

EXT. COURT HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Kim exits the court house. The sky has grown threatening. Lightning ZAPS. Thunder RUMBLES. Much too close for comfort. She races to hail a cab.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Kim slides into the back seat just as the rain begins.

KIM
Grand Central, please hurry.

MICK, the driver, SCREECHES from the curb, speeding like a demon. Kim eyes the photograph of an infant clipped to his dashboard. Mick watches her in the rearview mirror. He speaks in tones normally reserved for the revelation of miracles...

MICK
My grandson, Michael. Named after me. Twelve pounds, thirteen ounces. Born the fourteenth day of the fifteenth month after my son and daughter-in-law were wed. Sixteen hour labor, vaginal delivery, seventeen little stitches. Can you imagine?

Mick hands her the photograph. Kim's duly impressed.

MICK (CONT'D)
Miracles happen, even in New York.

KIM
You're a very lucky man.

MICK
Lucky? Hell, no. It's Saint Jude. He's the one for hopeless cases. The wife and I do novenas. To wear him down.

AT THAT MOMENT, Kim notices a tabloid on the seat next to her. The headline in big bold letters: 60-YEAR-OLD WOMAN BIRTHS TWINS, CREDITS CHINESE HERBS. She picks up the paper. Tries to read in the dim light. Talk about timing.

EXT. CITY STREET

The taxi speeds through the slick streets. Rain mixed with oil leaks. A nasty combination. Suddenly, a yellow MUSTANG skids through a yellow light...

INT. CAB

Kim's thrown against the side door as the taxi stops with a metallic CRUNCH.

MICK

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

(turns to Kim)

Lady, I'm sorry, you all right?

Kim's shaken up, but still in one piece. She manages a nod. Mick storms out of the cab to confront the other DRIVER.

Kim looks out the front windshield. She GASPS!

KIM'S P.O.V.

The windshield wipers swipe the raindrops away, revealing a CHINATOWN street. A small florescent sign on the fritz advertises CHING'S HERBAL PHARMACY.

INT. CHING'S HERBAL PHARMACY - MINUTES LATER

Small, dim. A bell CHIMES as the front door opens. Kim enters slowly, cautiously. Nearly jumping out of her skin as the door behind her closes with an unexpected BANG.

She immediately scrunches her nose as a pungent aroma penetrates her nostrils. She folds her umbrella and looks around, unsure of herself.

Hundreds of herb jars stacked on shelves. Dozens of wooden drawers against the back wall. An abacus, a scale, and various cutting implements rest on the counter. The place seems deserted. Kim waits a few beats. Then...

KIM

Hello? Anybody home?

Nothing. Then she hears some NOISE from a back room. She approaches a curtain in a doorway and peaks through the opening.

KIM'S P.O.V.

The ancient MR. CHING measures a handful of herbs into a mortar and grinds them with a pestle. His bespectacled face and Fu Manchu beard contrast nicely with an IZOD cardigan.

KIM

turns away. Maybe this isn't such a good idea, after all. She starts for the door. Just as she's about to open it, a delicate Chinese woman scurries inside, holding a grocery bag. This is MRS. CHING. She shakes the water from her umbrella. And when she looks up, an impressive mosaic of wrinkles surrounds her gentle smile.

MRS. CHING

This weather, oh! I hope I did not keep you waiting long.

KIM

I was just...passing by.

Mrs. Ching deposits her grocery bag on the counter and gestures towards the curtain.

MRS. CHING

My husband, his hearing, not so good. How can I help?

Kim wants to run. But Mrs. Ching's caring eyes calm her.

KIM

I really want to have a baby.

MRS. CHING

But you are not fertile.

KIM

No, frankly, it's my husband.

Mr. Ching enters in the background. Sees the two women. Gives them a smile and a quick bow.

MRS. CHING

I understand. Impotence affects even the best men.

KIM

No, it's nothing like that. What I need, well, what I truly need is time.

Kim unfolds the tabloid article. Shows Mrs. Ching.

KIM (CONT'D.)

And it's almost as if fate has just grabbed me by the shoulders and pointed me here.

Mrs. Ching regards the tabloid. Her face beams with comprehension.

MRS. CHING

Now I see. Your husband not ready for baby, but your biological clock says tick tock louder today than yesterday.

Kim nods quickly. What the hell is she doing here?

Mrs. Ching glances at her husband. Her smile fades as she rushes to him, REPRIMANDING him in Chinese. She SMACKS her hand against a closed drawer marked with three Chinese characters.

Mr. Ching squints through tiny spectacles, getting very close to the label. He MUTTERS something back in Chinese. And pours the herbs from his scale, back into the drawer. Then he opens the correct drawer that Mrs. Ching indicated and removes some other herbs.

Mrs. Ching continues to scold him as she returns to Kim.

MRS. CHING

My husband, a great man, when he could see and hear.

(indicating tabloid)

But this is very old recipe. Very simple for him. You have babies when you are my age, if you are crazy enough.

It's what Kim wanted to hear.

INT. EXPRESSIONS, INC. - MR. DODD'S OFFICE - DAY

Bryan and Larry speak animatedly. Demonstrating large mock-ups of the JUVENILE BIRTHDAY CARDS they've designed. Dodd listens attentively, behind his imposing desk.

BRYAN

Most boys really don't like the idea of growing up. So these cards help take the fear out of it.

(reading a card aloud)

"Five is best/But six beats the rest!"

The cards are cute, with all of the numbers in the shape of dinosaurs. But they're not exactly reinventing the wheel.

LARRY

"Seven may be heaven/But eight is
grrrrrrreat!"

Dodd looks at them, then the cards. He squints to read.

DODD

"Three's a breeze/But four's one
more?"

(a pregnant pause)

You boys must've spent days on
these rhymes. Not to mention the
psychological research to support
such a profound approach.

He hates it. Their smiles fade. They brace themselves.

DODD

I'm so impressed I'm putting you in
charge of Father's Day. And that's
fathers as in daddies. Not priests.

Bryan and Larry try to take it like men. But clearly they'd rather stick needles in their eyes.

INT. KIM & BRYAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - THAT EVENING

Bryan enters sheepishly to find Kim at the stove. Cutting a piece of cheese cloth to fit the inside of a plastic colander. She turns to him and smiles. Bryan looks relieved. Maybe she's over their fight. Quickly the aroma hits him...

BRYAN

What's cooking, eye of newt?

Kim takes the pot and strains the herbal compound through the colander and into a mug. She explains nonchalantly.

KIM

Just some Chinese herbs, to slow
the incessant ticking of my
biological clock, by deterring the
otherwise rapid maturation of my
ovaries.

She's got to be kidding.

BRYAN

It smells like...doo-doo.

Kim eyes the murky liquid. Sniffs it. Waits a moment to see if Bryan will try to stop her. He watches, intrigued. She's about to gulp. He stops her at the last second.

BRYAN

Where did you get this stuff?

KIM

Chinese women have been using these herbs for centuries. And they must be doing something right because there are a lot of Chinese people.

Kim raises the mug to her lips. Again Bryan stops her.

BRYAN

What if it makes you sick? What do I tell Poison Control?

KIM

Just tell them your obsessive compulsive wife was trying to work miracles. Without disturbing Saint Jude.

Bryan seems perplexed. He watches her blow on the hot liquid. AND THEN SHE DRINKS IT.

INT. KIM & BRYAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Riley snoozes cozily on the couch. Suddenly he awakens with a start. Looks around. Nervous. The wind HOWLS. A tree branch SCRATCHES the window ominously.

With some trepidation, Riley approaches the window and looks out. Wind and rain. A night fit for neither man nor beast. Without warning, a large orange MAPLE LEAF hits the glass. Sticks to it. Right in front of Riley's snout. He bares his fangs. GROWLS. Then his fur is ruffled by an unexpected rush of air.

Riley turns around. Scans the room. Everything seems all right. But then he feels another gust of wind. Riley looks toward the stairs. Spooked, but curious.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Riley approaches Kim and Bryan's bedroom. He stops in the open doorway and looks inside. He sees something he doesn't like. A fearful WHIMPER escapes his throat as he backs up and hightails it down the stairs.

INT. KIM AND BRYAN'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

We hear Riley O.S., not just barking but HOWLING at the Grandfather Clock. Bryan wiggles out of the tangled sheets. Heads for the bathroom. In an early morning daze.

BRYAN

He needs a shrink, that dog.

Kim stirs beneath the sheets. Swings her legs out of bed. Her oddly small feet drop to the floor. A farther journey than we would have guessed. The extra fabric from an oversized nightgown drops in a heap around her.

A tiny hand scratches her hip. Her wedding ring slips off her suddenly too-small finger and rolls under the bed. She takes a step and trips on her nightgown.

BATHROOM

Bryan ignores the O.S. THUD. Peeing peacefully. Eyes closed. Dreamy. Suddenly an EAR PIERCING SCREAM echoes O.S.. Distracting his aim. He frantically grabs a tissue to clean up the mess. Another SCREAM. Bryan swings open the door...

BRYAN

What is it, what's wrong?

KIM & BRYAN'S BEDROOM

A TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL lies on the floor. She stares at her little hands, her little arms. Her lower lip quivers.

BRYAN

Holy shi--who the hell are you?

The Girl picks herself up from the floor. She lifts the hem of her nightgown, to keep from tripping again. She walks cautiously towards a full-length mirror.

BRYAN

What's going on? How'd you get in here?

The girl stares at her reflection with a mixture of horror and disbelief. Tears roll down her cheeks.

KIM

How could this happen?

Now Bryan feels bad. He's upset the kid, made her cry.

BRYAN

I didn't mean to scare you. I had no idea we had company.

She looks at him, frightened. She needs him to believe her.

KIM

We don't.

There's something familiar about this kid, but...

BRYAN

When you say "we," how exactly do you mean that? Where's my wife? And why are you wearing her nightgown?

She grabs his hand. She has to convince him.

KIM

It's me, Bryan. It's me.

Bryan pulls away. This is way too weird, even for him. He folds his arms and speaks to the air...

BRYAN

All right, Kim, very funny. You can come out now.

KIM

I'm not hiding. I'm right here.

Bryan runs to the closet, opens it quickly. He drops to the floor, looks under the bed. No sign of Kim.

BRYAN

Come on, I said I was sorry.

KIM

It's the herbs, they were supposed to slow down my biological clock.

He only half listens. His eyes search the room for Kim.

KIM (CONT'D.)

But instead it seems they've reset everything. Before it even started ticking.

Suddenly Bryan grins. Now he understands. He speaks to an imaginary HIDDEN CAMERA.

BRYAN

Candid Camera, no way. I thought that show was canceled years ago. But you got me good.

KIM

Remember? The stinky herbs?

BRYAN

(playing along)
Oh, sure, the stinky herbs. How could I forget the...
(it's hitting him)
...stinky...herbs.

Bryan falls to his knees. Which puts him at Kim's eye level. A speechless beat passes. He stares at her.

BRYAN

It's amazing the way dreams can sometimes feel so...

She pinches his cheek with her little girl fingers.

BRYAN (CONT'D.)

...so incredibly real.

KIM

You have to believe me.

He rises, never taking his eyes off her. Grabs a photo from the dresser. Kim and her father, thirty years ago.

BRYAN

You do look just like Kim. I mean, when she was a girl.

He moves closer to scrutinize his child-wife's face.

BRYAN (CONT'D.)

But you can't be her. Not really. Not again.

KIM

It's like the last thirty years have just...vanished.

Bryan's very close to believing her. But it's impossible! He needs more proof. IF this is Kim, then she'll know...

BRYAN

What was the very first thing I ever said to you?

She dries her eyes, tries to compose herself.

KIM

Before or after you fractured my
fibula with your ski boot?

BRYAN

Never mind, Kim could have told you
that. When did I ask you to marry
me?

KIM

You didn't, I asked you.

BRYAN

(getting nervous)

That was a trick question. You're
very well prepared.

KIM

You sing the "Gilligan's Island"
theme in the shower. You eat pork
rinds when you think I'm sleeping.
You make that high-pitched dolphin
noise right at the moment when you--

BRYAN

--OH MY GOD.

IT IS KIM, IT HAS TO BE KIM. She'd never tell THAT to a
child. She'd never tell THAT to anyone.

BRYAN

It is you.

KIM

Of course it's me. Or what's left
of me.

BRYAN

Nobody knows about the pork rinds.
I mean nobody.

Riley peaks from around the open doorway. He tilts his head,
observing Kim with a puzzled, sideways glance. He WHIMPERS,
as if to confirm the truth. It's Kim, all right.

KIM

I just wanted some time, that's
all. I didn't want to start all
over again.

Bryan tries to console her. Although he could use some
consolation himself.

BRYAN

Okay, okay. Think about it. If
you could change like this
overnight, then you can change back
again overnight, too.

(a worried beat)

Right?

Kim looks at him with big, little girl eyes. He just gave
her a ray of Hope.

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