate,  
Bruce's assistant. May I offer you  
a beverage? A water, tea, coffee  
perhaps?

WENDI  
I'm ok, thank you!

KATE  
Oh, you have an accent! Where are  
you from?

WENDI  
China.

They start walking through endless rows of cubicles.

KATE  
You know, it's funny. We're a  
Chinese television station, but  
you're the first Chinese person  
I've met!

They walk the rest of the way in silence.

**INT. BRUCE GOLDMANN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

BRUCE GOLDMANN (54), a direct replica of David but add 30 years. His stomach pours over his expensive trousers. He has no time for the new intern--

BRUCE  
You speak Chinese?

Wendi nods.

**INT. KATE'S CUBICLE - DAY**

Wendi shares Kate's tiny desk.

Kate types furiously on her keyboard, almost attacking the keys. Her elbow bangs Wendi's arm incessantly.

Wendi has on headphones, translating mandarin into English. ZOOM IN on Wendi's ears.

CHINESE RADIO HOST #1

(in mandarin)

*Star TV will be buying up the most satellite dishes in Northern and Southern China. This could really give CCTV a run for its money.*

CHINESE RADIO HOST #2

*Yes definite. But the network is still a baby. And it's bringing in Western shows for the first time. I don't know if it can hold up against the CCTV audience.*

Kate's elbow nudges Wendi, causing her to misspell a word. Wendi's had it.

Wendi stands up, unplugs her cubic IBM computer that weighs a million pounds. She lugs it into--

**INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

A spacious room with a large meeting desk in the centre.

Wendi is at the end of the table, with all the arm room in the world, typing away.

We see Bruce walk along the glass walls. Kate trails behind him, obviously upset at Wendi's audacity.

He knocks.

BRUCE

Wendi, this is a board room. You are not allowed in here.

WENDI

I need to have a place to work, don't I?

BRUCE

Well, yes. But you have a place. Next to Kate.

WENDI

This is much better. I have almost finished the first tape.

BRUCE

Already?

Bruce is beyond impressed.

WENDI

Shall I continue?

Lost for words--

BRUCE

Err...yes. Yes, please continue.

Bruce closes the door quietly.

Kate walks behind him, confused as hell.

**INT. WENDI'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

Wendi sits on the floor, fiddling with a Barbie doll. She's on the phone--

WENDI

(on the phone)

*Can you tell her I started a new job? I love it here. I'm going to do everything in my power to stay.*

O.S. We hear the front door open and close.

**INT. CHERRY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Joyce seems to have put on weight. Her clothes are baggier than ever.

She looks like she's been crying.

**INT. WENDI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wendi talks in hushed tones.

WENDI

(on the phone)

*How is Mei?*

A deafening BANG. Wendi jumps.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
(on the phone)  
*I gotta go dad.*

Wendi hangs up.

**INT. CHERRY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Joyce has thrown a giant luggage bag in the center of the room. It's open and empty.

JOYCE  
Start packing.

Wendi freezes.

WENDI  
What's going on?

JOYCE  
You heard me. Start packing.

Wendi doesn't move.

Joyce grabs Wendi's arm forcefully. Wendi shakes her off.

WENDI  
Don't touch me.

JOYCE  
GET OUT. GET OUT. GET OUT.

Joyce grabs vase after vase and throws them at the wall. One by one, they SHATTER.

Joyce storms into Caroline's room and begins to bring out piles of Wendi's clothes. She drops them inside the bag.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
GET. OUT.

Back and forth.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
OF.

Back and forth.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
MY. HOUSE.

Back and forth until...

Silence.

Joyce doesn't reappear.

Wendi walks into--

**INT. WENDI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Joyce sits on the bunk bed, weeping into her hands.

Wendi doesn't know what to do.

Wendi quietly starts to gather the rest of her clothes from the wardrobe. Stepping over the mess Joyce has made.

JOYCE

I had no choice you know? Jake was going to leave us if we didn't sponsor you. I thought putting you in Caroline's room would remind him that you're still just a child...

JOYCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I thought, maybe if I waited it out, he'd--

Joyce blows her nose into her daughter's pyjamas.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

He'd stay.

Wendi takes a step towards Joyce.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Don't you dare show *me* sympathy.

Wendi grabs the last of her clothes and disappears out the room.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Joyce follows Wendi into the living room. Her hands are shaking. Her makeup, running.

JOYCE

Do you love him?

Wendi zips up her bag.

A long beat.

Wendi doesn't look up. Her eyes betray the truth.

She rolls the bag through the front door. BANG. The door shuts.

Joyce just stands there. Broken and alone.

CUT TO:

**INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY**

Wendi, dressed in a plain white dress stands next to Jake, in a cheap suit.

The cold, almost clinical layout of the courtroom makes their marriage seem more like a transaction than a celebration.

Jake's daughter, Caroline sits in the stands with two MALE STRANGERS (40s). STRANGER #1 glares at Caroline to stop fidgeting.

Wendi's hand quivers slight, as she signs the most important document she's ever signed. Then Jake signs. It's as if the world has been lifted off her shoulders.

**INT. STAR TV BOARD ROOM - DAY**

**STAR TV, 1995**

Wendi (25), in a navy suit, hair is neatly tucked behind her ears. She sits in a room of men. She looks older, wiser.

Bruce (her old boss) sits next to Wendi, now a peer.

HANK (60s), the CEO of Star TV, clean shaven with a youthful bounce, passes around the annual earnings of the company.

Immediately, Wendi's hand shoots up.

WENDI

This is terrible.

Hank laughs. Obviously accustomed to Wendi's abrupt manner.

HANK

We know, Wendi. For now, there's nothing we can do. The government has passed the bill.

WENDI

Murdoch offended them.

HANK

Now, we don't know that.

WENDI

You offend the Chinese and they'll  
pass a bill to keep you out.

Again, Wendi is the only Chinese woman in the boardroom.

HANK

Mr Murdoch himself will be  
attending our annual meeting next  
Monday afternoon. Please come  
prepared with solutions for our  
dwindling shares.

WENDI

The solution is that he needs to  
apologize to Li Peng personally.

Wendi is once again, ignored.

**INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY**

Wendi walks in on TWO FEMALE CO-WORKERS gossiping by the microwave. They eye her suspiciously. People don't trust her here and she knows it.

Wendi waits for her turn to heat up her container of rice and bok choy.

CO-WORKER 1

Have you heard the rumor?

CO-WORKER 2

About Murdoch's wife?

CO-WORKER 1

No! That he's looking for an  
assistant to translate for him in  
China.

CO-WORKER 2

I'd kill for that job.

The microwave BEEPS.

**INT. HANK'S OFFICE - DAY**

Wendi barges in.

WENDI

I'd like to be put up for the  
Murdoch translating job.

HANK

We're looking for someone who is a little more senior. With a little more knowledge of the TV biz.

WENDI

It won't matter if they're a veteran in TV or not. If they don't understand Chinese culture, they can't make deals.

Hank knows he doesn't win fights with Wendi.

HANK

I'll bring it up to my boss and see what he says, ok?

WENDI

I want an interview with Murdoch.

HANK

With Rupert Murdoch?

Hank lets out a laugh.

HANK (CONT'D)

Wendi, I can't even get a meeting with Murdoch. Let alone a low level executive like yourself...

WENDI

This isn't a meeting. It's a job interview.

HANK

I'll tell you what. I'll bring it up with him on our Monday meeting when he's here in person. And see if he's interested. Deal?

Wendi's not convinced.

**INT. WENDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Wendi writes a check to her family and seals it inside an envelope addressed to China.

Around her table, a dozen books are open about television management and media in China. The three stained coffee mugs near her books are beginning to stink.

The television plays loudly in the other room.

## INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

This is the first look at Wendi and Jake's new home. Think Ikea style furniture. Cheap and bland. However, a state of the art refrigerator peeks out from the kitchen.

Jake, no longer clean shaven, is sunken on the sofa seat, drinking a beer. His eyes are bloodshot. He gives off an unemployed vibe.

WENDI (O.S.)  
Can you turn it down? I'm trying to work.

Jake goes to look for the remote. He doesn't look very hard. Wendi watches him, unwilling to help. Finally he looks under his ass and pulls out the remote.

He motions at an unopened beer.

JAKE  
Wanna take a break?

WENDI  
No thank you.

JAKE  
This came for you.

Jake points to letter resting beneath the beer. Wendi grabs it. Rips it open. It's her green card.

## INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Everyone is dressed in their best gear. They're all here to impress the big man, the legend, the boss, the billionaire.

RUPERT MURDOCH (61), wearing casual beige pants and a button up shirt, like he's going golfing after this meeting.

His TWO ASSISTANTS, HAMISH (25) and YOLANDE (mid 30s) stick to him like Velcro.

Wendi arrived early and therefore scored the best seat in the house; directly opposite Murdoch. She clutches a thick binder.

HANK  
Everyone, please take your seats.

Everyone puts away their organizers.

HANK (CONT'D)

This man needs no introduction.  
He's here today to talk about the  
future of Star TV and our place in  
Chinese Media. Our boss and legend,  
Rupert Murdoch.

Enthusiastic applause with a few 'woos'. Murdoch stays seated. Gives an obligatory smile to the crowd. He's firm and in control.

MURDOCH

Hello everyone. I'm sure you've all  
heard about the Chinese  
Government's recent ban on Star TV  
satellite dishes. It's a shock to  
me and it's definitely a shock to  
the company.

Immediately, Wendi's hands shoot up. Hank does his best to play down his embarrassment.

Murdoch points to her.

MURDOCH (CONT'D)

Yes?

WENDI

Hi Mr Murdoch. My name is Wendi  
Deng and I'm a junior sales  
executive here at Star TV. As the  
only Chinese woman working at this  
office. I just want to clarify one  
thing. Did you offend the second in  
command to Jiang Zemin last summer  
in Shanghai?

Hank's forehead begins to sweat. His eyes dart to Murdoch who seems relaxed. Almost amused at what is happening.

MURDOCH

Miss Deng. Firstly, I'm sorry to  
hear you are the only Chinese woman  
working for my company. That needs  
to change. Secondly, I am well  
versed in business affairs in  
China. If I did offend Li Peng, it  
was because my speech writer was a  
moron and he had no idea how  
business works in China.

WENDI

So should your speech writer draft  
out an apology?

MURDOCH

It is too late for an apology at  
this point Miss Deng.

Wendi shifts in her seat, a little wary about what she's  
about to ask next.

WENDI

So what about our jobs? If there's  
no possible way of salvaging the  
satellite dishes, will the company  
downsize?

A nervous Hank fiddles with his suit pants underneath the  
table. He avoids the eye contact of every employee sitting in  
the room.

A long and drawn out pause.

MURDOCH

There will be layoffs, yes.

The room bursts to life with whispers and panic.

Wendi slams open her binder with one swift motion.

WENDI

I thought so. Which is why I came  
up with 3 plans on how to keep  
company growth and maintain our  
stake in the Chinese market. I am  
available to speak to you privately  
after this meeting if you are  
interested.

Wendi stares directly into Murdoch's eyes. He's never met  
someone so young and audacious before.

**INT. HANK'S OFFICE - DAY**

Hank is pacing around the room in a fit of rage. Wendi sits  
patiently on a sofa, watching him make up his mind.

HANK

I should fire you right now.

WENDI

Why don't you?

HANK

You're fired.

Wendi hops up from the sofa.

WENDI

Ok.

HANK

No, wait. Sit down.

Wendi sits back down. Hank puffs out his chest.

HANK (CONT'D)

You can't do that. You work for ME  
do you understand? You do what I  
tell you to do. You don't come into  
MY board room and ask MY boss if  
we're doing layoffs.

WENDI

I wanted to help. I have been  
working on these plans.

HANK

You can't surprise me like that. I  
need to know everything you are  
working on.

Hank resumes his chair behind the desk. He leans forward.

HANK (CONT'D)

This entire office looks to me to  
be their leader. I need to know  
what's going on at ALL TIMES. Do  
you understand?

WENDI

Sure.

A long pause. Hank's ego is still recovering.

HANK

Rupert wants to speak with you.  
Tonight 8 o'clock at Linq.

A smile spreads quickly across her face.

**EXT. WENDI'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Wendi waits for a cab. She's in a fancy yet restrained, black dress. The cool, summer breeze caresses her long black hair.

Behind her, through the window, we see the television blaring against the white walls. And a shadow of a man we can only presume to be Jake, watching with a beer.

**EXT. LINO RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

A quiet and dark building with no signs.

Wendi's hesitant to knock and stands there for about a minute, contemplating whether or not this is the right place.

Finally, she knocks. One KNOCK and the door slowly opens. We hear the crowds and laughter emanate from within.

**INT. LINO RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

A large Asian inspired private room. Paintings of golden dragons adorn the walls.

Rupert turns to their stylish PRIVATE WAITER (20s)--

RUPERT

Let's get the usual banquet. For three.

Wendi picks up her chopsticks. They're made of jade.

WAITER

Very good, sir.

RUPERT

(to Wendi)

You know, in my years in this business, I've never had a stranger speak to me like that before. About my business.

WENDI

I'm sorry, sir.

RUPERT

Don't apologize. And never call me sir.

Wendi is suddenly at ease. Murdoch seems relaxed, almost conversational.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

It's refreshing to know you're not afraid of me.

WENDI

No si----

Wendi stops herself from saying sir.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
I want to make you money.

RUPERT  
We can both agree on that.

WENDI  
There is so much in the Chinese  
market you're not tapping into.

RUPERT  
And what do you propose Miss Deng?

WENDI  
The biggest hurdle in China is  
censorship. You will not win with  
Western shows. You must invest in  
Chinese content. You were trying to  
control the Chinese market by  
having the most satellite dishes.  
Now, the government has banned Star  
TV dishes. Use the remaining dishes  
to broadcast Chinese shows. Not  
this American bullshit.

Rupert listens, thinking intensely.

RUPERT  
What's your background Miss Deng?

WENDI  
I was born in China.

RUPERT  
Your parents?

WENDI  
They were factory workers.

RUPERT  
You've seen China grow from the  
bottom up.

WENDI  
Yes.

RUPERT  
What brought you to America?

WENDI  
School.

RUPERT  
What else?

Pause.

WENDI  
Opportunity.

RUPERT  
I'm looking for a translator to  
accompany me on my next trip to  
China. I would like for you to be  
my translator.

Her head is exploding, but her face remains calm.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
What do you say?

Wendi can barely see straight. She hardly registers the  
assistant coming inside and pouring everyone a shot of hot  
rice wine.

This is what pure bliss feels like.

**INT. WENDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Wendi tip toes inside the bedroom. Jake snores loudly with  
his phone still in his hand.

She makes a banging noise on purpose - hoping to wake him. He  
just snores louder.

Wendi BANGS again. Louder. Jake turns in his sleep, still  
dreaming.

Wendi leans into Jake's ear--

WENDI  
JAKE. Wake up.

Jake's eyes open.

JAKE  
What's wrong? Is everything ok?

WENDI  
Guess what?

Jake moans.

JAKE  
Tell me tomorrow.

Wendi turns on the lights. Jake shields his eyes.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Turn it off!

WENDI  
Listen! I'm going to be Rupert  
Murdoch's personal translator.

JAKE  
That's great. Can you just turn off  
the light?

WENDI  
Did you hear me?

JAKE  
Yes, I heard you. That's fantastic.

Jake walks over to the light switch like a zombie. Turns off the light. He collapses back on the bed.

Wendi turns the lights back on.

WENDI  
We need to talk.

JAKE  
Not tonight, please.

WENDI  
I want a divorce.

Jake sits up straight, facing his wife who's dressed up like a movie star.

PRE-LAP: A plane engine WHIRLING.

**EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT - EVENING**

Murdoch's private plane sits on the tarmac, ready for take off. At \$84 million dollars in value, this luxury plane puts all other luxury planes to shame.

**INT. MURDOCH'S PRIVATE PLANE - CONTINUOUS**

Three HOSTESSES fuss over the placement of cushions on the leather couches.

HOSTESS 1  
Mr Murdoch likes whiskey near his  
chair.

Wendi lays across two chairs, marvelling at the grandeur.

The air suddenly grows tense.

Wendi straightens up.

Rupert Murdoch appears with his long line of lawyers, assistants and business associates. Intimidating.

RUPERT  
Wendi. Welcome.

To his assistant--

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
Wendi will sit by me.

**EXT. TARMAC - SHANGHAI - SUNSET**

If you can look past the smog, Shanghai actually delivers a pretty decent sunset.

On the tarmac--three limousines await Murdoch and his crew.

**INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS**

Hamish immediately hands Rupert his missed call messages and today's newspapers from all of his publications.

ROGER AILES (59), bushy eyebrows on a round face sit opposite Wendi.

The car is silent as Rupert rifles through his papers.

Wendi gets a weird vibe from Roger. He's sizing her up and down, like she doesn't belong here.

ROGER  
Where in China are you from, Wendi?

WENDI  
Grew up in Guangzhou.

ROGER  
Is that a wealthy city?

WENDI  
Yes it is. But I grew up very poor, if that's what you're asking. I had to work very hard to get to where I am.

Tense atmosphere.

Having been completely oblivious to the entire interaction--  
Rupert looks up--

RUPERT

Wendi, you will accompany me to  
dinner with the communications  
minister tonight.

Hamish whispers to Wendi--

HAMISH

A driver will pick you up at 7pm  
sharp. Please dress appropriately.

ROGER

Didn't Anna call before? You should  
call your wife back eh Rupert?

MURDOCH

I'll call her later. There's no  
rush.

Rupert returns to his papers.

**EXT. LIMOUSINE/MARRIOT HOTEL - DAY**

Wendi is dropped off in front of the Marriot. It's opulence  
intimidates anyone who doesn't view hundred dollar bills as  
spare change.

A DOORMAN with a top hat opens the door with a bow--

**INT. MARRIOT LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

Wives wrapped in fur coats. Men giving \$500 tips. Marble  
ceilings and floors.

Wendi is immediately led into the elevator by her own private  
CONCIERGE (35).

**INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS**

The floors zoom by. One after the other until she realizes  
she is being taken to the presidential suite.

CONCIERGE

Here we are miss. Your bags should  
already be in your room.

Wendi steps out into--

**INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

A lavishly decorated space, with 60s Shanghai chic as the theme. Beautiful oak furniture and wall panels. A giant chandelier as the centerpiece.

Wendi walks into the--

**INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

A king sized bed made from the same delicate oak. The room looks fit for a queen.

CONCIERGE

You and Mr Murdoch share the same elevator. But his suite is to the left whereas yours is to the right.

As soon as the concierge leaves, Wendi jumps onto the bed and curls herself around the sheets. She grabs a pillow and smells its freshly washed scent. Her head's on cloud nine.

The room is larger than her entire house back in China. It could house a family of 10 and still have room.

Wendi runs into the--

**INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

A giant, marble bathtub gleams in the centre of the room. Wendi disappears and reappears completely naked. She hops into the bathtub and turns on the tap. She leans back, feeling the warm water against her skin.

**INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Wendi holds up her slightly old business dresses to the mirror. Unsatisfied, she puts both options down and takes out a third option. Still not satisfactory.

Her father is on speaker phone.

WENDI

*Did you get the check?*

DEHUI (O.S.)

*Yes, but we've told you a thousand times. Keep the money for yourself. Don't waste it on us!*

In the background, we hear severe coughing from someone.

DEHUI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*I know you're on a very important business trip but your mother and I would love it if you could take some time off to visit us.*

Beat.

DEHUI (CONT'D)  
*It would mean a lot if you came home, Wen Ge. Your mother and I miss you very much.*

WENDI  
*It's a little difficult right now. I'm finally hitting a stride with work.*

DEHUI  
*Can you come after the trip?*

WENDI  
*I can't. I'm too busy, dad.*

Wendi tries on her first dress. In her eyes, it's the least tacky. She checks the time.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*I have to go ok?*

We hear coughing again.

#### INT. 5 STAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The 99th floor. A quiet and respectable atmosphere. Everyone speaks at a moderate volume.

Wendi clinks her wine glass with Murdoch and his guest - the communications minister - ZHENG XIAO WEN (late 60s).

Zheng's entire face crinkles when he smiles. He wears *The Monkey King* cuff links.

WENDI  
*How many grand children do you have?*

ZHENG  
*5 scoundrels!*

Wendi points to his cuff links.

WENDI

*What's their favorite show?*

ZHENG

*Monkey King of course!*

WENDI

*Mr Murdoch has 6 grandchildren!*

Wendi whispers something to Murdoch. He reaches into his wallet and brings out a family photo.

ZHENG

*Wow. A huge family!*

Wendi and Murdoch exchange a glance. They have Zheng wrapped around their finger.

WENDI

*I grew up very poor so we didn't have a television set. But my father used to tell me Monkey King stories as a child. They gave me the strength to overcome my bullies and grow stronger.*

ZHENG

*Hmmm yes, he has been inspiring kids for generations.*

WENDI

*I understand Monkey King is for sale right now. I would love for you to put Star TV at the top of the list. The show has a very special place in my heart.*

Zheng nods slowly.

**INT. BLACK SUV - NIGHT**

Wendi and Rupert sit side by side, having just had their first successful meeting. Rupert may not be showing it, but he's grinning from ear to ear.

He notices how old Wendi's clothes look--

RUPERT

*You need new clothes.*

Offended--

WENDI

I like my clothes, thank you very much. And on that note, I think you should change your clothes.

RUPERT

Oh? What's wrong with my clothes?

WENDI

They're old fashioned.

RUPERT

I refuse to wear pants that drape on my bottom.

Wendi laughs.

WENDI

You should at least change your tie.

Wendi slides her hand up and down Murdoch's tie. Examining the fabric.

Murdoch's phone rings. Ruining the moment. He looks at it and turns it off.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Is everything alright?

RUPERT

Yes.

Rupert's phone rings again. This time, Wendi catches a glimpse. It's Murdoch's wife - ANNA.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
Hello.  
(listens)  
Yes, go without me.  
(listens)  
The 14th.  
(listens)

The car slows at a traffic light. Outside, a group of street dancers, hopping around in eccentric costumes and banging drums that shoot sparklers into the sky.

WENDI

Driver! Pull over!

The driver pulls over to the side--

RUPERT

Anna, I'm about to step into a meeting--

Wendi opens the door and jumps out. She beckons for Rupert to follow.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Love you too.

Rupert's eyes are on Wendi as he chases after her.

**EXT. SHANGHAI STREETS - NIGHT**

Wendi drags Rupert through the crowded streets of Shanghai. The lights overwhelm Rupert. Trailing behind them are his two security guards.

The street performers are now twirling their drum sticks that are on fire. They do a handstand while holding the flaming sticks between their teeth.

Rupert hasn't felt this free in a long time. He claps along to the music, hypnotized by Wendi's laughter.

**EXT. TIE SHOP - NIGHT**

A small, tie cart with an OLD MAN (80s) operating from inside. The old man takes a long drag of his cigarette, coughs loudly and spits out his cart.

Wendi holds up a Roberto Cavalli tie to Rupert's neck. It's gold with navy stripes.

WENDI

Mmmm...too old.

RUPERT

I think it looks handsome.

Wendi looks through the rack. Picks out a light blue tie.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

Too blue.

WENDI

We can compromise.

Wendi turns to the old man and begins to haggle.

Off Rupert's amused face--

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Aiyah...too expensive. I'm buying  
2. \$20

OLD MAN  
I gotta feed my family. \$40.

WENDI  
I know how much they cost. They're  
fake. \$20

OLD MAN  
\$35 is the best I can do.

WENDI  
My mother works in these factories.  
She can get it for me for \$10!

OLD MAN  
I have to make *some* money!

Wendi begins to walk away. Rupert follows suit.

They hear the old man's cane get closer and closer.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
Hey hey! \$20 \$20.

Wendi hands over \$20 renmenbi.

Murdoch is impressed.

RUPERT  
He didn't look very happy.

WENDI  
It's all a front. Chinese people  
will never show you how they truly  
feel.

Rupert hands the ties over to his security guards.

**EXT. PIER OVERLOOKING THE BUND - NIGHT**

The sun sets behind the Bund - a technological island  
brimming with the tallest buildings in the world.

Wendi and Rupert stroll the scenic route, looking out at the  
yellow moon. They each cradle a Tsingtao beer.

WENDI

I really think purchasing Monkey King is the first step to gaining a loyal Chinese following.

RUPERT

You know I've been chasing that show for months. And after one meeting, you bump us straight to the top.

WENDI

You needed a Chinese woman's touch.

RUPERT

Have you always been this ambitious?

WENDI

Yes.

RUPERT

Why did you leave China?

WENDI

I wanted a western husband.

Wendi jokes.

RUPERT

Have you found one?

WENDI

Not yet.

Wendi takes a sip of her beer. Rupert studies her, unsure if Wendi is flirting or not.

WENDI (CONT'D)

When you come from nothing, being ambitious means never having to go back to that.

They continue to walk in the dimming light.

**EXT. MARRIOT HOTEL - NIGHT**

The limousine pulls up to the paparazzi SNAPPING and screaming Murdoch's name.

Hamish ushers his boss and Wendi through the crowd.

**INT. MARRIOT LOBBY - NIGHT**

The paparazzi bang against the winding doors, squishing their noses to the glass for a better look.

Hamish carries Rupert's array of shopping bags and hands over his schedule for the next day.

HAMISH

Tomorrow, you have lunch with the Transport minister. He wants to know why you published that article about him and his second wife--

Murdoch is not listening. Instead, he's fixated on Wendi. He's completely infatuated.

**INT. MARRIOT ELEVATOR - NIGHT**

Hamish continues to speak as Rupert opens the elevator doors for Wendi.

WENDI

Thank you.

Murdoch presses the top floor.

HAMISH

Sir? Sir?

RUPERT

Hm. Yes?

HAMISH

Is 7am a good time for pick-up?

RUPERT

Yes.

Wendi looks in one of the shopping bags. Fishes out the light blue tie.

She undoes Rupert's current tie. Wraps the younger, hipper tie onto his neck. She stands back. Marvels at the difference.

WENDI

I'll be working out in the morning.  
Would you care to join me?

RUPERT

What time?

WENDI

Around 7.

RUPERT

(to Hamish)

Change my pick up time to 8.

On Murdoch's face as he exits the elevator--

**INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NIGHT**

Murdoch opens the door to his suite. Wendi opens her door. Hamish follows Murdoch in, still talking a mile a minute.

HAMISH

But sir, you haven't worked out in  
years...

RUPERT

(ignoring Hamish)

Good night.

WENDI

Good night.

They close their doors simultaneously.

**INT. WENDI'S SUITE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT**

Wendi lays down on the bed and kicks off her shoes.

She's in a romantic daze.

She spreads her arms out like she's flying. Turns to see the entire city of Shanghai, dazzling outside her window. A light seems to sparkle extra bright. She looks closer, it's coming from inside her room. It's the answering machine.

Wendi presses the messages button--

RECORDING

Hi Wen Ge. It's Mei. Dad didn't  
want to tell you, but mom has  
cancer. You need to come home right  
now. The doctor says she has 2  
weeks.

(Pause)

Call me.

Wendi looks at the telephone and then back outside to the lights of Shanghai. The view is intoxicating.

She can't let this opportunity slip by.

Feeling just a hint of guilt, Wendi deletes the message.

CUT TO:

**EXT. \$50M BOAT OFF HUDSON RIVER - DAY**

We are on a luxurious boat floating along the East River off Manhattan; a party in full swing. The world's wealthiest men and their gorgeous wives gossip among themselves as a four-piece string quartet strum elegantly to the side.

Suddenly the music drifts off. An anticipatory hush fills the room.

The quartet begins to play the wedding march.

***June 25th 1999***

An unknown woman steps into view. We do not see her face, just her extravagant wedding dress. Her long veil cascades on the wooden boards.

The woman is revealed to be Wendi. Her makeup is sophisticated and simple.

Wendi (**now 29**) beckons for a YOUNG ASSISTANT, 23, hair in a ponytail, wearing an ear piece.

WENDI  
(whispers)  
There is a woman near the front  
wearing white.

The assistant knows what to do. A momentary commotion. The woman is removed and taken inside.

Wendi resumes her walk. Up ahead, Rupert Murdoch (**68**) stands in a suit way too expensive to comprehend.

Wendi steps up to face her soon to be husband. The smile on her face is priceless. This is the moment she becomes queen.

Wendi's family watches on from the back row. The odd ones out. Her mother is missing.

CUT TO:

**INT. HOTEL PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NIGHT**

It is their wedding night and Rupert makes love to Wendi. It is not the love making that blows peoples' minds. It's soft, calm and a little boring.

Wendi grows impatient. She jumps on top and pushes Rupert down against the pillow. Her youth revitalizes Rupert.

LATER...

Wendi stares at the ceiling as the most powerful man in the world falls asleep in her arms.

**MONTAGE - VARIOUS**

- Wendi decorates her new Soho Loft Apartment. She's still new to this grandeur.
- New York Newsstand. Her face is plastered on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, *Vogue* all introducing her as "MRS RUPERT MURDOCH".
- In the front row at NY fashion week. Anna Wintour (51, Editor-in-Chief of *Vogue*) whispers something in Wendi's ear. The lights and cameras are dazzling.
- Wendi moves into her new corner office at Star TV. She looks out at the skyline of Los Angeles. Endless possibility.
- Wendi furnishes their Carmel Ranch. She's rocking a new bob haircut. More confidence. She installs a state of the art fridge as the centerpiece to her kitchen.
- Decked out in a dark, red gown. Wendi hooks arms with her new best friend, NICOLE KIDMAN. Her hair is different again. Blowing kisses on the red carpet. A professional now.
- Wendi has lost a lot of weight. She's almost unrecognizable. We see her shouting at an interior decorator. Her office has grown in size and grandeur.
- With another new haircut, she waves her two assistants away. The biggest refrigerator you've ever seen sits in her SOHO kitchen.

**END OF MONTAGE.**

**INT. SOHO MANSION - NYC - DAY**

*June 2001*

The Soho Mansion is completely furnished. The interior design looks modern and impeccable.

Wendi, rocks another new haircut.

She motions for a WORKER to hang a Jackson Pollock on the wall.

WENDI  
Hurry up. What am I pay you for?

She looks over to Rupert who is in his office in hysterics at a joke his MAID (early 20s) just told. A hint of jealousy.

She motions for a second painting to be put up.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
It's too small.

The worker nods. Scurries away to call his boss.

Rupert's old friend - Roger Ailes (now 61), disappears inside Rupert's office.

He sees Wendi but doesn't say hi.

**INT. SOHO MANSION - NYC - LATER THAT EVENING**

Wendi gets her nails painted while receiving a back massage.

Roger reappears from Rupert's office.

ROGER  
(to Rupert)  
Yes, yes, see you Friday.

WENDI  
Hi Roger. Care to stay for dinner?  
We have a chef flying in from  
Osaka.

ROGER  
No, thank you. I hate Japanese  
food.

WENDI  
He's cooking us Greek.

Roger manages a smile.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Did you see me earlier?

ROGER  
Excuse me?

WENDI  
When you arrived earlier today. Did you see me?

ROGER  
I believe so.

WENDI  
Why didn't you say hi?

ROGER  
You looked so busy spending Rupert's money, I didn't want to disturb you.

Roger turns to leave.

WENDI  
Speaking of my husband's money. What was Fox News' losses last financial year? 22 million and counting?

ROGER  
We have our ups and downs but I've been in this industry a long time. We always bounce back.

WENDI  
You sure about that? According to my reviews, Fox News has been losing money pretty consistently for the last 5 years. That doesn't sound like you'll be bouncing back any time soon.

ROGER  
No need to strain your pretty, little head. Fox is doing just fine. You just stick to what you're good at.

He points to the newly installed Pollock painting?

ROGER (CONT'D)  
An original?

Wendi nods.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
Expensive.

Roger turns to leave.

ROGER (CONT'D)  
(shouts)  
Good night Rupert. Always a  
pleasure.

The door SLAMS shut.

**INT. EVENING BENEFIT - NIGHT**

Velvet table clothes draped over round tables. Just another elite benefit. Open bar, fancy people.

On stage, a swanky HOST (40s) introduces the main speaker.

HOST  
With his terrible physique and bald patches, you'd never guess that he's our youngest Prime Minister since 1812.

The crowd laughs.

HOST (CONT'D)  
But he is. And God do we hate him for being our leader and looking so good doing it. To launch tonight's JUSTICE Human Rights Gala, please welcome Tony Blair!

The crowd erupts.

**INT. EVENING BENEFIT - LATER**

Packed with the 1%, drinking from bottles of champagne, smoking, toasting, shouting to be heard.

Wendi speaks to Murdoch's LAWYER, LON JACOBS (44), trustworthy with a laid back attitude.

WENDI  
How are the kids?

LON  
Just got back from the Caribbean actually! I'm completely sunburnt! My nose is peeling.

Cutting to the chase--

WENDI

If I were to fire any house staff  
under the age of 40--

LON

That would be illegal. But if you  
don't mention the age as a  
reason...I guess you can get away  
with it. Just don't fire them all  
at once.

Wendi looks over to Rupert who is speaking with Tony. Tony  
waves to her. She smiles.

WENDI

How is the acquisition coming  
along?

LON

Not long now.

WENDI

Has Rupert appointed a CEO yet?

LON

It will most likely be Lachlan.

Wendi contemplates this news.

Tony walks over, greets her with a kiss on the cheek.

**INT. WENDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Wendi is on her side as Murdoch makes love to her. It's slow  
and dreary, like a rainy London day.

Murdoch finishes and cleans Wendi up. Wendi holds Rupert's  
head again, just like before. He falls asleep instantly.

WENDI

Rupert?

Rupert opens his eyes.

RUPERT

Hm?

WENDI

I want to sit on the board for  
Myspace China.

RUPERT

The acquisition's not final yet.

WENDI

When it's acquired. I want to be  
partners with Lachlan.

Rupert is more awake now.

RUPERT

We'll talk about this tomorrow.

WENDI

No, now.

RUPERT

Lachlan won't be happy.

WENDI

I don't give a shit.

RUPERT

What about Star TV?

WENDI

I can do both.

RUPERT

This is a huge takeover. I'm not  
sure you're han--

WENDI

You're dealing with the Chinese. I  
know how my people think.

RUPERT

We can talk about this tomorrow  
morning.

Wendi doesn't answer.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

Has the renovations for the games  
room been completed?

WENDI

I don't fucking know. I'm not your  
interior designer.

#### INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Wendi picks at a bowl of fruit at the end of a long dining table.

A young maid, MARIA, 28, pretty with long brown lashes,  
clears the table.

WENDI

Do me a favor and knock on Rupert's door. Ask Lachlan if he needs a coffee and then leave the door slightly open.

Maria nods diligently.

Wendi watches Maria do just that.

Wendi begins to eavesdrop.

LACHLAN

Dad, she's just bored.

Beat.

LACHLAN (CONT'D)

She's a conniving gold digger. When are you gonna fucking see that?

Rupert doesn't speak.

Wendi gets up from her chair. Knocks quietly on the door.

RUPERT (O.S.)

Come in.

**INT. RUPERT'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Wendi floats in, taking Lachlan by surprise.

LACHLAN

Hi Wendi.

WENDI

How's Sarah?

LACHLAN

She's pregnant.

WENDI

Congratulations! And congratulations to us! I'm very excited to be working together on launching MySpace in China.

LACHLAN

That's not going to happen, Wendi.

WENDI

I don't think you can handle the expansion by yourself, Lachlan. Not with your history.

LACHLAN

And what gives you the right to run MySpace?

WENDI

I know the Chinese. I have been doing business in China my entire life.

LACHLAN

This is the most important launch at NewsCorp right now. My dad bought it for 580 million dollars. He's not about to let some Chinese woman off the streets run this business to the ground. Tell her dad.

Lachlan glares at Rupert who says nothing.

**INT. DINING ROOM - DAY**

Back in the dining room, Maria collects Wendi's plates.

Wendi, triumphant, sips her coffee.

We hear a muffled screaming match coming from Rupert's office.

WENDI

Maria? Finish what you are doing and then you may go. We no longer require your services.

Maria is frozen.

WENDI (CONT'D)

You heard me. Finish what you're doing. Go on.

Maria doesn't dare to speak back. She collects the remaining plates. They make clanking sounds as her hand shakes, walking away.

**INT. WENDI AND RUPERT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Rupert is in bed. Dressed in silk pyjamas, typing away on his laptop. His glasses rests gently on his nose bridge.

Wendi walks in from the ensuite. She's dressed in a black, lacy dress that's almost see through.

Without looking up--

RUPERT  
Who are the new maids?

WENDI  
The old ones weren't working out.

Rupert looks up.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Do you like it?

Rupert smiles.

She climbs into bed next to him.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
I want a child, Rupert.

Rupert stares at Wendi, mesmerized by her beauty but also hesitant.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
I want us to have a child.

RUPERT  
Where is this coming from?

WENDI  
I'm 31. I want to have a child with  
you before it's too late. I want  
our own little family. Away from  
everyone else.

Wendi touches Rupert's cheek. It's tender. Rupert kisses  
Wendi's hand and pulls her in.

**INT. MYSPACE LAUNCH PARTY - NIGHT**

Through the crowd, Lachlan watches Wendi and Rupert kiss  
cheeks with Tony Blair and his wife, CHERIE (47).

Cherie opens her mouth in shock. Touches Wendi's stomach. A  
little bump is already starting to form.

**LATER...**

Wendi is sipping a mocktail by the bar. Lachlan walks over.

LACHLAN

Myspace only received an initial  
600,000 sign ups in China.

WENDI

Just mainland or including Hong  
Kong?

LACHLAN

Everything.

Wendi thinks.

WENDI

What did Baidu get?

LACHLAN

20 million sign ups.

WENDI

That's easy. We just implement what  
we talked about.

LACHLAN

No. It'll alienate the audience.

WENDI

Trust me. I know the Chinese  
market. They won't care. They're  
all consumers at heart.

Wendi raises her glass.

WENDI (CONT'D)

Come on, let's celebrate!

PRE-LAP of crowd applause--

**INT. CHINESE TALK SHOW - NIGHT**

A Chinese Oprah style show with spunk. Mostly women in the audience.

The host, WANG TAO (28), peppy and energetic. Wears a crisp, black suit with a cute bow tie. He has a face for showbiz.

HOST

*Welcome to the first episode of  
Dialogue in the new year.*

A HUGE banner: **2002, YEAR OF THE HORSE** drops from the stage. Confetti and balloons fall from the ceiling.

WANG TAO

Let's bring out our first guest!  
She needs no introduction. A fierce  
business woman and wife to Rupert  
Murdoch. Wendi Deng!

The audience stands up to cheer--

Wendi as fashionable as always, walks out on stage with grace. She thrives in the spotlight.

WANG TAO (CONT'D)

*Wow. What a reception! Thank you  
for being here tonight!*

WENDI

*What a cute bow tie!*

Wang Tao takes it off.

WANG TAO

*Here! It's yours!*

He hands it to Wendi. Immediately, a producer runs on stage. Hands him a duplicate tie.

WANG TAO (CONT'D)

*I have a million more!*

Wendi puts it on. Now they have matching bow ties. The audience are amused.

WANG TAO (CONT'D)

*Now, you recently launched Myspace  
in China. How has it been going?*

WENDI

*It's been going wonderfully. We  
have seen a 12% growth in the last  
quarter since our latest addition.*

Crowd applause.

WANG TAO

*Now this latest addition has been  
a little controversial. Can you  
tell us a little bit about it?*

WENDI

*Well, our algorithms will play a specific advertisement tailored to you, before every video.*

WANG TAO

*Now, many people have complained that it's just a scheme for you to make money. I mean, who wants to be forced to watch an ad before every video?*

WENDI

*Absolutely not! Myspace is here to help you! If we detect that you've been visiting a particular band's page multiple times, we will play an ad for your favorite band's concert near you! It's all to benefit you!*

The crowd applauds again.

**EXT. BABY SHOWER POOL PARTY - DAY**

Skinny, gorgeous women lounge around the pool in bikinis, sipping Piña Coladas. The sun reflects off their fake tans.

They all surround Wendi, who sits back on a chair, heavily pregnant. Everyone is dying to congratulate her or to just be near her.

JILL (45), leathery skin with bleached blonde hair is lucky enough to be within ear shot.

JILL

You are absolutely killing it honey. My husband is OBSESSED with Myspace China.

WENDI

Well, tell Peter I am always looking for investors. And since he's such a dear friend, I'd be willing to cut him a family deal.

JILL

He will be thrilled!!

Jill opens her legs a little.

JILL (CONT'D)

Have you ever had a tuck?

She's talking about between her legs.

WENDI  
A tuck?

JILL  
I look like a porn star now, I  
swear to God.

Wendi forces a smile.

WENDI  
Excuse me.

The other girls all try to speak at once.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
I'll be back ladies. Just going in  
to freshen up.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

A pile of neatly wrapped presents sit near a window. It's quiet inside.

Wendi picks up the latest issue of The Economist. Headline says "WENDI DENG MURDOCH, THE FACE OF MYSPACE".

A young maid, Maria, who looks awfully familiar, waters a plant nearby.

WENDI  
Didn't I fire you?

MARIA  
Yes ma'am. But Mr Murdoch hired us  
back.

WENDI  
Who is us?

MARIA  
The ones who were let go, ma'am.

The maid walks off to resume her chores. Wendi is furious.

As soon as Murdoch is off the phone, Wendi marches into--

**INT. MURDOCH'S OFFICE - DAY**

Rupert raises a finger to silence her. He's thinking.

Wendi won't be treated this way.

WENDI  
Don't treat me like one of your  
lawyers.

Rupert jots something down in a calculator.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Why did you rehire the maids I  
fired?

RUPERT  
I didn't feel the need to be sued.

WENDI  
I fired them under the impression  
that they were no longer needed.

RUPERT  
Well, by firing everyone under the  
age of 35, they formed a group who  
had a very strong case against me.  
And I just don't need the extra  
stress right now.

WENDI  
Who do you have to thank for the  
recent profit margins?

RUPERT  
You made a smart call with the  
advertising.

WENDI  
Who is on the cover of The  
Economist?

Rupert gestures to her.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Don't question me again, Rupert.  
Fire them.

Rupert sighs.

**INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT**

Wendi in yet another evening gown. Her baby bump is bigger  
than ever.

She is surrounded by three assistants. Murdoch only has  
Hamish.

ASSISTANT 2

Mrs Deng, it's your dad's birthday  
tomorrow.

WENDI

Why are you telling me?

ASSISTANT 2

Did you want to send him a gift?

WENDI

That's your job isn't it?

Feeling stupid, the assistant nods.

**EXT. CHARITY EVENT FOR AIDS - NIGHT**

The car pulls up to a decked out building, bustling with paparazzi.

Wendi poses, smiling for the cameras.

**INT. HALL - NIGHT**

A giant hall with guests seated at dinner tables, swirling their wines and comparing thousand dollar watches.

On stage - HUGH JACKMAN speaks, oozing charisma and charm.

HUGH JACKMAN

We started this fund just 5 years ago. And this year, thanks to you all, we have raised over 30 million dollars to help fight the spread of HIV in developing nations. Now I want to bring someone up here who is very special to my heart. I first met her 2 years ago in Somalia. I held her at birth and she was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. She was born with HIV and has been fighting the disease since her birth. But thanks to your donations, she will now get the help she needs. Please welcome to the stage - Jamilah Omar.

We PAN along the crowd until we see a particularly crowded area.

A line of celebrities and millionaires have lined up to shake JAMILAH'S hand and take selfies.

Jamilah (12) sits in a wheelchair, her short hair is spiky, her hands small and bony.

Jamilah's caretaker excuses them and wheels her towards the stage. The camera pans with them until we pause with Wendi and Lachlan backstage.

**INT. BEHIND THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Wendi and Lachlan's eyes are locked on their phones. They're both reading the same text.

LACHLAN  
Fuck. FUCK. FUCK FUCK FUCK.

Lachlan punches the wall.

WENDI  
This can't be right.

Lachlan's eyes are bloodshot. Too much cocaine.

LACHLAN  
I KNEW it was a bad idea.

WENDI  
This can't be right.

LACHLAN  
It is Wendi! These are the numbers.

Wendi internalizes her panic. Desperate to hold it together.

Lachlan's phone lights up.

He reads a text.

LACHLAN (CONT'D)  
FUCK. Peter's out.

WENDI  
What?

LACHLAN  
Am I mumbling? Peter's pulling out.

His phone lights up again.

LACHLAN (CONT'D)  
So is Miles. And Reece.

Lachlan's phone is buzzing non stop now. His teeth grit.

Wendi's panic begins to seep through. She looks around, trying to find a seat.

WENDI

There's got to be some sort of mistake. The shares can't drop this suddenly.

LACHLAN

The shares were being inflated. The Chinese were never into those ads. It was all just inflation after the takeover. This.

(He points to his phone)

These are the real numbers.

Increasing heart rate. Jelly legs.

WENDI

It's ok. We can get rid of the advertising then.

LACHLAN

We can't just get rid of advertising! That's our primary source of revenue. God, why did I listen to you...

WENDI

It's ok. It's ok. It's ok--

Suddenly--SPLAT. Wendi looks down. Her water has broken.

WENDI (CONT'D)

Oh God.

Heart pounding. Everything's suddenly gone quiet. Slow.

Lachlan helps steady Wendi. Wendi's vision goes in and out of focus. She barely registers a group of men carrying her outside...

Her eyes, darting around...

She feels the floor drop out underneath.

Black.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Things are calm. A heart monitor beeps quietly. Wendi's eyes open to a NURSE (60) smiling down on her.

Wendi tries to sit up. Groans.

NURSE  
Rest Mrs Deng. You need rest.

The nurse pushes her back onto her back.

WENDI  
What's the share price?

Delirious.

NURSE  
I'm sorry ma'am?

More conscious.

WENDI  
Where is she?

NURSE  
She's with her daddy.

WENDI  
Let me see her.

The nurse disappears.

Seconds later, Rupert walks in with the baby cradling in his arms. His expression is tender. Loving.

He hands the baby to Wendi.

Wendi looks down at her tiny face and smiles.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Grace.

Wendi's sweat infused hair falls onto the baby's face. GRACE tries to catch it with her mouth, then with her tiny hands.

Wendi looks up to find Rupert laughing.

NURSE  
You'll need to sit back Mrs Deng.  
The stitches are still fresh. So  
I'll need you to lay back down and  
relax.

Wendi hands the baby back to Rupert. An unspoken bond. Suddenly, nothing else matters.

But then the phone beeps. It's Rupert's cell. He takes out his phone and stares at the text.

Off Wendi's worried face--

RUPERT  
I gotta make some calls.

Rupert hands the baby to the nurse and walks out the room. And just like that, the moment is gone and the world goes back to how it was.

**INT. WENDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The news plays on television loudly. Wendi has changed into a see-through slip. She slides into bed and faces Rupert, hoping he'll notice her sexy wardrobe.

Rupert doesn't.

NEWS ANCHOR  
(on TV)  
In recent news, MySpace shares has suffered another whopping 23% drop. This is a devastating blow to Murdoch's new internet venture--

Angry-- Wendi switches the TV off.

She crawls up next to Rupert's ear, begins to nibble gently.

RUPERT  
I'm tired.

Wendi doesn't give up. She continues kissing Rupert's chest all the way down to his belly button.

She mounts him, making love to him slowly--

Suddenly, snoring.

Wendi looks down. Rupert is asleep. She's about to whack his head when--

The baby monitor bursts to life. We hear soft whimpering and then a baby starts to cry. The crying grows louder and louder until it fills the room completely.

Wendi dismounts.

The crying continues. Wendi stops and glares at the monitor.

The crying intensifies. Then--

Beat.

The crying slows to a sob. We hear Mrs Chu whisper something to the baby. She begins to hum quietly.

Defeated, Wendi switches off the monitor. Rupert's snoring escalates.

HOST (PRE-LAP)  
Welcome to the show, RUPERT MURDOCH  
AND OUR VERY OWN, WENDI DENG!!

**INT. CHINESE TALK SHOW - NIGHT**

The crowd erupts in applause. We are back in the studio. This time, Wendi sits beside Rupert, holding hands.

Behind them on a screen reads: **HAPPY NEW YEAR 2003** with electronic fireworks.

WANG TAO  
*We have a returning guest tonight  
and guess who she's brought with  
her?*

Rupert waves to the audience. They clap and whistle.

WANG TAO (CONT'D)  
*Thank you both for being here!*

WENDI  
*Thank you for having us.*

Wendi and Rupert are still holding hands.

WANG TAO  
*Now, I know you are both very eager  
to share this news. And I am  
blessed to be the show you chose to  
do this on. What is it you want to  
share with China and the world?*

WENDI  
*I am pregnant!*

WANG TAO  
*Again!*

WENDI  
*Yes.*

The crowd bursts into applause.

WANG TAO

*Now do you know if it will be a  
girl or boy this time?*

WENDI

*We know but we don't want to share  
it just yet!*

WANG TAO

*And who are the famous God parents?*

RUPERT

My dear friend Tony Blair.

A translator on the side translates Rupert's words.

WANG TAO

*Now Mr Murdoch. You have some news  
yourself about your latest internet  
venture.*

Wendi's smile cracks just a little. But it's too subtle for the crowd to see.

RUPERT

Yes. My wife and son are currently developing a new strategy to combat the failed algorithm from before.

WANG TAO

*What was wrong with it?*

RUPERT

The Myspace algorithm was showing advertisements before every video. Now, there are no more ads!

The crowd applauds.

WANG TAO

(looks straight into  
camera)

*We'll hear more about that right  
after the break!*

Someone from backstage shouts - CUT.

CUT TO BLACK:

**INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT**

Wendi in a different dress. Murdoch sits on the furthest end of the car, engrossed on his phone.

Wendi stares out the window. Neither are talking.

RUPERT  
I'm having you step off the board.

WENDI  
What?

RUPERT  
Lachlan has it under control from  
here on out.

Before Wendi can protest any more--

The car pulls to a stop outside a red carpet. Murdoch grabs Wendi's hand.

She takes a moment to put on her best smile.

**EXT. MANSION GARDENS - NIGHT**

A giant fountain sits in the centre of the front yard. Beds of yellow lilies surround the footpath. The Los Angeles skyline is in the background.

Jill, the tanned woman from Wendi's pool party runs up to greet them. A big kiss on both cheeks. She wears a head piece larger than her head.

JILL  
Look at all the paparazzi! Some  
darling must've leaked the event!

Jill pouts at a camera.

She leads them towards the mansion in the distance. It's spectacular.

JILL (CONT'D)  
Peter is over there.

Jill runs off, waving her hand around.

JILL (CONT'D)  
PETER! PETER!

PETER (57) notices Rupert and Wendi. Excuses himself from his current conversation--

PETER  
Rupert!

Kisses Wendi's cheek.

PETER (CONT'D)

Wendi, you look scrumptious. Sorry  
about the paparazzi.

(whispers)

Jill loves the press.

Peter has a feminine vibe. In the distance, a young STUD (23)  
waves at him.

Peter, desperate to get away--

PETER (CONT'D)

Eat and drink. Do what you like.

Peter winks at Rupert.

PETER (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Wendi is finally left alone with her husband.

WENDI

(whispers)

You don't get to drop that on me  
and then walk away.

RUPERT

Don't make a scene. We'll talk  
about it later.

Rupert wanders towards the bar. Begins to engage in a  
conversation with a YOUNGER WOMAN (25), pretty, wearing a  
short dress.

Wendi watches her touch Rupert's arm. Fuming.

**INT. MANSION LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Wendi waits for Peter to finish flirting with his young stud.

WENDI

Peter. Gorgeous party, as always.

PETER

Thanks darl. Help yourself to some  
Rose Champagne. It's divine.

WENDI

Did Jill talk to you about the  
Myspace investment?

PETER

Yes she did. I love you but I'm hosting tonight. Maybe another time?

Ignoring his request--

WENDI

Did you look at the proposal my assistant sent you?

PETER

Look Wendi, I'm a business man and I just don't see this as a good investment anymore.

WENDI

But six months ago, you were practically begging me to--

PETER

Honey...6 months ago, Myspace was still profitable. It's shares are so low right now, it's practically a start up.

WENDI

Well, that's the thing I was going to talk to you about.

Peter waves to another YOUNG MAN (23), half listening.

WENDI (CONT'D)

We're actually selling to Facebook. So shares are low right now. But as soon as the merger is finalized, it's going to drive share prices through the roof.

PETER

I'm not the right person for this. I hear Xing Chang right now might be looking to invest. Stick to the Chinese. That's the best I got right now.

WENDI

This is the investment of a lifetime Peter--

PETER

(cuts her off)

Look Wendi. I'm a huge fan of Rupert and I'm a huge fan of yours.  
(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)  
But please stop asking me to invest  
in this sinking ship. It's  
pathetic.

WENDI  
What's pathetic is your marriage to  
Jill.

PETER  
Excuse me?

WENDI  
We all know you're as gay as Elton  
John.

PETER  
How dare you?

Rupert notices the commotion. Makes his way over.

RUPERT  
What's the matter?

PETER  
(to Rupert)  
You need to sush your wife. She's  
out of line.

RUPERT  
What did you say Wendi?

Wendi can feel every pair of eyes side glancing at her.

WENDI  
I SAID HE'S GAY. HOMOSEXUAL. GAY AS  
ELTON JOHN.

The crowd gasps.

**EXT. MANSION DRIVEWAY - NIGHT**

Wendi's shoes are off as she storms the gates. Rupert is  
nowhere to be seen.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Wendi!

Tony Blair (50), dressed as dapper as ever, catches up to  
her.

TONY  
You caused quite a commotion back  
there.

Wendi continues storming.

WENDI

They're all playing dress up. But it's all just a lie. It's all make believe.

TONY

I'll have a word with Peter. If that means anything.

Wendi is quiet.

WENDI

I don't need your help.

TONY

Clearly.

Wendi speeds up.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hey, hey slow down. You're not actually going to make the prime minister run, are you?

Wendi slows down. Then stops.

WENDI

This is all Lachlan's fault. I should've been the only one in charge.

TONY

We all have our ups and downs.

WENDI

I never have downs.

TONY

That's impossible.

WENDI

I only have ups.

TONY

Right. Well, sooner or later, you're going to have some downs.

Wendi pauses.

WENDI

No, not me.

Wendi turns to walk off.

**INT. EXPENSIVE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT - SHANGHAI - EVENING**

This is the first time we have seen Wendi's family since the wedding. Wendi's dad - Dehui, dressed in a poor man's suit, that seems to have been worn a thousand times.

Mei (now 34yo) has gained a little weight. But still recognizable with her plain face and quiet demeanor. She's quiet. Years of resentment towards her sister has made her sick.

Li Hua (now 40yo), still skinny and wears her signature red lipstick. Her caked on makeup gathers between her wrinkles.

Wendi is at the head of the table.

WENDI  
(to the waiter)  
*Let's have banquet number 5.*

She sends the waiter away.

Dehui picks up his chopsticks and uses his shirt to clean it.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*Dad, you don't have to do that here.*

Embarrassed, Dehui puts the chopsticks down.

DEHUI  
*I'm so happy we are all finally together.*

WENDI  
*Where is my little brother?*

DEHUI  
*He couldn't get time off work.*

WENDI  
*I told him I would pay for the time off.*

DEHUI  
*I know. But I think he's trying to get a promotion right now. So he wants to look good.*

WENDI  
*Tell him I'll speak to his boss.*

DEHUI  
(obedient)  
*I will.*

Wendi looks around the restaurant, almost like she's looking for someone. No one catches her eye.

WENDI  
*Why all the dreary faces! We're celebrating!*

LI HUA  
*What are we celebrating?*

WENDI  
*My baby!*

Wendi rubs her stomach.

Li Hua is genuinely excited.

LI HUA  
*How many weeks?*

WENDI  
*9.*

DEHUI  
*I'm going to spoil him to death.*

WENDI  
*It's a girl.*

DEHUI  
*Wahhhh another little princess!*

Mei hasn't spoken a word this entire time.

WENDI  
*I'm excited for Grace to have a sister.*

Mei's eyes flicker to Wendi. An acknowledgement. Is this the beginning of a reconciliation?

Wendi notices a MAN in a business suit sit down with his family.

From the corner of Wendi's eye, she watches him.

Mei notices that Wendi is secretly watching the Man and his family. But no one else seems to notice.

Wendi calls the Waiter over. Whispers something in his ear. Immediately, the Waiter brings an expensive looking bottle of wine to the mysterious Man and his family. He looks over. Wendi gives a small wave.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
(to her own family)  
*Excuse me for a moment.*

She gets up and walks over to the MAN.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*Mr Chang. So great to see you here  
tonight! This must be your  
beautiful family.*

XING CHANG (54), awkward with thinning hair introduces his family.

XING CHANG  
*This is my wife, Xiu and my  
daughter Ting Ting.*

WENDI  
(to Ting Ting)  
*What a beautiful necklace! Did your  
dad buy that for you?*

Ting Ting nods.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*Your dad has very good taste!*

Wendi points over to her table.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*I'm here having dinner with my  
family! I see we are both family  
oriented people!*

XING CHANG  
*Absolutely. Family ALWAYS comes  
first, right honey?*

Their daughter nods vigorously.

WENDI  
*May I speak with you privately?*

Xing Chang excuses himself from the table and follow Wendi to the back of the restaurant.

WENDI (CONT'D)

*I fly to China to see my family once a month. I want to make sure they are doing ok.*

XING CHANG

*That's very noble of you.*

WENDI

*We are very family driven. Once you are a part of the family, we take very good care of you.*

XING CHANG

*I can only imagine so.*

WENDI

*So I would be honored if you considered investing in Myspace and becoming a part of the family. Because once you invest in the family, you're in for life.*

Xing Chang chuckles.

XING CHANG

*You are very sneaky Mrs Murdoch. Bringing your family here today knowing I'd be here.*

(beat)

*I'll tell you what, I know you are good friends with the Prime Minister of Great Britain. I wish to lower tariffs on Chinese coal in Great Britain right now, but he is adamant on keeping it high. If you help me out, I'm sure I can find a way to invest some of my new profits into your little internet venture.*

Xing Chang returns to his family like nothing happened.

**INT. EXPENSIVE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS**

Wendi, excited and barely able to keep it together, returns to her family.

Wendi resumes her meal like nothing's wrong. Her family however, is uncomfortable with what just transpired.

You can cut the tension with a knife.

The waiter returns with bowls of frog legs.

WENDI  
*What's wrong with you all? Eat up!*

Mei slams the table and storms out. Denhui and Lihua chase after her.

**EXT. SEAFOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Wendi bursts through the double doors.

In the distance, she sees her father hurrying off with her two sisters. She runs towards them.

WENDI  
 (screaming)  
*Where are you going?*

MEI  
 (to her father and sister)  
*Don't look back. Ignore her.*

Wendi pulls on Mei's shoulder.

MEI (CONT'D)  
*I should've known.*

WENDI  
*What are you talking about?*

MEI  
*You were using us.*

WENDI  
*That's ridiculous! I ran into an old friend.*

MEI  
*You knew he was going to be there.*

WENDI  
*I had no idea he wa--*

Interrupts--

MEI  
*All of these years, you've cast us aside. The only people who gave a shit about you. And now, you use us like we're trash. Shame on your Wen Ge.*

(MORE)

MEI (CONT'D)  
*I grew up in your shadows,  
 wondering why I was never good  
 enough. Wondering why I wasn't as  
 smart or as pretty as you. But now?  
 I'm glad I'm not you. Because  
 everything you've ever done has  
 been to service yourself. I may not  
 be rich or successful. But at least  
 I have integrity. At least I'm  
 capable of love.*

Wendi stands there, stunned. Cheeks, burning.

WENDI  
*You have no idea what it's like for  
 me. You'll never be as good as me.  
 And that kills you doesn't it? You  
 stopped giving a shit when you  
 realized you were never going to  
 amount to anything. So don't even  
 pretend you have an idea of what  
 I've had to do to get to where I  
 am.*

MEI  
*It's clear to me. You sold your  
 soul.*

Dehui drags Mei away.

**EXT. MURDOCH'S PRIVATE BOAT - DAY**

Two masseuse tables side by side, Wendi and Tony each have their personal massage therapists. Pounding away on their backs.

A large banner hangs between two poles - **HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
 PRINCESS GRACE!**

Grace is nowhere to be seen.

Wendi and Tony's heads are facing the floor.

WENDI  
 What are you doing next weekend?

TONY  
 Depends what you're proposing.

WENDI  
 Fancy a weekend away?

CUT TO:

**EXT. CARMEL RANCH - CALIFORNIA - DAY**

A huge castle like structure greets us. With stone walls and tiled roofs in the shape of cones.

It's hard to believe we're not in the South of France.

**EXT. RANCH POOL - CONTINUOUS**

Topless waiters serving elaborate cocktails to all the guests.

Wendi, who is normally the life of the party is nowhere to be found.

We finally spot her, sitting on the side talking with Tony Blair.

TONY

The sunshine feels good on my  
British skin.

WENDI

The air is so fresh here. It's my  
favorite getaway.

Tony takes a deep breath in and then releases it.

TONY

Smells like freedom.

Beat.

TONY (CONT'D)

You know I've known Rupert for over  
20 years?

WENDI

What was he like back then?

TONY

He was ambitious. He worked so damn  
hard. Never had time for anyone.

WENDI

What's changed?

TONY

I think you breathed life into him.  
Made him feel young again.

WENDI

He's a hard man to please.

Tony chuckles.

TONY

The problem with men like Rupert is that they're always chasing the next fad. He's a businessman. He's always thinking about the next investment.

WENDI

I feel like I'm no longer profitable.

Tony finishes his drink.

WENDI (CONT'D)

Do you want another?

Tony hesitates.

WENDI (CONT'D)

It's ok. We're just enjoying each others' company.

Wendi motions for a maid to bring him another drink.

**INT. LIVING ROOM/DANCE HALL - NIGHT**

One half of the living room has been transformed into a dance floor. Disco balls droop from the ceiling, casting shards of light on the sweaty bodies.

Wendi is in the centre, dancing freely with Tony and a few female friends.

The music picks up. Wendi begins to dance harder to the beat. She edges closer to Tony who is tipsy from the alcohol.

Their bodies are close. Tony's hot breath is inches from Wendi's neck.

**EXT. RANCH POOL - NIGHT**

Wendi is inside the infinity pool still in her dress.

Tony stands on the edge, refusing to get in.

WENDI

Come on! Don't be a pussy!

TONY  
Did you just call the Prime  
Minister of Great Britain a pussy?

WENDI  
PUSSY!

Wendi swims to the other side of the pool.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Come on! Just jump!

TONY  
I really shouldn't. They're  
watching.

Wendi looks around in the darkness, expecting to see the secret service with binoculars.

WENDI  
Where are they?

TONY  
Up high somewhere.

WENDI  
Follow me.

Wendi hops out of the pool, and wraps herself in a towel.

**EXT. RANCH BALCONY - NIGHT**

Wendi and Tony are tucked away. High above the ground, looking through a telescope into the star studded sky.

They're finally alone.

Wendi points to a random star.

WENDI  
That's the Orion's belt.

TONY  
Is that right?

WENDI  
I've learned that if you say  
anything with complete conviction,  
99% of the time, nobody will  
question you.

Tony chuckles.

TONY  
That's my life motto.

Beat.

WENDI  
Back in China, I was very poor. And  
my sister and I would pray to the  
stars that one day, we could come  
to America and live like queens.

Pause.

TONY  
Where's your sister now?

WENDI  
In China.

TONY  
She never made it out?

WENDI  
No. She didn't have my stamina. My  
drive.

Pause.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
She would've been eaten alive out  
here.

Wendi looks out at the gardens. Fairy lights dangle over a  
water feature.

A long silence.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
I feel like I can talk to you about  
anything.

Wendi looks through the telescope. But instead of looking up  
into the sky, she points it forward.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Sometimes I think I can see China  
from here.

Wendi looks through the telescope again. POV of lens - of  
just blurry shapes of trees and buildings. No China. No Mei.

Beat.

Wendi looks into Tony's blue eyes.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
I need a favor, Tony.

TONY  
What is it?

WENDI  
Those coal tariffs you've imposed  
on Chinese imports. I need them  
lifted.

She takes a seductive step towards Tony. He stays put.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING**

Wendi, naked. Intertwined in satin sheets. The sun is barely poking out.

Wendi opens her eyes and looks to her right expecting someone there. But it's empty.

A folded up piece of paper sits on the bedside table:

*"You scratched my back, I scratch yours. Expect good news from the Chinese in 2 weeks. Love, Tony."*

Instead of rejoicing, Wendi looks tired. Sad. Defeated.

**INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Water BLASTS onto Wendi's back. She dips her head under the shower head. Closes her eyes.

FLASH FROM LAST NIGHT: Wendi and Tony's bodies intertwining. Tony kisses her neck.

BACK TO PRESENT: Wendi scrubs her neck viciously.

FLASH: Tony making love to Wendi. Panting.

BACK TO PRESENT: Wendi scrubs between her legs. Her thighs turn pink.

She turns off the shower. Stands there, dripping. Head staring at the ground. Disgusted with herself.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wendi dressed in track pants and an XL t-shirt. For the first time in a long time, she's dressed like a normal person.

She draws the blinds. Darkness.

The house is quiet.

Wendi sits on the edge of the bed. Sees her lacy underwear from last night. She picks it up and BURIES it in the trash.

A realization. Maybe she has sold her soul.

A beat.

Wendi picks up the phone and dials.

RING RING. RING RING.

**INT. TINY STUDIO APARTMENT (SOMEWHERE ELSE) - NIGHT**

CLOSE ON a cell phone. It lights up. We are in an old, modest home but cosy. Various colored chalk is spread around the table.

We HEAR footsteps.

A hand reaches in, grabs the phone.

It's Mei.

MEI

Hello?

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP. They've hung up.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

Wendi looks at her phone. Shuts it off.

Her breathing is shallow. She can't tear her eyes off the ground. A frail figure. Alone.

**EXT. NYC SOHO APARTMENT - DAY**

Back inside the hustle and bustle of NYC. A HOMELESS MAN (45) wakes up cuddling an empty bottle of rum.

**INT. MURDOCH DINING ROOM - DAY**

The sound of a blender. CLOSE ON strawberries and raspberries disintegrating into a milky substance.

Her hand rests on the blender but Wendi's mind is elsewhere. She stares out the window at the skyline. Feeling nothing.

Rupert sits at the other end of the dining table, reading this week's issue of The Economist.

Rupert is cold. Expressionless.

A baby cries in the next room.

The life from this household has been sucked dry.

Mrs Chu carries baby CHLOE, Wendi's newborn into the room. The baby cries loudly, snot flooding down her lips.

MRS CHU

Mrs Deng--

Wendi doesn't notice.

Mrs Chu is trying to shush the baby but it only makes her cry louder.

MRS CHU (CONT'D)

Please Mrs Deng. I think she's hungry.

Wendi is snapped back into reality.

WENDI

Feed her! What am I paying you for?

Mrs Chu bows and disappears out of the room.

Wendi's assistant - Ruby runs into the room--

RUBY

Your dad's on the line Mrs Deng. He says it's urgent.

WENDI

Tell him I'm busy.

RUBY

He sounds desperate ma'am.

Wendi sighs. Exits into--

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Wendi shuffles down the hallway.

WENDI  
 (impatient)  
*Make it quick dad.*

Muffled sounds.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
 (into the phone)  
*Hello? Can you hear me?*

The phone crackles. Dehui's voice goes in and out.

Wendi walks into:

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Two chefs quickly abandon their posts and disappear.

Dehui's voice still sounds crackly.

DEHUI (O.S.)  
*Hel...hel...yo....ter....hi*

WENDI  
 (into the phone)  
*You need to call me back later. I  
 can't hear you.*

Wendi walks into:

**INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Suddenly the phone clicks and everything is clear.

DEHUI (O.S.)  
*Can you hear me? Hello? Hello?*

WENDI  
*Yes dad. Now's not a good time.  
 What is it?*

DEHUI (O.S.)  
*It's your sister.*

WENDI  
*What's wrong with her now?*

Wendi closes the laundry room door.

There is a long pause.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*Dad? You there?*

And then...we hear a soft sobbing...

Wendi doesn't know what to think.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
*Dad? What's wrong?*

Another long pause.

DEHUI (O.S.)  
*Your sister.*

Denhui's voice quivers.

DEHUI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*She was found by her friend.*

Silence.

DEHUI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*She had a bed sheet tied around her neck.*

A long, drawn out silence.

DEHUI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*I know you and Mei never mended things...I don't want you to blame yourself.*

Wendi's hand shakes. The walls close in, as if suffocating her.

WENDI  
*Why would you say that? Of course I don't blame myself. Why would you say something like that?*

DEHUI (O.S.)  
*No--he--hell--*

WENDI  
*Hello? Hello?*

DEHUI (O.S.)  
*I--wa-----i-----d---o*

WENDI  
*I can't hear you dad. Hello?*

BEEP BEEP BEEP. The line goes dead.

Wendi sinks to the floor. The room spins.

Frustration. Regret. Heartbreak.

She grabs an armful of fresh laundry and buries her face in it. She shrieks at the top of her lungs.

The baby starts to cry.

**INT. LIMOUSINE - GUANGZHOU, CHINA - DAY**

Wendi, dressed in all black, looks out the tinted windows. Guangzhou has changed since she last visited.

The street vendors are now replaced by leering skyscrapers.

**EXT. CEMETARY - DAY**

Wendi's black stilettos get caught in the soft grass.

A small gathering of close family and friends crowd around a small tomb.

Wendi tries her best to suppress her emotions.

Dehui runs over to greet Wendi--

They embrace but it's cold. Void of connection.

Wendi greets the rest of her family. They look like strangers.

LI HUA  
*Hello Wendi.*

Li Hua gives her sister a cold hug. She's put on weight. Her two sons run in the distance, playing tag.

LI HUA (CONT'D)  
(screams at her sons)  
*CUT IT OUT. SHOW SOME RESPECT FOR  
THE DEAD.*

Wendi's younger brother Deng Fu is in his 30s. She can't help but notice a tiny bald patch.

DENG FU  
*Good to see you, Wendi.*

They hug. It's awkward.

Wendi walks up to the tiny tomb. She stares at it, unable to look away.

From behind--Dehui hands Wendi a metal box. It's the tin box from her childhood.

DEHUI

*I found this underneath her bed in  
her apartment.*

Wendi takes the box. Those same hula hooping, Hawaiian girls adorn the lid.

It feels foreign in her hands.

She finds a spot away from the proceedings.

Opens the lid and peers inside.

Those same fridge pamphlets. Caucasian families.

Wendi flips through more pamphlets.

Mixed in is a New York Times article. Curious, she reads it. It's cut out from a newspaper. The heading reads *MURDOCH MARRIES SECOND WIFE.*

Wendi reaches into the box and takes out the rest of the papers. They're all cut outs from various media outlets. All about her.

She flips through. Page after page.

Until suddenly. She stops.

A drawing. Of Wendi and Mei as children. They are holding hands next to a large fridge. Wide smiles with hope in their eyes.

Suddenly, Wendi begins to weep.

**INT. LIMOUSINE (PARKED) - NIGHT**

The tin rests gently on Wendi's lap. She holds it while peering through the tinted glass at her old home.

The city may have changed but her old neighborhood is still the same.

Kids are on skateboards now instead of bikes.

Wendi can see inside the house, her father is cooking.

Steam rises from the hot dumplings, fogging up the window.

**INT. WENDI'S OLD HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Dehui washes a pan. He notices a limousine outside.

**INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT**

Dehui knocks on the tinted window. Wendi rolls it down halfway.

DEHUI

*What are you doing outside? Come in, come in!*

WENDI

*I'm ok. I just stopped by on my way to the airport.*

DEHUI

*Nonsense! Come in!*

WENDI

*No really dad. I'm ok.*

DEHUI

*I made your favorite. Chives dumplings! Lihua and Fu are inside! We're all dying to see photos of your new baby.*

Dehui tries to open the door but it's locked.

WENDI

*I have a flight to catch, dad.*

DEHUI

*Just come in for some dumplings! Remember when we used to play games after dinner? And I'd give you pamphlets I'd collect from work?*

Beat.

WENDI

*Why did Mei collect articles about me?*

DEHUI

*She looked up to you. She wanted to keep track of all your successes.*

WENDI

*But she hated me.*

DEHUI

*She never stopped loving you.*

WENDI

*I don't believe it.*

DEHUI

*She was so proud of you.*

WENDI

*She was always jealous of me.*

DEHUI

*You have no idea how much she adored you. She never stopped loving you.*

Wendi turns away. Wipes away tears.

She can barely look at her father.

DEHUI (CONT'D)

*Please come in. Just for a minute.*

Wendi can sense the desperation in her father's voice.

DEHUI (CONT'D)

*We miss you, Wen Ge.*

Wendi notices a tiny hole starting to form on her father's sleeve. The hole has been mended before. Over and over again.

Beat.

DEHUI (CONT'D)

*Please. Come home.*

Unable to make eye contact, Wendi rolls up her tinted window.

Dehui just stares at the limousine, the floor giving out under him.

**INT. MURDOCH LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The tin box is emptied out. Wendi has all the articles spread out. But her focus is on the picture of her and Mei as kids.

Wendi's daughter, Grace (now 12) walks past the double doors.

WENDI  
(calls out)  
GRACE?

Grace peers in.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Come here.

Grace knows better than to say no. Grace sits stiffly on her mother's lap.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
How is school?

GRACE  
It's fine.

WENDI  
What's your favorite subject?

GRACE  
English.

WENDI  
How's Mrs Hoover?

GRACE  
She was my teacher 2 years ago.

WENDI  
Oh.

GRACE  
Can I be excused? I have homework to do.

Grace's pearly brown eyes are void of any emotion. They're like two empty marbles. Indifferent.

WENDI  
Yes. Go on.

Grace races out the door like she's running from the plague.

Wendi swallows.

**INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING**

Hollow eyes and sagging skin. Wendi looks like she hasn't slept in days. She sips a hot tea, bundled in winter clothes. Rain splashes against her grandiose windows. NYC looks dreary and cold.

A MAID (50s) hand delivers an A4 envelope.

Confused, Wendi rips it open.

It's a petition for divorce.

Wendi's heart stops.

Outside, a pigeon flies, head first, into the window. The dead bird smears the window as it falls to its death, 200 storeys below.

**EXT. NEWSCORP BUILDING - DOWNTOWN NYC - DAY**

The rain drops have hardened, almost making indents on the concrete ground.

Wendi's assistant holds up a golden yellow umbrella, struggling to keep up.

Outside the revolving doors, a HOMELESS MAN (mid 50s), a white beard and bald patch, shakes in the cold.

HOMELESS MAN

Miss? It's my birthday today. Care to make my birthday wish come true?

The sight of him disgusts her. She walks right by as if he doesn't exist.

**INT. RUPERT'S OFFICE - DAY**

The corner office in the highest part of the building. Rupert is surrounded by 5 of his top lawyers.

Wendi storms in with her assistant, completely drenched, trailing behind.

She slams the divorce papers on the table.

WENDI

Explain.

One of Murdoch's clingy lawyers takes the reigns.

LAWYER #1

My client wishes for you to sign these papers within 3 business days. After which the courts will determine who will get custody of the children.

WENDI  
You've got to be joking me.

Rupert remains silent.

The lawyer is about to start speaking again when--

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Shut your fucking mouth and get  
out. All of you.

Wendi turns to Rupert.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Have the fucking decency to talk to  
me.

Pause.

Rupert waves his lawyers out the room. They file out, like  
toy soldiers.

Wendi closes the door.

WENDI (CONT'D)  
Why?

RUPERT  
Why do you think?

WENDI  
Is this because I sank the Myspace  
acquisition? For Gods sake Rupert.  
You know I can make all that back  
in a year--

RUPERT  
Maria found emails between you and  
Tony.

Wendi goes quiet.

A long and agonizing pause.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
What were you thinking?

WENDI  
I don't know what she thinks she  
found, but it's nothing.

RUPERT  
Do you want me to read them out?

Rupert opens up a manila folder, rifles through the papers.

WENDI

I don't know what you're talking about.

RUPERT

Tony admitted to the whole thing.

WENDI

He's a liar. He just wants you to divorce me so he can get rid of me. He knows I'm not a fan of his political agenda--

Rupert reads from a piece of paper.

RUPERT

Oh Tony, I miss you so much. Your body--

WENDI

Stop it.

Wendi panics.

WENDI (CONT'D)

You know what? I'm divorcing you. You were a heartless husband who only cared about money and nothing else. You used me to make you money in China and now you're done. So you're tossing me aside. You think you're so powerful with your team of lawyers but I'm going to destroy you. You'll never see Chloe and Grace ever again.

RUPERT

I look forward to it.

WENDI

The entire world is going to know what a selfish, cruel man you are. You'd have driven me to suicide if I was anyone else.

A long pause.

Rupert presses a button on his Cisco phone.

RUPERT

(into the phone)  
I'm done.

The toy soldiers march back in.

**EXT. NEWSCORP BUILDING - DOWNTOWN NYC - CONTINUOUS**

Wendi steps outside, barely keeping it together. The rain SPLATTERS harder than ever.

A black BMW is waiting.

The homeless person has shifted closer to the doors now.

HOMELESS MAN

Please lady. It's my birthday.

The Homeless man tries to touch her hand. Wendi jumps back.

WENDI

Ugh...don't touch me!

The homeless man spits on her shoe.

HOMELESS MAN

Fuck you, you fucking whore.

Wendi SLAPS him straight across the face. She's shocked by her own strength. The homeless man lunges forward.

Wendi stumbles.

Smashes on the ground.

Ruby drops the umbrella.

Water hits Wendi's face like rocks. Her mascara, although waterproof, cannot handle this amount of rain.

Two SECURITY GUARDS run towards them. Detain the homeless man. He spits again.

Wendi rubs her eyes. Unsure if it's rain or tears.

Off her look--

**INT. GREEN ROOM (PRESS CONFERENCE) - DAY**

This is the first scene of the film. We have come full circle.

Wendi's entourage fuss over her hair and makeup. She's dressed in a Chanel suit with Leboutin heels.

WENDI

When is Grace and Chloe arriving?

RUBY

They're with your husband.

WENDI

Why are they with him?

RUBY

Their preference.

WENDI

Tell them their mother wants to see them.

RUBY

I have ma'am.

WENDI

And?

Beat.

RUBY

I can't force them, ma'am.

Wendi lets that sink in.

WENDI

I want to be alone.

RUBY

Mrs Deng, we still need to rehearse the speech.

WENDI

I will not repeat myself.

Ruby understands.

RUBY

OUT, OUT, EVERYONE OUT. OUT.

Wendi is left alone.

Behind her, a television is on.

NEWS REPORTER

In most recent news, NewsCorp has just sold MySpace to Facebook at a whopping 93% loss. This is a historic blow to the Murdoch empire-

Wendi doesn't seem to be listening because she's taken out the tin box from her childhood.

The contents are once again spread out before her. Articles, photographs of her with celebrities, exam papers...

She basks in its glory, touching the 100% mark on all her tests. It makes her feel better. Like she's a star.

She keeps flipping. Looking for something.

The childhood drawing falls out. Wendi looks at it.

Beat.

Wendi's eyes close. She takes a deep breath.

She scrunches the picture up. Tosses it into the trash can.

She re-opens her eyes. Breathes out. Buries any sign of weakness. Full denial mode.

Wendi begins to recite her speech; perfectly, with extreme precision.

WENDI

Rupert and I are announcing our joint decision for divorce. I will also be stepping down from the board at Star TV, which was a personal decision. I want to take this moment to thank my husband for being the best friend and partner anyone could ask for. And I want to thank my family for being so supportive and loving through this tough time. I have always put family first and this is no exception. My two children are my best friends. They love spending time with me and doing eachothers' nails. They're such darlings. Rupert and I will do our best to shower them with the love that they deserve.

She practices her smiles. Each one as genuine as the last. Then she stops smiling. She looks at herself...

Truly looks at herself.

**CUT TO BLACK.**