

Blended

Kitty Cheung

EXT. BACKYARD GARDEN - DAY

FIONA (O.S.)

He's only marrying you for your citizenship.

Cut between close-up shots of the lush, if slightly tacky, garden: strawberry plants potted in cut-up milk jugs, beanstalks climbing makeshift trellises made from foraged tree branches, squash vines weighing down on a fraying clothesline.

SAMMY (52) squats in her backyard garden tending to a bed of Chinese leafy greens. She wears Adidas slippers and a comically large sun hat made of straw. Her daughter FIONA (17) stands nearby, arms crossed over a t-shirt and pajama shorts, exasperatedly trying to maintain SAMMY's attention as she gardens.

All dialogue in [brackets] is spoken in Cantonese.

SAMMY

[What a shame. The slugs are eating our gai lan.]

SAMMY holds a stem of gai lan up for FIONA to see. There are small insect-bitten holes in the leaf.

FIONA

(ignores the gai lan)

[You've only known him for six months, Ma. How would you like it if I married my boyfriend next week? We've been dating way longer than you two have.]

SAMMY

[It's different when you're older.]

FIONA

[As in he has] ulterior motives. It's legit marriage fraud. [Why do you think he's rushing this so much?]

SAMMY

[June said that if I add crushed eggshells to the soil, it will stop the slugs.]

FIONA

Ma.

SAMMY

[He's coming here for a better life, same as we did.]

FIONA

[He's skipping the line. What, did Dad sleep with some random Canadian so he could come here? Is that our immigration story?]

SAMMY

[Who cares about him? He left us.]

FIONA

He was deported.

SAMMY

[And he never even sent any money back from China! Meanwhile I was here working, taking care of you.]

FIONA

[Oh yes, because you kept me so well-fed with those] McDonald's Quarter Pounders.

SAMMY

[You were too skinny as a kid. Could see all your ribs.]

FIONA

[You encouraged me to overeat.]

SAMMY

[And look at you now! Such a healthy girl.]

FIONA

(under her breath)

With only a mild binge-eating problem.

SAMMY

[Was it eggshells or garlic? Grab that garden spade.]

FIONA begrudgingly plucks the garden spade from the soil near her feet.

FIONA

(waving the spade around)

[You've raised me alone for well over a decade. Why do you think you need him?]

SAMMY moves to the beanstalks, still focused on gardening.

SAMMY

[He's not so bad.]

(Beat.)

[He can cook for us.]

FIONA

[So you just want another servant.]

SAMMY

(cackles with delight)
[The snow peas are almost ready. We can harvest them next week and make beef stir-fry.]
Ah so yummy yummy happy happy!

FIONA

[Ma I swear I will rip those plants down—]

SAMMY

(teasing in sing-song)
[Then you won't get to eat any peas.]
(insulted and mocking)
[Hm! How can a daughter be so disrespectful? Look at you. You've never had a dad. Ha! Now I've found one for you!]

FIONA is visibly upset by this.

FIONA

I never wanted a
(mocks SAMMY's heavy
Cantonese accent)
new dad!
(back to FIONA's own
Canadian accent)
This guy is a stranger! He's
invading our house, invading
this country, invading my mom!

SAMMY

[Nonsense nonsense! You should be happy. You get to be an older sister soon.]

FIONA

(appalled)

He's bringing his son?

(weakly)

What, you're like a two-for-one PR deal?

SAMMY continues gardening. FIONA clutches the garden spade, then hurls it at the ground. The tool clatters against the driveway. FIONA locks eyes with her mother—the first time this conversation where they've made significant eye contact—before running inside the house.

