

LOST IN TRANSLATION (NOT REALLY)

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FADE IN:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

A receptionist sits at her desk.

In front of the desk, magazines lie scattered on a coffee table surrounded by affordable, yet comfy, chairs.

MALCOLM ZHAO (late teens, 1st generation American) sits using his phone. Next to him, HUI-YIN ZHAO, his mom (50s, middle aged Chinese woman) also uses her phone-- but in the way you'd expect someone in their 50s would.

< This indicates dialogue spoken in Chinese. >

MRS ZHAO

< You know, you should try to get an appointment too. >

MALCOLM

(confused/mildly concerned face)

< What? >

MRS ZHAO

< Maybe they can tell you why you're so skinny. >

MALCOLM

< Mom. >

MRS ZHAO

< How are you going to get a girlfriend like that? You know, when your dad and I were your age-- >

MALCOLM

(weirded out)

< Mom! >

DOCTOR KLEIN (female, late 50s, friendly white face) steps out. She looks down at her clipboard, hesitates for a moment.

DOCTOR KLEIN

(slowly and painfully)

Hoo-wee Lin Za-how?

Mrs. Zhao looks up and smiles politely.

DOCTOR KLEIN (CONT'D)

We're ready for you.

She turns to Malcolm.

MALCOLM  
(to Mrs. Zhao)  
< They're ready to see you now. >

They stand and walk to Doctor Klein.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)  
Oh uh, I'm Malcolm. My mom doesn't  
speak English very well. I'm her  
unpaid translator first and son  
second.

Doctor Klein lets out half a laugh.

DOCTOR KLEIN  
Oh! Okay... *Ni hao!*

She bows her head down lightly.

Beat.

DOCTOR KLEIN (CONT'D)  
Right this way.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Doctor Klein flips through her clipboard as Mrs. Zhao sits  
patiently on the examination table.

Malcolm waits standing next to his mom-- he doesn't know what  
to do with his hands.

Doctor Klein looks back at them with a friendly smile.

DOCTOR KLEIN  
So is there any particular reason  
you came to visit today?

MALCOLM  
Just... check up stuff. She has  
this rash.

He looks back at Mrs. Zhao.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)  
It's been a while since she's seen  
a doctor, so she just wanted to be  
extra sure.

MRS ZHAO  
< Did you ask her about your  
weight? >

MALCOLM  
< Mom, she's asking about *you*. >

DOCTOR KLEIN  
All okay?

MALCOLM  
Yeah, yeah. Just a day in the life  
of a translator.

DOCTOR KLEIN  
(another half laugh)  
Oh, right, right! Because the...  
(beat)  
Right. Well, uh, just a few  
preliminary questions: do you  
drink, ma'am?

MALCOLM  
Not much.

DOCTOR KLEIN  
You should probably ask your mom  
that one.

MALCOLM  
(to Mrs Zhao)  
< Do you drink? >

She chuckles.

MRS ZHAO  
< Only when my mother-in-law is in  
town. >

MALCOLM  
Not much.

DOCTOR KLEIN  
And smoking?

Malcolm turns to his mom and makes the gesture.

MALCOLM  
< Do you smoke? >

Mrs. Zhao scowls, almost offended. Malcolm shrugs  
expectantly.

DOCTOR KLEIN  
I'll take that as a no.

Doctor Klein scribbles on her clipboard. She gives Mrs Zhao a thumbs up. Mrs Zhao returns two. Klein looks back down at the clipboard.

DOCTOR KLEIN (CONT'D)  
Let's see here...  
(chuckling)  
This next one is uncomfortable but  
I have to ask.

She looks at Malcolm apologetically, then Mrs. Zhao.

DOCTOR KLEIN (CONT'D)  
Are you sexually active?

He stares her down in disbelief, making a face that screams,  
"You've gotta be kidding me."

DOCTOR KLEIN (CONT'D)  
(shrugging)  
It's procedure.

He pauses. Turns to his mom.

MALCOLM  
< How often do you and dad... >

Mrs. Zhao looks at him, head cocked.

MRS ZHAO  
< Do we what? >

He sighs. His eyes widen.

MALCOLM  
< You know...How often do you... >

They stare at each other for a brief moment. She squints at him. He's dying inside.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)  
< ...make...love? >

Finally, her eyes widen. She laughs and shakes her head. A moment of relief for Malcolm.

MRS ZHAO  
< Oh, you know your dad. 6 or 7  
times a week! >

Malcolm is shocked. Horrified. Appalled.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

Malcolm takes a deep breath. He opens the door and walks in hesitantly. He calls out:

MALCOLM  
< I'm home! >

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

He wanders through the house slowly, scanning every inch of the house.

MALCOLM  
< Mom? Dad! >

He pauses. Silence.

He walks up the stairs to his bedroom, when he suddenly stops at the top. His eyes widen. There's a faint thumping noise.

He leans in close the wall. It's getting louder and louder. Then-- a loud, melodic BEEP. He turns.

It's just the dryer.

He breathes a sigh of relief. He laughs at himself for his paranoia, and opens the door to--

INT. MALCOLM'S BEDROOM - DAY

He barges in to see:

MR. ZHAO (50s, middle aged Chinese man) has Mrs. Zhao up against the wall. They're half naked-- you know what's up (seriously, I don't want to imagine this any more).

MALCOLM  
OH MY GOD.

He turns away in horror. They turn to their son, laughing. They haven't stopped.

MRS ZHAO  
< Oh, we didn't think you'd be home  
so early. >

MALCOLM  
< It's SIX O'CLOCK! >

MR ZHAO  
< I guess we just lost track of  
time! >

They laugh. Malcolm screams. He turns around for a brief second. They're at it on his bed. He freaks out, horrified.

They start ripping off each other's clothes. He backs out as quickly as he can-- too quick.

He trips and *dramatically* falls down the stairs-- like the staircase scene in *Psycho*. He can't get the sounds out of his head: the laughing, the fucking.

He's falling to his demise. Wearing the same shocked, horrified, appalled face.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Malcolm is lost in thought, shuddering at everything he's just pictured in his head.

MRS ZHAO  
< Malcolm! What'd she say? >

Malcolm BREAKS from his trance.

MALCOLM  
< Oh, uh, how often do you... >

Mrs. Zhao looks at him annoyed.

MRS ZHAO  
< Do I what?! >

MALCOLM  
< How often do you... >

He tenses up. The paranoia, the disgust, every horrible thought floods to his brain. He has a mini-panic attack.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)  
< ... floss? >

MRS ZHAO  
< Oh. >

She shakes her head, slightly embarrassed. Malcolm finally relaxes.

MALCOLM

Nope. She's not sexually active.

Doctor Klein writes on her clipboard. Malcom sighs in relief.

FADE OUT.