

Also by Ins Choi

Subway Stations of the Cross
(Illustrated by Guno Park)

KIM'S CONVENIENCE

Ins Choi



CHARACTERS

APPA

A 59-year-old first-generation Korean-Canadian man,
and owner of Kim's Convenience store.
Speaks with a thick Korean-Canadian accent.

UMMA

A 56-year-old first-generation Korean-Canadian woman.
APPA's wife. Speaks with a thick Korean-Canadian accent.

JUNG

A 32-year-old second-generation Korean-Canadian man.
APPA and UMMA's son.

JANET

A 30-year-old second-generation Korean-Canadian woman.
APPA and UMMA's daughter.

The following characters are played by one actor:

RICH

A young black man

MR. LEE

A successful black real estate agent and a friend of APPA

MIKE

A black man with a thick Jamaican accent

ALEX

A 32-year-old black police officer and a childhood friend of JUNG

SCENE

A convenience store in Toronto's Regent Park, a low- to middle-income neighbourhood made up mainly of recent immigrants.

1. Open

Autumn. Morning. Inside a convenience store.

APPA is heard humming a medley of hymns as he enters from the back of the store with a pocketful of money, a mug of coffee in hand, and scratch-and-win card trays. He puts the coffee mug on the counter, inserts the money in the cash register, and slides in the scratch-and-win trays. He turns on the lights, then goes to the window and flips the CLOSED sign to OPEN. He unlocks the front door. He returns to the counter, pours sugar in his coffee, and stirs. As he looks out the window, he sips. He sighs. He turns on the radio and begins pricing a case of cans with a price gun.

2. I am Korean

Early afternoon. Bell. RICH enters.

APPA: Hi.

RICH: Hey, wassup?

APPA: Nice day.

RICH: Yeah. Hook me up with a scratch-and-win card, please? (APPA pulls out the tray and RICH chooses a card.) Thanks.

APPA: Is that one you car?

RICH: Sorry?

APPA: *Pointing to a car outside.* Is that one you car?

RICH: Is that one my car?

APPA: Yah.

RICH: Which one?

APPA: White Honda in no-parking zone. Is that one you car?

RICH: No, man, I don't even have a car.

APPA: Oh.

RICH: And a du Maurier Balanced, please.

APPA: Large or small?

RICH: Small.

APPA: King size or regular?

RICH: King size.

APPA: If you don't have car, why you ask, "Which one?" when I ask, "Is that one you car?"

RICH: I don't know. Didn't know what you were talking about.

APPA: *Indicating the case of cans on the counter.* Insam Energy Beverage?

RICH: What?

APPA: It's Insam Energy Beverage. It's new one, very good from Korea. Made from —

RICH: Ginseng.

APPA: No, insam.

RICH: No, like what it's made from, looks like ginseng.

APPA: No, looks like insam. That's why it's call —

RICH: You're not hearing me. (*Picking up a can.*) The picture, right here, it's ginseng.

APPA: No, picture is insam.

RICH: Yo — forget it, it's no big deal. (*Putting the can back.*)

APPA: Yo, it's very big deal. Look same, not same thing. 1904. You know what happen 1904? Japan attack Korea.

RICH: Japan attacked Korea?

APPA: Yah.

RICH: In 1904?

APPA: Yah.

RICH: Are you Japanese?

APPA: No.

RICH: You look Japanese.

APPA: No.

RICH: Yo, you look like that guy in *The Last Samurai*.

APPA: Who, Tom Cruise?

RICH: No, the Japanese guy.

APPA: Look same, not same thing. You look like you is from Kenya.

RICH: I am from Kenya. I was born there. How'd you know that?

APPA: I can tell.

RICH: Really?

APPA: Yeah. Really.

RICH: Yo, that is cool.

APPA: I know. I am.

RICH: Why were we talking about Japan attacking Korea?

APPA: Japan attack Korea 1904, make slave of Korean. I am Korean. Ginseng is Japanese name. Insam is Korean name. (*Beat.*) Look same —

APPA &

RICH: — not same thing.

APPA: You understand.

RICH: Yeah, I gotcha. Hook me up.

APPA: Okay. I hook up. Anything else?

RICH: No, that's it.

APPA: *Tallies up the total on the cash register. \$12.52.*

RICH gives APPA a twenty.

RICH: Thanks.

APPA gives RICH his change.

APPA: Okay. See you.

RICH remains at the counter and plays the scratch-and-win card. He loses.

APPA: You win?

RICH: Nah.

APPA: You choose bad one. Okay, see you.

RICH: Yeah, have a good one.

RICH exits. Bell.

3. Call police

JANET enters from the back of the store with her camera bag. She goes to the side closet for her jacket and fills up on candy throughout the scene.

APPA: Janet.

JANET: Bye Appa.

APPA: Call police.

JANET: *Startled.* What happened?

APPA: Car is no-parking zone. (*Offers her the cordless phone.*) Call police.

JANET: I gotta go.

APPA: *Slowly dialling.* Nine . . . one —

JANET: Stop being so nosy.

APPA: YOU nosy! Talk to police.

JANET: I'm not talking to the police.

APPA: I'm push last one.

JANET: I don't care if you push last one. I'm not talking to the police.

APPA: I don't care if you don't care, I'm push last one.

JANET: Mind your own business, Appa.

APPA: This is my business. Talk to police.

JANET: What, it's a Toyota?

APPA: No.

JANET: Mitsubishi?

APPA: No. (*Beat.*) Okay, it's Honda, but still —

JANET: How many times do I have to tell you, Appa, Japanese people aren't the only ones driving Japanese cars.

APPA: You buy Japanese, you is guilty by associationship.

JANET: What about your Canon SLR camera, made in Japan?

APPA: Appa get half-price.

JANET: Your money still went to Japan.

APPA: Half-price, I rip off Japan.

JANET: Still Japanese.

APPA: I scratch name. Nobody can tell. Talk to police.

JANET: What about Mr. Shin? He's a salesman for Honda.

APPA: Mr. Shin is Mr. Shit.

JANET: I thought you guys were best friends?

APPA: No, he is pimping the Jesus now.

JANET: What?

APPA: He is pimping the Jesus.

JANET: He's doing what to Jesus?

APPA: Pimping.

JANET: Peemping?

APPA: Not peemping, pimping.

JANET: Pimping.

APPA: Yah. He is using church to selling Honda. Different church every Sunday, selling Honda. That's pimping the Jesus.

JANET: How'd you learn about a word like pimping?

APPA: Janet, I am cool, what you talking?

JANET: Okay, what about Mr. Park? He sets up cheap sushi restaurants in the Annex. He's promoting Japanese cuisine. He's guilty by associationship, and since you're his best friend, so are you.

APPA: No.

JANET: Yes.

APPA: No.

JANET: Yes.

APPA: No. That's different. He is pimping Japan. Pimping Japan is okay. He is make money selling Japan food, but he is Korean. White people can't tell difference. Kind of look same. Korean Grill House, run by Chinese. Chinese pimping Korea. That's no good. Appa boycott. Talk to police.

JANET: Talk to them yourself.

APPA: Police hear accent, they don't take serious.

JANET: Appa —

APPA: Janet! 1904 Japan attack Korea —

Bell. MR. LEE, a successful real estate agent, enters.

JANET: Okay, fine! I'll call the police.

APPA: 그래! 아이씨 참! [That's right!]

JANET takes out her cellphone.

4. The offer

LEE: Mr. Kim.

APPA: Oh, Mr. Lee! My black friend with Korean last name!

LEE: Hi Janet.

JANET: Hey, Mr. Lee.

JANET exits. Bell.

APPA: Long time now see.

LEE: Yeah, it's been a while.

APPA: Wah, look at you, nice jacket, pants. Turn around. Turn around. (*LEE does a flashy Michael Jackson turn.*) Wah, looks very good.

LEE: You like this? I can get you one.

APPA: Oh, no, no thank you. Not my style. How's mommy, daddy?

LEE: They're doing very well, thank you.

APPA: And how's you business?

LEE: Business is good. Business is very good. (*Beat.*

Gazing out the window.) Lotta condos going up in the area, eh, Mr. Kim?

APPA: Yah, very fast. They is working hard.

LEE: Did you hear about Walmart?

APPA: Walmart? What's Walmart?

LEE: Apparently once those condos are up and ready, Walmart's moving in.

APPA: Why Walmart wants to moving to Regent Park?

LEE: 'Cuz once those condos are up and ready, Regent Park isn't gonna be Regent Park anymore. *(LEE hands APPA his card.)* Here.

APPA: I already have you card.

LEE: This is a new one. Flip it over.

APPA: What flip?

LEE: The card. Flip the card over, Mr. Kim. *(APPA turns the card upside down.)* That's not a flip, that's a turn.

APPA: Oh, flip, okay.

APPA flips the card over twice.

LEE: You're back on the same — just — I'm serious, Mr. Kim! *(LEE grabs APPA's hands, showing him the back of the card.)* There. See?

APPA: No, I can't see. Light is no good here. *(APPA goes back behind the counter.)* What is?

LEE: That's my offer for your store, Mr. Kim.

APPA: Offer?

LEE: Mr. Kim, I want to purchase your store.

APPA: You want to buy my store?

LEE: Yes, I want to buy your store for that amount.

APPA: Oh, Mr. Lee, this is lots of money.

LEE: I wouldn't dare insult you with anything less.

Beat.

APPA: This is very generous, Mr. Lee, but, no. This community need me. Even if Walmart moving in, people in neighbourhood need this store.

LEE: I understand that, Mr. Kim, but once Walmart moves in, I'm sorry to say, but that's it. No one can compete with that kinda buying power. Dufferin Mall, Jane and St. Clair —

APPA: Mr. Lee, my answer is no! Thank you.

APPA offers the card. LEE takes the card and resolves to leave.

LEE: Mr. Kim, do you have an exit plan?

APPA: Exit plan?

LEE: What's your exit plan, Mr. Kim? What's your exit plan from this life? You plan on working at the store 'til you die? That's not a good exit plan. You've had a rough life, especially with your son. Don't think for a minute that I don't remember the kind of trouble Jung put you through. Now if Jung were here, he'd take over the store. But he's not here and he's not coming back. *(Offering his card.)* This is your only opportunity to enjoy life a little, Mr. Kim, before there's only a little life left to enjoy. *(APPA doesn't take the card. LEE puts it on the counter.)* Well, think it over. Give me a call tonight. I gotta go. I'm parked in a no-parking zone.

Bell. JANET enters.

JANET: Appa, did you see my Day-timer?

APPA: Mr. Lee! *(JANET puts her bags on the counter and rushes into the side closet.)* White Honda is your car?

LEE: Yeah. Mr. Shin gave me an offer I couldn't refuse. Give me a call.

Bell. LEE exits. APPA takes out a printing calculator and adds up some figures. He tears off the receipt and looks at it close up. It's impressive. He puts LEE's card on the cash register and begins making a list of things to pick up at the wholesaler.

5. I am serious

JANET is in the side closet looking for her Day-timer.

APPA: Janet?

JANET: What?

APPA: Did you call police?

JANET: Yeah.

APPA: Good. Now, call police again and cancel order.

JANET: What?

APPA: Cancel order, we don't need.

JANET: Forget it. You cancel the order.

APPA: I am serious, Janet.

JANET: Seriously?

APPA: Yah, seriously.

JANET: No kidding?

APPA: No kidding.

JANET: You serious?

APPA: Yah, I am serious.

JANET: No foolin'?

APPA: Who is fooling?

JANET: You.

APPA: No. What you talking?

JANET: I'm talking serious.

JANET appears.

APPA: Me too.

JANET: You don't look serious.

APPA: My face is serious.

JANET: That's your serious face?

APPA: This is my serious face!

JANET: Seriously?

APPA: Seriously!!

UMMA enters with her jacket on, carrying her purse and a covered tray of food.

UMMA: *To APPA.* 그만해 아이씨참!! [Will you two quit it!!]

JANET, with a mischievous smile, exits to the back of the store.

APPA restocks the gum shelf as UMMA puts the tray of food behind the counter.

6. I'm going

UMMA: 내가 이따가 와서 치울게요. [Just leave it, I'll clean it up when I get back.]

APPA: 주일날 최집사님이 저녁 같이 하자네. 시간돼? [This Sunday Mr. Chae wants to get together for dinner. How's your schedule?]

UMMA: *Picking up LEE's card.* 이게 뭐예요? [What's this?]

APPA: 어... 그거... 그러니까 그제... Mr. Lee 가 오피너거야... 우리가게. [Oh... that's, uh... Mr. Lee's offer... for the store.]

UMMA: 오피요? 가게 판다는 얘기 안했잖아요. [I didn't know you were selling the store.]

APPA: 팔려고 하는게 아니라 ... Mr.Lee 방금 오피를 상의도 없이 주고 갔더니까. [I wasn't ... Mr. Lee just made an offer. Just now.]

UMMA: 가격은 꽤 괜찮네. [It's a generous offer.]

APPA: 그러게 ... [I know ...]

UMMA: 은퇴할 수 있겠네. [You could retire.]

APPA: 그러게. [I know.]

UMMA: *Beat. Gets herself together.* Janet, I'm going. Janet, I'm going to church. Janet? Janet!

JANET appears.

JANET: What?!

UMMA: 엄마 갔다올게. [I'm going to church.]

JANET: Then 가 [go] already.

UMMA: *Under her breath as she leaves.* 아휴, 이 기집애 때때 내가 죽겠다, 죽겠어. [Ugh, I swear, she's gonna be the death of me, the death of me.]

UMMA exits. Bell.

7. What's your plan?

APPA resumes pricing the cans. JANET is organizing her camera lenses and lens-cleaning materials at the counter.

APPA: Janet.

JANET: What, Appa, she drives me crazy!

APPA: Do you have exit plan?

JANET: What?

APPA: Do you have exit plan?

JANET: Do I have a what?

APPA stops pricing.

APPA: Exit plan. You having?

JANET: An exit plan? For what?

APPA: No, like what's your life plan?

JANET: What are you talking about?

APPA: You is thirty years old now. Have to think what is plan you future. What you think, take over store?

JANET: I don't want to work at the store.

APPA: What's wrong with store?

JANET: How can I work at the store, Appa? I'm busy.

APPA: Not work at store. I am talking take over store. Make Kim's Convenience dynasty.

JANET: Take over the store?

APPA: Yah.

JANET: Don't you want me to succeed in life? Look, Appa, you did what you had to do, right? And I appreciate that. I do. But didn't you do what you had to do so I wouldn't have to do what I had to do but could choose what I wanted to do?

APPA: What?

JANET: I'm a photographer, Appa. This is what I've chosen to do.

APPA: Yah, you can do weekend. Hobby, like me. But you don't make money take picture. Store make money. Take over store: money. Picture: hobby. It's good deal for you.

JANET: I don't want to take over the store. I don't even know how to run the store.

JANET goes back into the closet.

8. Jamaican

Bell. MIKE enters. He speaks with a thick Jamaican accent.

MIKE: Hey, man, wa gwan? D'ya have a tub o' Vaseline fa me? A tub o' Vaseline?

Beat.

APPA: What?

MIKE: D'ya have a tub o' Vaseline?

APPA: Seen? Sorry, I don't — I can't catch fast what you talking.

Beat.

MIKE: What?

APPA: I can't catch hearing you speak mouth too fast.

MIKE: What ya talking about?

APPA: No, uh, what you talking?

MIKE: About what?

APPA: What?

MIKE: What what?

APPA: No, you ask me —

MIKE: Y'aks me what I talking, what ya referring to?

APPA: Why you talking like you want to fight me?

MIKE: Me not speaking like me want to fight ya. Me not want to fight. Me just need a tub o' Vaseline, see, and dis how me speak, take it or leave it.

APPA: Okay, I take.

MIKE: Ladda mercy, me look for it me damn self. Cha!
(*As he walks down an aisle*) Chinaman wan run business in Canada and him can't even speak da language proply.

9. Steal or no steal

JANET appears and APPA ushers her behind the counter at the window.

APPA: Janet, Janet, you see?

JANET: See what?

APPA: That guy.

JANET: Which guy?

APPA: Not front of store, back of store. See? Don't look! See, but don't look.

JANET: The black guy?

APPA: Janet, don't be racist.

JANET: What?

APPA: You see?

JANET: Yeah, I saw the guy. So?

APPA: He is steal.

JANET: What?

APPA: He is steal.

JANET: You saw him take something?

APPA: No, he is going to steal.

JANET: How can you tell?

APPA: He is black guy, jean jacket. That combo is steal combo. You don't know how to run store, I teach you. This is training day. Lesson number one, steal or no steal. Every customer, have to know. Steal or

no steal. (*Beat. Pointing to a girl outside.*) See that girl? She is no steal. She is black girl, fat. Fat black girl is no steal. (*Pointing to a guy outside.*) Fat white guy, that's steal. Fat guy is black, brown shoes, that's no steal. That's cancel-out combo.

JANET: That is so awkwardly racist.

APPA: Not racist . . . survival skill. Look. Secret survival skill. (*Closes his eyes and looks around.*) Make eyes very small. Then nobody know you even looking. (*Reopens his eyes.*) Okay, brown guy, that's steal. Brown girl, that's no steal. Asian guy, that's no steal. Asian girl, that's steal. If you is the gay, that's no steal. Easy. The gay is never steal. If you is the lesbian, that is girl who is the gay, that's steal, one hundred percent guarantee they is steal. But two lesbian, that's no steal, cancel-out combo.

JANET: What about a black lesbian with long straight hair and a fat Asian gay man with short hair together? Steal or no steal?

APPA: That's impossible.

JANET: What's impossible?

APPA: The gay, Asian, fat?

JANET: Appa, there are Asians who are gay, y'know?

APPA: I know, but the gay Asian is never fat. Only skinny Asian is the gay. That's rule. Shhh.

10. Hapkido

MIKE: Me find it in da back.

MIKE comes to the counter with a tub of Vaseline.

APPA: Oh, Vaseline. You using for feet? I using for feet. My heel get hard and cracking. Vaseline make smooth.

MIKE: Right.

APPA: *Tallies up the total on the cash register. \$4.65. (MIKE gives APPA a twenty.)* Thank you. Okay, I give to you change.

APPA closes the cash register and comes around to the other side of the counter, standing between MIKE and the door.

MIKE: Wa gwan?

APPA: I have you change here my hand. I give to you change, you give to me what you steal.

JANET: Appa!

MIKE: What?!

APPA: Give to me what you steal, I give to you change.

JANET: Appa!

MIKE: 'Cuz me black, y'accusing me of teefin'?

JANET: No! I'm sorry, sir —

APPA: *To JANET.* Janet, stay back. *(To MIKE)* No, I'm not accuse you. I'm tell you, you is steal.

JANET: *Coming forward.* Appa, stop it! *(To MIKE)* Sorry, he's got a weird sense of —

APPA: Janet! *(JANET moves.)* Give to me what you steal from back of store and I give to you change.

MIKE: Excuse me, but —

APPA: No, I don't excuse you. You have no excuse. You living in Canada, you is healthy, you is smart, you is good boy, you have no excuse to steal.

MIKE: Ya making big mistake —

JANET picks up the phone.

APPA: No, you making big mistake. I know hapkido. You know hapkido? It's Korean fighting style. That's big mistake for you. Now, you want something, you pay. You can pay cash or you can pay I kick you ass.

MIKE attempts to run. APPA grabs his arm, twisting it, sending MIKE to the floor in a submission hold.

MIKE: AH!

APPA: Empty pocket. Empty pocket!

APPA applies pressure to MIKE's arm.

MIKE: AH! *(MIKE takes a pack of razors out of his pocket.)* Please don't hand me over.

APPA: You didn't pay for this.

MIKE: Please, me sorry. *(APPA applies pressure to MIKE's arm.)* AH! Please don't hand me over.

MIKE takes a pack of toothpaste out of his pocket.

APPA: You didn't pay for that.

MIKE: Please.

APPA: "I am steal from you store, Mr. Kim." Repeat. "I am steal from you store, Mr. Kim. Please forgive me." Repeat!

MIKE: I am steal from ya store, Mr. Kim. Please fahgive me.

APPA: "Dear Jesus."

MIKE: What? (*APPA applies pressure to his arm.*) AH!

APPA: Repeat. "Dear Jesus."

MIKE: Dear Jesus.

APPA: "Please forgive me I am steal from Mr. Kim."

MIKE: Please fahgive me I am steal from Mr. Kim.

APPA: "Help me be good example to black kid."

MIKE: Help me be a good example to the black kids them.

APPA: "I accept you in my heart."

MIKE: What? (*APPA applies pressure to his arm.*) AH!

APPA: Repeat!

MIKE: I accept ya in a me heart.

APPA: "Amen."

MIKE: Amen.

APPA: Walk out slow. And if I ever see you, I shit kick you fuck ass, you understand?

MIKE: Ya, man.

APPA lets go. MIKE makes to leave.

APPA: *Getting his attention.* Ya.

MIKE turns around. APPA tosses him the tub of Vaseline. MIKE catches it.

MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Kim.

MIKE walks out. Bell.

APPA: You not welcome.

11. YOU stupid

APPA: See, I tell you he is steal. (*Picks up the stolen items, putting them on the counter.*) That is lesson number one. Steal or no steal. Have to know. Okay, lesson number two —

JANET: That was the most idiotic, insanely stupid thing I've ever seen you do, and you've done a lot of stupid things, Appa.

APPA: YOU stupid.

JANET: Appa!

APPA: He is stupid too.

JANET: Of course he's stupid! Why else would he be stealing unless he's stupid!

APPA: David Chen, Lucky Moose in Chinatown, do same thing. He is hero. I am hero.

JANET: Kenny Kim, Queen and Sherbourne, did the same thing and it cost him his life.

APPA: Kenny Kim is die because cigarette company and government is so greedy. They make cigarette so expensive, people can't afford and have to steal. Then convenience store owner is victim. That's why Kenny Kim is die. Don't get mix up, Janet.

JANET: Appa, that guy could've had a gun.

APPA: I know hapkido.

JANET: *Picking up the stolen items and placing them behind the counter.* Is it worth it? Is it really worth it? Grow up, Appa!

APPA: YOU grow up.

JANET: Did you even think about —

APPA: YOU think.

JANET: What?

APPA: YOU what.

JANET: Stop doing that!

APPA: YOU stop.

JANET: I'm not doing anything.

APPA: YOU doing.

JANET: I'm just talking.

APPA: YOU talking.

JANET: Appa, that doesn't even make any —

APPA: YOU doesn't.

JANET: You're just repeating —

APPA: YOU.

JANET: Alright!

APPA: YOU alright.

JANET: Fine.

APPA: YOU fine.

JANET: Forget it.

APPA: YOU forget.

Beat.

JANET: Turn.

APPA: YOU turn.

JANET: Niverse.

APPA: YOU niverse.

JANET: Tube.

APPA: YOU tube.

JANET: Calyptus!

Bell. Police officer ALEX enters.

APPA: YOU calyptus!

JANET: Thanasia!

APPA: YOU thanasia!!

JANET: Kulele!!!

APPA: YOU kulele!!!!

12. Police

ALEX: Excuse me, sir, did someone here call 9-1-1?

APPA: Yah.

ALEX: Who called 9-1-1?

APPA: I do.

ALEX: Is there an emergency? Sir!

APPA: Yah, used be emergency. You take so long time not emergency now.

ALEX: What was the emergency, sir?

APPA: White Honda is parking no-parking zone. Then drive off. You take too long.

ALEX: Sir, 9-1-1 is reserved for emergency situations. Please don't abuse it with trivial matters like illegally parked cars. There are severe consequences —

APPA: Actual, I don't call 9-1-1, Janet is.

JANET: Appa!

ALEX: Is this true, miss?

JANET: Well, yes, Officer, technically —

ALEX: Janet?

JANET: Yes?

ALEX: Planet Janet?

JANET: Alex?

ALEX: Look at you.

JANET: Oh my God, you're a cop.

ALEX: And you're . . . all grown up.

Beat.

APPA: What's happen?

JANET: Appa, this is Alex. He . . . he was a friend of Jung.

ALEX: Hi, Mr. Kim.

APPA: Oh, yah, I remember you, yah. Hi, Alex. (*Beat.*) You is now police?

ALEX: Yeah.

APPA: Real police?

ALEX: What can I say, Mr. Kim. People change. (*ALEX shows APPA his badge.*)

APPA clears his throat and gestures for the badge. ALEX gives it to APPA. APPA checks to see if it's real and then returns the badge.

APPA: You daddy must be very proud of you.

ALEX: Yeah, he was. He passed away two years ago, but he was very proud.

APPA: I'm sorry.

ALEX: That's okay.

APPA: How's you mommy?

ALEX: She's good, very busy at church, as usual. Wow, can't believe you guys are still here. Is Jung here?

Beat.

APPA: Alex, you want something drink? Janet, take to back, give him something drink.

ALEX: No, it's okay.

APPA: Not okay.

ALEX: No, I'm fine.

APPA: Not fine.

ALEX: Please —

APPA: Please take something.

ALEX: No, it's really okay, Mr. Kim —

APPA: Not really okay, Alex.

ALEX: Mr. Kim —

APPA: Alex! You in my store, you is my business! Take drink, give to you energy. (*Gives an insam drink to him.*) Janet, take to back, give him snack. Police is hungry job, need energy. (*JANET and ALEX go to the back of the store.*) Peanuts. Take peanuts. Peanuts is good snack. Janet, give to him peanuts. Salty peanuts. Honey-roasted peanuts. Chocolate-cover peanuts, that's good taste. (*JANET and ALEX are chuckling.*) It's true.

JANET: Okay, Planters cocktail peanuts. How about a Clif Bar?

APPA: Yah, okay.

JANET: You like Crispers?

APPA: Good.

JANET: Gotta be ranch. Oh, and Pringles, pizza-flavoured. Definitely a couple of Combos Cheddar Cheese Pretzels. That's for sure.

APPA: Okay, that's good enough.

JANET: Peek Freans Shortcake. Gatorade Cool Blue.

APPA: Okay, that's last one.

JANET: Hubba Bubba Strawberry —

APPA: Janet!

JANET comes to the front. ALEX has his arms full of stuff.

JANET: What?

APPA: What you doing? He is back to working time is now.

JANET gets ALEX a plastic bag for the snacks.

ALEX: He's right, I gotta go, Janet. This is more than enough. Hey, could I get Jung's number? I'd really like to hook up with him.

APPA: What? Oh, sorry, no, we don't having that kind. Okay, bye, Alex.

ALEX: Yeah. Okay. Bye, Mr. Kim. It was really good seeing you, Janet.

JANET: Yeah, same here.

ALEX: Yeah, me too.

JANET: Yeah.

Beat.

APPA: Okay, bye, Alex, see you.

ALEX exits. Bell. JANET watches ALEX exit.

APPA: *Checking his watch.* Okay, Janet, I have to take big *ddong* now. We continue training after. Watch store.

APPA takes the cordless phone and exits to the back; JANET resumes looking for her Day-timer behind the counter.

13. Where's your brother?

Bell. ALEX enters store.

ALEX: Hi.

JANET: Hi. Did you forget something?

ALEX: No.

JANET: You need more peanuts?

ALEX: *Chuckles.* Wow. No, I have enough. I just wanted to leave my number for Jung. What? What is it?

Beat.

JANET: Guess you guys haven't kept in touch, eh? *(beat)*
He left . . . a long time ago.

ALEX: He left?

JANET: Yeah. He left home when he was sixteen.

ALEX: Didn't know that.

JANET: You remember Jung's temper? My dad was the same.
Even worse.

ALEX: What happened?

JANET: Uh, well, during one of their arguments, Jung said that Appa was a horrible husband, that he was treating my mom like a slave. And Appa hit him. Hard. Jung was hospitalized for a few days. After he was released, everything seemed to be back to normal. Then, one day, my dad went to get the money from the safe and it was empty. So was Jung's room.

ALEX: Wow.

JANET: Once in a while, I catch my dad looking out the window. Most of the time he's looking for illegally parked Japanese cars, but sometimes I think he's looking for Jung.

ALEX: Where is he now?

JANET: I don't know. Heard he was in rehab for a while.
He meets my mom at church sometimes.

Beat.

ALEX: Sorry to hear that.

JANET: That's okay.

Beat.

ALEX: That your camera bag?

JANET: Yup.

Beat.

ALEX: Are you a photographer?

JANET: Yup.

ALEX: How'd you become a photographer?

JANET: OCAD [Ontario College of Art and Design]. How'd you become a cop?

ALEX: Cop school. (*JANET chuckles.*) No, my life changed a lot after I moved out of this neighbourhood. I forgot how much you used to follow us around.

JANET: Can I take your picture?

ALEX: Uh, sure, okay.

*JANET gets her camera. ALEX does a "hot cops" pose.
JANET chuckles.*

ALEX: Just playin'.

JANET: What did you have for breakfast?

ALEX: For breakfast?

JANET: Yeah.

ALEX: Cereal, some fruit, coffee.

JANET begins shooting.

JANET: What kind of cereal did you have?

ALEX: Mini-Wheats.

JANET: Have you always had Mini-Wheats?

ALEX: No, used to be Frosted Flakes — when I was a kid. My dad liked Frosted Flakes. We'd eat it together. We had this routine, this tiger thing we'd do. "They're grrreat!" Yeah, Frosted Flakes.

JANET: What about Cheerios?

ALEX: Nah.

JANET: What's wrong with Cheerios?

ALEX: For me, it had to do with what the cereal did to the milk. That bowlful of sweetened milk right at the end was what breakfast was all about.

JANET: Like the chocolate tip at the bottom of an ice cream Drumstick?

ALEX: Exactly.

Beat.

JANET: Wanna see?

ALEX: Sure. (*JANET shows ALEX his picture on the LCD screen.*) Wow. I look so . . . artsy. (*JANET giggles.*) What?

JANET: I was actually on my way to check out a site for a wedding I got tomorrow —

ALEX: When I came in?

JANET: When you came in.

ALEX: Where you shooting?

JANET: The Distillery. Where you shooting? That was a joke.

ALEX: Need a lift?

JANET: I gotta cover for my dad.

ALEX: Til when?

JANET: Another ten minutes? (*Beat.*) You married?

ALEX: Yeah, no — used to be. Divorced. You married?

JANET: No. Any kids?

ALEX: No. You?

JANET: No. But I want kids. Like, if I met the right guy and got married to him, then yeah, of course, no question, absolutely.

JANET ducks down behind the counter.

ALEX: What kind of guy you looking for, maybe I can keep an eye out for you. (*Beat.*) Did you eat lunch?

JANET: No. You?

JANET rises with her hair undone, all sexy like, and proceeds to move in front of the counter.

ALEX: No.

JANET: We could eat.

ALEX: We could. What do you want to eat?

JANET: I don't know. What do you want to eat?

ALEX: Anything's good.

JANET: Yeah, anything's good for me too.

ALEX: I'm not feeling anything in particular.

JANET: Me neither.

ALEX: Could do just about anything.

JANET: Yup, me too.

ALEX: You allergic to anything?

JANET: Melons.

ALEX: Melons? Really?

JANET: Yeah. Kinda developed it.

ALEX: Didn't know you could develop melons — allergies.

JANET: I used to not be allergic to melons, now I am.

ALEX: That's too bad. I love melons.

Beat.

JANET: Korean or Indian?

ALEX: Who?

JANET: Food. You. Choose. Korean or Indian?

ALEX: Korean.

JANET: Now it's your turn. Offer me a choice.

ALEX: Oh, okay, uh . . . Christie and Bloor . . . or Yonge and Finch?

JANET: Christie and Bloor. Rice or noodles?

ALEX: Rice. Meat or vegetarian?

JANET: Meat. Pork or beef?

ALEX: Pork. Hot and spicy or extremely hot and spicy?

JANET: Extremely hot and spicy. In a stone bowl or in a stainless steel bowl?

ALEX: Stone bowl. Gamjatang or pork mandu soondubu?

JANET: Gamja Tang. Kachi or Booungee?

ALEX: Han Kuk Kwan.

14. Take over the store

APPA: *Offstage. Returning from the back of the store, talking on the phone.* No, it's Christie —

ALEX: I'll pick you up in ten minutes.

ALEX exits. Bell. JANET returns behind the counter and begins to put on some makeup.

APPA: — then Bathurst, then Spadina, St. George, Bay, Yonge, Sherbourne, then is Castle Frank. Yah, one hundred percent guarantee. Yah, okay. (*APPA hangs up the phone.*) *아-아 씨 바보.* [Idiot.] (*APPA pulls out JANET's Day-timer and reads from it.*) Okay, Janet, lesson number two: "Old is cold, new out of view." Old can is cold can, put in front. New can is not cold can, put out of view. "Old is cold, new out of view."

JANET: Appa, where'd you find that?

APPA: Upstair washroom.

JANET: I've been looking for that. Give it to me.

APPA: Wait, lesson number three is —

JANET: Appa, I gotta go.

APPA: Wait, we have to finish training, I make list —

JANET: Appa, I'm not taking over the store.

APPA: Janet, you is thirty years old now and still single. You have to understand, now is desperation time for you. Sudden death, overtime, penalty kick shootout. Expiration date is over. Take over store is only choice you having.

JANET: I can't believe —

APPA: Me and Umma is struggle whole life make life for you. We do what we have to do, hope you can be doctor, lawyer, big success, but what you do? Take picture. We don't have to come to Canada for you take picture. Even you can take picture in North Korea.

JANET: Appa —

APPA: Janet, I am dying . . . one day in future and before I dying, I —

JANET: You want to retire.

APPA: What is my story? Hm? What is story of me, Mr. Kim? My whole life is this store. Everybody know this store, they know me. This store is my story. And if I just sell store, then my story is over. Who is Mr. Kim? Nobody know that. You take over store, my story keep going.

JANET: But Appa, that's life. Whether you choose it or get thrown into it, you make it what it is. And if you're not happy with your life, I'm sorry, but you can't expect me to make your life — I don't know — meaningful.

APPA: But I give my life, my story for you.

JANET: But you're the parent. You're supposed to.

APPA: Why is that supposed to? I don't have to give to you my life. I could throw you away as baby. I don't have to love you as baby, but I do. That is choosing. I choose like that. So, you have to be thank you and give to me you life. Second half. Fifty-fifty. That's fair. Yah, lookit, I am work at store, what you do, you don't work at store and still you eat, sleep upstairs, yah? You whole life, that's how we doing. Thirty years. So, just switch side now, like soccer. Second half, you work at store and I don't work at store and still I eat, sleep upstairs. Understand? *(Beat.)* I'm not live more than ten years, it's good deal for you.

JANET: That's a messed-up idea, Appa.

APPA: What you talking?

JANET: That's a seriously messed-up idea.

APPA: YOU seriously messed up —

JANET: No, Appa, that's —

APPA: YOU no.

JANET: No, Appa, really —

APPA: YOU really.

JANET: Stop doing that!

APPA: YOU stop.

JANET: Give me my Day-timer, Appa!

APPA: Take out garbage and I give to you. *(JANET ties the garbage bag to take it out.)* What you doing? *(APPA unties what JANET has done and ties it his way.)* Have to roll like this. Push out air. Make tight. Small package. Then tie round back. That's best way.

APPA offers it to JANET. JANET takes it and unties what APPA has done and reties it.

JANET: That's your way. And if it matters that much to you, then do it yourself.

APPA: Janet, that's you job.

JANET: My job? I haven't taken out the garbage in sixteen years. All of a sudden it's my job again? Fine. But it wasn't even my job back then, 'cuz if it were my job,

then I would've gotten paid. So, what in fact I did back then and am doing right now is a favour for you. I wish you would at least appreciate this favour I'm doing for you, Appa.

JANET leaves with the garbage bag. Bell.

APPA: You pay rent? You pay for food? (*APPA follows JANET.*) What you talking? Take picture. Take picture! What's that?! Waste!!!

JANET returns with the garbage bag. Bell.

JANET: For my whole life, I've worked at least four hours a day covering for you guys, and I've never asked you for anything in return. I've never complained about it and never bitched about not getting paid. I've been here for you for my whole life, APPA. When Jung left, I was here. When Umma was sick, I was here. What would be nice is a simple thank-you. A little appreciation, that's all I need. To hear you say "thank you." Just once. (*APPA remains silent.*) *JANET drops the garbage bag.* Okay, fine. (*She goes behind the counter, takes out the printing calculator, and punches in the numbers.*) Four hours a day, six days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, for the past twenty years, eight dollars an hour — subtract room and board . . . You owe me a grand total of \$102,720! Give me my money, Appa!

Beat.

APPA: Piano lesson. Piano lesson. \$20 every lesson. Once a week. Every week. Five years. I pay.

JANET tallies it up.

APPA: Golf lesson. \$500. I invest in you.

JANET tallies it up.

APPA: Summer art camp. Material fee. \$200. Every year.

JANET tallies it up.

APPA: Winter church camp. \$100. Blue Mountain ski pass —

JANET: Wait.

APPA: Blue Mountain ski pass. \$50. Grade 8 semi-formal dress —

JANET: Wait.

APPA: Prom dress —

JANET: Wait!

APPA: Diet program. Dating program. Orthodontist. (*JANET stops tallying the numbers.*) Computer. Camera. Hand phone. Tuition fee. Trip to Korea. TTC Metropass. Weight-losing program. Internet. Shoes. Clothes. Haircut. Everything you have Appa

give to you. All Appa having, Appa invest to you and what you doing? Waste time. Waste money. Waste hope. What I still owe to you? Tell to me, Janet. I give to you my whole life, what fucking I still owe to you!?

Beat.

JANET: My Day-timer.

APPA hurls the Day-timer at the front door.

APPA: Ahhhhhh!

JANET slowly gets the Day-timer and walks out. Bell.

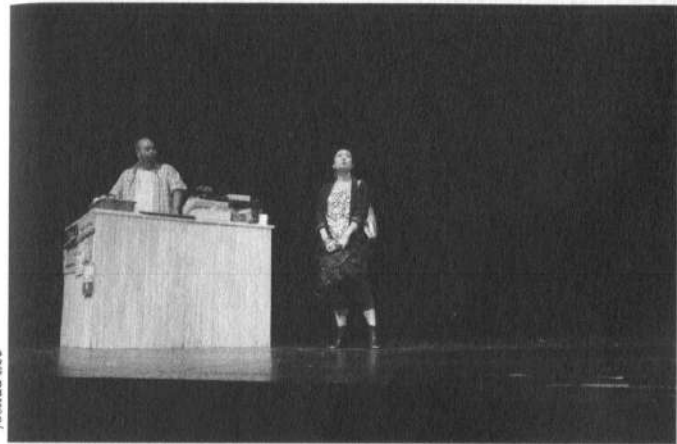
Beat. Bell. UMMA returns.

UMMA: 아이고, 내 정신 좀 봐. 맨날 이래, 맨날. [Oh my goodness, look at me, always forgetting things, always.] (*UMMA takes an envelope from underneath the tray in the cash register. Beat.*) 왜 그래요? 뭔일 있었어요? [What's wrong? What is it?]

APPA: 아니야. [Never mind.]

UMMA: 여보? 여보? [Honey? Honey?]

APPA exits to the back.



Joshua Lee

Kim's Convenience debuts at the 2011 Toronto Fringe Festival.



Stephen Scott

Episode: *Gay Discount*

UMMA shuts the door, locks it.

UMMA: It's family emergency.

JUNG: Is everyone okay?



Stephen Scott

Episode: *Wingman*

JANET: Appa, where's Umma?

APPA: Last time I see her she is in love shack with Mr. Chin and two Russian hairstylist.

15. Hi Jung

UMMA sees the garbage bag and puts it in the closet.

UMMA begins to sing as she gets her things together to leave.

UMMA: 천사의 말을 하는 사람도
사랑 없으면 소용이 없고
[If I speak in the language of heaven,
but speak it without love, it means nothing.]

JUNG enters with a knapsack on. He sings in harmony with UMMA.

UMMA &

JUNG: 심오한 진리 깨달은 자도
울리는 징과 같네
[If I understand all mysteries,
but understand them without love,
it means nothing.]

하나님 말씀 전한다 해도
그 무슨 소용있나
사랑 없으면 소용이 없고
아무것도 아닙니다
[What meaning is there even in sharing
the message of God
if it is shared without love?
Anything, without love,
amounts to nothing.]

[Based on 1 Corinthians 13:1-2]

UMMA's church sanctuary at night.

UMMA: You remember church family singing contest? You was eight years old. Janet was six. We is stand up here in church. You, me, Appa, Janet, all together, hold hands. We win first place. That is my most happy memory.

JUNG: What about the time when I was born, Umma?

UMMA: That is my most painful memory. You work today?

JUNG: Yeah. What's with all the decorations?

UMMA: This Sunday is last day. Last day for our church.

JUNG: The condo thing? They bought it?

UMMA: Yah.

JUNG: 3.2?

UMMA: \$3.9 million.

JUNG: Wow. Now you guys can move to North York. Buy a church with a parking lot.

UMMA: Our church is not moving.

JUNG: What, you guys gonna be at the bottom of the condo?

UMMA: They is closing our church.

JUNG: Who? The condo company?

UMMA: Church head office think waste of money to build new church. Not enough people. So, they closing our church and using money for mission work in North Korea. Bible say time to start, time to finish. Now is time to finish. When Moksanim first start church, only six Korean church in Toronto. All downtown, small, no money. Now, over two hundred Korean church, all move out of downtown, big building, lots of money. We is last Korean downtown church.

Beat.

JUNG: Here, I got something for you.

JUNG gives UMMA a photo.

UMMA: Wah! Sonam. He is get so big. Two months?

JUNG: Yeah.

UMMA: Looks like six months old.

JUNG: Yeah, people say he's really big for his age.

UMMA: Looks just like Janet when she was baby.

UMMA offers the photo back.

JUNG: Keep it. It's yours.

UMMA: Appa should know he is *halabujee* now.

JUNG: How's Janet doing?

UMMA: She is still single, ready to mingle.

JUNG: Hey Umma, you ever think Janet might be "the gay"?

UMMA: The gay? If Janet is lesbian, that's okay because then at least I know reason why she has no boyfriend. (UMMA gives JUNG the envelope.) For baby.

JUNG: Thanks, Umma.

JUNG kisses UMMA on the cheek.

UMMA: What's wrong, Jung?

JUNG: I'm not happy.

UMMA: Can't always be happy, Jung.

JUNG: I don't like my life, Umma. I was at work today — do you know what Facebook is, Umma?

UMMA: Facebook?

JUNG: It's a website on the Internet. It's kinda like email, but it connects more people. And friends can find other friends and there's lots of photos — you remember Mike from church, long time ago, he was on the soccer team?

UMMA: *깍두기 아줌마 아들?* [The son of that woman who makes that radish kimchee?]

JUNG: Yeah, right. He found me on Facebook today and soon the whole crew found me, the old church soccer team. We're all chatting away, checking out photos, like a reunion. Suyoung put up an old picture of the team, and he starts writing this play-by-play. Centennial Park, Etobicoke. The Toronto Korean inter-church annual soccer tournament. Under-16 division. Game one, Haninjangno Church: (*explosion sound*) conquered. Game two, Dong Bu Church: (*explosion sound*) conquered. Game three, Bethel Church: tied. Quarter-finals, United church: (*explosion sound*). Semi-finals, Young Nak Church: (*explosion sound*). Final championship game, the Catholic church: tied. Extra time: tied. Extra extra time: tied. Penalty kick shootout: (UMMA joins in on making the explosion sound). So glorious, right? Mike lives in Richmond Hill. He drives a Beemer. 5 series. He's got great-looking kids, a sexy cute wife, family vacations all around the world every

year. I've seen all his photos. Jason, Rich, Tech, Tom, Henry, Mike, Jong, Young, Young Jong, Suyoung. All of them. They're all successful. They start asking about me. What I do, where I been. I start making stuff up, trying desperately hard to sound impressive, but just sounding desperate. I was their captain. I was their captain, Umma. I was smarter than all of them, faster, stronger. I didn't dream I'd end up renting cars to people. Nine to five. Checking for dents and scratches. Living in a shithole in Parkdale. Apartment's a constant mess. Fight all the time, his mom and me. She thinks I'm a loser — I don't even know why I'm with her anymore. And all he ever does is cry and cry and cry and cry and cry. Just wanna leave, y'know? Just go. Start over. Somewhere else. Calgary, Vancouver — doesn't matter where. It'd be so easy too. Bay and Dundas, hop on a bus and leave. I rent cars to people, then take the street-car home. What is that? That's a joke.

Beat.

UMMA: You Appa was teacher in Korea. He was very good teacher. Student all love him. He have lots of friend. We have very good life in Korea. Then we coming to Canada. But he can't be teacher here. His English is very . . . no good. We get store. And he work every day. No weekend, no time off, no vacation, always have to be open, no retirement. Why? Why he doing like that? For you. For you and Janet. He is choosing

like that for you. (*Offers the photo.*) You choosing like that for him. (*JUNG takes the photo.*)

JUNG: How's Appa doing, anyway?

UMMA: Appa is getting old. You remember Mr. Lee?

JUNG: Black man with the Korean last name?

UMMA: Yah. He is make offer to buy store.

JUNG: Appa selling the store?

UMMA: No, Mr. Lee just make offer.

JUNG: How much?

UMMA: Enough to retire.

JUNG: What's Appa gonna do?

UMMA: I don't know. Go home, Jung. Go home.

JUNG exits.

16. Naming

A memory of APPA and UMMA. Underscored.

APPA: What you think, Kim's Variety Store?

UMMA: Kim's Variety Store?

APPA: Yah. Kim's Variety Store. What you think?

UMMA: Mr. Kim has already.

APPA: Who Mr. Kim?

UMMA: Yonge and Finch Mr. Kim.

APPA: Mr. Kim, Yonge and Finch, has Kim's Variety Store? Then just Kim's Variety. Take out "store." What you think?

UMMA: Kim's Variety?

APPA: Yah.

UMMA: St. George Mr. Kim has already.

APPA: St. who?

UMMA: St. George.

APPA: Who is St. George?

UMMA: St. George is St. George.

APPA: St. George? Sound like St. Jajee.

UMMA: Not St. Jajee, St. George.

APPA: Kim Cheese. Like Mac's Milk, but Kim and cheese.

UMMA: We don't only sell cheese.

APPA: Mac's don't only sell milk. *(Beat.)* 7-Twelve. Like 7-Eleven but . . . *(Beat.)* KFC. Kim's First Convenience. No, people think we is Kentucky Fries Chicken. Then we have to sell chicken, fries, and turkey. *(Beat.)* Kim Hortons.

UMMA: *Rubbing her belly.* What you think of name is Jung? *(Pause.)* If baby is boy, Jung Kim. What you think?

17. What is it?

Store. Night.

APPA: 언제 왔어? [When did you get in?]

UMMA: 조금 전예요. 내가 해논거 다 먹었어요? [Just got here. Did you eat?]

APPA: 먹었어. 왜 그래? [Yeah. What is it?]

UMMA: 아니에요... Janet 은 요? [Nothing... Where's Janet?]

APPA: 나갔잖지. 주일날 최집사님이 저녁 같이 하자네. 듣고있어? 왜 그러냐니까? [Out. Mr. Chae wants to have us over for dinner this Sunday. Did you hear me? What's wrong?]

UMMA: 아니에요. 당신이 알아서 해요. 저 먼저 올라가요. [Nothing. Yeah, it's fine. I'm going up.]

APPA: 뭐냐니까? 여보? 여보? 여보? 아이씨 참! [What is it? Honey? Honey?]

UMMA takes the tray of food and exits to the back.

APPA looks at Mr. Lee's offer and picks up the phone.

18. Who you go out with?

JANET enters. Bell.

JANET: Closing?

APPA: Soon.

JANET: Want some help?

APPA: It's okay.

JANET: How's business?

APPA: Same same. (*JANET begins to exit to the back.*)
You go out?

JANET: Yeah.

APPA: Who you go out with?

JANET: Alex.

APPA: Alex? Black police Alex?

JANET: *Coming forward.* Yes.

APPA: You used to have crush on him. You have fun time?

JANET: Yeah.

APPA: *Beat.* You remember Mr. Chae?

JANET: Ingoo's Appa?

APPA: Yah. He is having store in South Central L.A., California. Lots of black people is living there too. One day black lady is come and ask five-dollar loan. So, he give loan five dollar. Next week, she come and pay back. No interest. Then she ask loan ten dollar. And he give and she pay back. And continue. They

have good friendship. She tell all her friend, and they come and ask loan too. He is help all of them. Then 1992. Rodney King L.A. riot happen. All Korean convenience store is on fire and black people stealing. So he take shotgun and go to store. When he gets out of car, he see fire and smoke, people screaming, running, crazy, and he look at store. He see all black people in front of store. So, he get gun, ready to shoot, then he stop. What he see is that black woman who he give to loan and all his black customer hold hand, make big wall, stop other people stealing his store.

Beat.

JANET: What are you trying to say, Appa?

APPA: Alex is not Korean, but if you want to marry him, that's okay with me.

JANET: We went out on one date. I don't even know if he had a good time.

19. Let's talk

Bell.

ALEX: Hi.

APPA: Alex.

ALEX: *To JANET.* Can I talk to you?

APPA: Yah, okay, talk.

ALEX: Uh, I didn't —

APPA: No, it's okay.

ALEX: No, Mr. Kim, I didn't mean —

APPA: Alex, it's okay, take easy, nice and slow. We is here for you. Talk. (*Beat.*) We closing soon. Hurry up.

ALEX: Uh, okay. I have this, uh, friend, this girl, who's just a friend.

APPA: Okay.

ALEX: She recently met an old friend of hers, uh, this guy.

APPA: Okay.

ALEX: They used to know each other when they were kids. I mean, he was best friends with her brother and she'd always be around and he never thought much of her, growing up — see, the thing is, he was a bad kid.

APPA: Oh.

ALEX: And she knows all about the stuff he used to do, like really stupid stuff. Anyway, so they meet and they

go out . . . on this date, I guess, and, well, it wasn't like an official date per se, but . . . uh . . . Sorry, this was a bad idea. (*Makes to leave.*)

APPA: Alex! Do you think she like him?

ALEX: Who?

APPA: You friend.

ALEX: Oh, uh, I don't know. I'm not sure.

APPA: Janet, do you think she like him?

JANET: Uh —

APPA: Okay, Alex, do you think he like her?

ALEX: Um, that's a good question, Mr. Kim. Well, uh, see, ever since his divorce . . . uh . . . see, the thing about it is, he went through this phase where —

APPA: Okay, that's enough! Alex, do you believing in the Jesus?

ALEX: What?

JANET sighs.

APPA: Do you believing in the Jesus?

ALEX: Yes, I believing in the Jesus.

APPA: You have job?

JANET: Appa —

ALEX: I'm a cop.

APPA: Do you think my Janet is the sexy?

JANET: Appa!

ALEX: What?

APPA: Do you think my Janet is the sexy?

JANET: Appa!

ALEX: Mr. Kim — AH!

APPA twists ALEX's hand, forcing ALEX to his knees, writhing in pain.

JANET: Appa! What the hell are you doing?

APPA: You want to know answer? Alex, do you think my Janet is the sexy? Yes or no?

ALEX: Yes!

APPA lets him go.

APPA: Good. (*Beat.*) Then give to her popo.

JANET: Appa, stop it!

ALEX: What? You want me to give her a popo?

APPA: Yah.

ALEX: What's a popo? (*APPA kisses the air twice.*) You want me to kiss your daughter?

APPA: Yah.

ALEX: Now?

APPA: Yah.

ALEX: In front of you?

APPA: My store, my business.

ALEX slowly, awkwardly kisses JANET. Then she kisses him. Then he goes in for another kiss and APPA grabs his arm in such a way that ALEX is up on his toes, writhing in pain.

APPA: What's your problem, Alex?

ALEX: What? You told me to give her a popo.

APPA: Do I tell you popo two times?

ALEX: She popo me.

APPA: I know she popo you, I see she is popo you, I was here, I was supervise. But then you try popo her one more time after she popo you. Two popo, too many popo.

ALEX: Sorry.

APPA lets him go.

APPA: Okay. Now, step two. Do step two.

Beat.

ALEX: You're gonna have to give me some clarification on what step two is, Mr. Kim.

APPA: 아이씨 참! [Good grief!] Step two is, ask Janet marry you.

ALEX &

JANET: What?

APPA: Ask Janet marry you.

ALEX: Mr. Kim — (*APPA twists ALEX's hand, forcing ALEX to his knees, writhing in pain.*) Ah!

JANET: Appa, just stop — (*JANET tries to pull APPA's hand off ALEX. APPA then twists JANET's hand, forcing her to her knees, writhing in pain.*) Ah!

APPA has both of them on either side of him, on their knees, writhing in pain.

APPA: Alex, do step two.

ALEX: Mr. Kim —

JANET: Appa —

APPA: Alex, do step two.

ALEX: Ah! Janet, will you marry me?

JANET: Ah! Appa, this is ridiculous!

APPA: Ask again!

ALEX: Janet, will you marry me?

APPA: Janet, say yes.

JANET: Stop! Ow!

APPA: Ask again!

ALEX: *(simultaneously)* Ah! Janet will you marry me!?
Ahhhhh!

JANET: *(simultaneously)* Ah! Appa, you're ruining everything!

APPA: *(simultaneously)* Janet, say yes! This is last chance for you — AH! *(ALEX does a reversal and has APPA in a hold.)*

ALEX: I'm sorry, Mr. Kim. I'm sorry. I just need to talk — I came here to talk to your daughter.

APPA: Okay, hurry up, talk.

ALEX: Uh, okay. Um. Janet, I've always thought of you as a younger sister, following us around like a chubby little puppy dog. Wait, but when I saw you today, like, now — you're so beautiful. You're smart, talented, you make me laugh — I don't understand why you're still single. The only way I can figure it is God must love me so much that he's kept you single for all these years to bless me with you.

JANET: I've had a crush on you since I was ten years old, Alex. Still do.

ALEX: Seriously?

JANET: Seriously.

ALEX: I'm off tomorrow, you wanna do something?

JANET: I got a wedding to shoot.

ALEX: Need a helper?

JANET: You wanna be my assistant?

ALEX: I do.

JANET: Pick me up at seven a.m.?

ALEX: I'll be here.

ALEX and JANET go in for a kiss, inadvertently putting pressure on APPA's hand.

APPA: AH!

JANET: What about him?

ALEX: Come here. Apply pressure right here.

They transfer holding APPA.

APPA: AH!

ALEX: Bye, Janet.

JANET: Bye.

ALEX: Please don't hold this against me, Mr. Kim. I just needed to talk to your daughter.

APPA: Okay, see you.

ALEX exits. Bell.

APPA: Okay, Janet, enough is enough, let go.

JANET: Thank you.

APPA: You welcome. Now let go.

JANET: "Thank you . . . Janet." (*Beat.*) Repeat. After. Me.

APPA: What? Ah!

JANET: Repeat after me. "Thank you, Janet."

APPA: AH!

JANET: Repeat after me. "Thank you —"

APPA: You welcome.

JANET: Repeat after me! "Thank you, Janet!"

APPA: Ah! Ah! Okay, okay, okay. Thank you, Janet. Okay, enough is enough, let go.

JANET: "I'm sorry."

APPA: That's okay. Ah!

JANET: Repeat after me. "I'm sorry."

APPA: Ah! Okay, okay, I'm sorry.

JANET: "I love you, Janet. I love you, Janet." (*Beat.*) "I love you, Janet!"

APPA: Ah! Okay! I love you, Janet!

JANET releases APPA.

JANET: I love you too, Appa. (*With arms open.*) And see, no one's twisting my arm to say it.

JANET slowly lowers her arms, picks up her bag, and walks to the back of the store.

APPA: You was fourteen years old. (*JANET stops.*) You was fourteen years old, school project: "What I am most proud of." You write story how we begin store. Then you take picture of me in front of store. That is my most happy memory, Janet. I don't want you take over store. I want you live life best way you choosing.

JANET takes the garbage bag from the closet and approaches the front door.

APPA: Yah. (*APPA takes it from her.*) Go upstairs. Go. Sleep. (*JANET embraces APPA.*) Okay, okay, okay, that's good enough, let go, Janet.

JANET exits to the back and APPA takes the garbage out. Bell. APPA returns. Bell. Turns off the lights. Goes to the cash register.

20. Hi Appa

Bell. JUNG enters with a knapsack on, no tie, and shirt dishevelled.

APPA: Sorry, we is closing.

JUNG: Hi, Appa. (*Beat.*) How you been? (*Beat.*) You look good. I take it the store's doing well? (*Beat.*) Still smells the same. A good smell. Familiar.

APPA: You voice is change.

JUNG: Sorry?

APPA: You voice, you voice is . . . change.

JUNG: My voice. Right. Yeah, I guess it has. Your English got a lot better.

APPA: Umma is upstairs. I go call her.

APPA makes to leave.

JUNG: That's, uh — that's alright. Um . . . (*Beat.*) What is that? What are those? Energy drinks? Insam Energy drinks?

APPA: Yah. New one. From Korea.

JUNG: KBA?

APPA: Mr. Park bring in. (*Beat. Offers one.*) You can have.

JUNG: That's okay. (*As APPA is about to put the can back.*) Sure, yeah, okay.

JUNG walks to the counter and takes the can from APPA. He cracks it open and takes a sip.

APPA: What you think?

JUNG: It's good. Yeah, it's really good. Not too sweet. Not too medicinal. (*Seeing the price.*) A dollar fifty? You could sell this for two dollars to black people and two-fifty to white people. Rock Star, Red Bull, they go for, like, three in my neighbourhood.

APPA: Oh, yah?

JUNG: Yeah.

APPA: That's kind of rip-off.

JUNG: Yeah, it is. I was just . . . How's Janet?

APPA: Good.

JUNG: Still single, ready to mingle?

APPA: She has boyfriend now.

JUNG: She has a boyfriend now?

APPA: Yah.

JUNG: You sure?

APPA: Yah, I was supervise. (*Beat.*) She is upstairs too.

JUNG: Lotta condos going up, eh? It'll be good for business. A good location is finally building itself around the store. (*Beat.*) Remember when I wanted to run the store all by myself? I was eleven. You told me I was too short, so I went to the back of the store, strapped milk crates onto my feet, and came out walking tall. (*Steps up on a milk crate, then steps down.*) You were so impressed you let me run it for twenty minutes, all by myself. Eight customers.

APPA: I let you run store all by you self because you pass my test.

JUNG: Right. Your Korean history test.

APPA: My proud moment Korea history test.

JUNG: Right.

APPA: *Beat.* 1592. 1592.

JUNG: 1592? Oh, uh, that's Admiral Yi-Soon Shin invents the Turtle Ship. The world's first ironclad battleship in 1592.

APPA: Sixty-six.

JUNG: 1966 World Cup soccer. North Korea beats Italy in the sixteens to advance to the quarter-finals.

APPA: Eighty-four.

JUNG: 1984. Hyundai's Pony arrives in Canada in 1984. Its initial 5,000-unit projection totals at 50,000 units sold, becoming Canada's best-selling car that year.

APPA: Sea of Japan.

JUNG: Sea of Japan doesn't exist. The body of water between Korea and Japan is called the East Sea.

APPA: Kim Hyung-Soon.

JUNG: Kim Hyung-Soon. The Korean guy in America who crossed a peach and a plum, inventing the nectarine.

APPA: Ninety-eight.

JUNG: Ninety-eight? 1998. Uh . . . LPGA. Se Ri Pak becomes the first non-White woman to ever win the LPGA golf championship, which is still dominated by Korean women today.

APPA: O-two.

JUNG: 2002 World Cup soccer, hosted by South Korea and Japan. Korea placed fourth. Also, 2002 international breakdance champion is a Korean guy named Bruce

Lee. He did this one move, Appa, oh, you gotta YouTube him.

APPA: Ten.

JUNG: 2010. Vancouver Olympics. Yuna Kim wins the gold medal in figure skating, beating out that Japanese girl.

APPA: Thirteen.

JUNG: Thirteen? Uh . . . Park Ji-Sung. His number. The captain of South Korea's national soccer team. And Manchester United's midfielder. Third Lung. They call him Third Lung 'cuz he's not a finesse player, but he never gives up.

APPA: Good. Very good.

JUNG: I have a son, Appa. He's two months old. That's right, you're a *halabujee* now. (*Gives him the photo.*) That's him. He's really big for his age. I was thinking maybe if I start him early enough, he could make the NHL. First Korean NHL superstar. What do you think?

APPA: What his name?

JUNG: Sonam. Sonam Kim. It's a Tibetan name. It means "The Fortunate One."

APPA: His mommy is Korean?

JUNG: No. She's Tibetan. She's from Tibet.

APPA: You married?

JUNG: Yeah. No. No, I'm not married.

APPA: What you doing job? Working?

JUNG: Yeah, I rent cars to people. I work at Discount Car Rental in Parkdale.

APPA: You like working at Discount?

JUNG: I hate it. I can't stand working there. It's just, with my record, it's . . . um . . .

Beat.

APPA: I think of you, Jung. I think of you lots of time. Every day. You was very smart kid. Good looking. Natural leader. Lots of girl like you. Good at sports, music, lots of thing. You was so full of . . .

JUNG: Potential.

APPA: Yah, potential. Could be best, I always dream like that. Could be best. But that is my dream, not you dream. (*Beat.*) If Sonam don't become NHL superstar, don't get angry, it's okay. You can still be proud of him. You understand?

JUNG: Can I work here, Appa? What do you think of me working here? I could stock, clean, y'know, go to KBA, do the wholesale pickup, research all the best prices in town. You wouldn't have to pay me that much and you could always cash out. I don't have to handle the money. What do you say?

APPA: Take over store.

JUNG: What?

APPA: Take over store, Jung.

JUNG: What? You want me to take over the store?

APPA: Yah.

JUNG: You giving the store to me?

APPA: Yah.

JUNG: Seriously?

APPA: Seriously.

JUNG: No, Appa, seriously?

APPA turns to JUNG with tears streaking down his face.

APPA: This is my serious face.

JUNG: Store's probably worth a lot of money. You could sell it and retire. Why do you want to give it to me?

APPA: What is my story? What is story of Mr. Kim? My whole life I doing store. This store is my story? No. My story is not Kim's Convenience. My story is you. And Janet. And Umma. And Sonam. You understand? (*JUNG nods his head yes. APPA gets the pricing gun and offers it to JUNG.*) Change price. Make two dollar. That's good idea. (*JUNG takes the pricing gun with both of his hands.*)

APPA exits to the back.

JUNG goes behind the counter, adjusts the numbers on the pricing gun, and begins repricing the cans.

Lights slowly fade to the sound of the pricing gun.