

THE PERMANENT GIRLFRIEND

THE MUSE OF MAKATI

Written by

Alan Nafzger

Copyright 2020

PH: 1-214-875-1305

alan.nafzger@gmail.com

FADE IN

INT. FERRY STATION - CAGAYAN DE ORO

JOHN PAUL (24) leaves the counter and sits beside a poverty-stricken but intelligent looking MINDANAOAN (60). John Paul sits and looks at his ticket. The trip is a big move for him and he shows the seriousness.

MINDANAOAN
Where ya going, friend?

JOHN PAUL
I'm moving to Manila.

MINDANAOAN
Oh, no. Not another.

JOHN PAUL
Another what?

MINDANAOAN
A dreamer.

JOHN PAUL
I'm going to be a writer.

MINDANAOAN
Well, what do you do now?

JOHN PAUL
I teach at a rural high school.

MINDANAOAN
Here?

JOHN PAUL
In Lanao del Sur.

MINDANAOAN
Friend, stay here. There's plenty of poverty to write about here, just look around.

JOHN PAUL
Well, I've saved up and have enough funds for a year. There is a

archeologist, a professor who's agreed to mentor me.

MINDANAOAN

For what?

JOHN PAUL

I'm writing a television series.

MINDANAOAN

About archeology?

JOHN PAUL

About a cavemen?

MINDANAOAN

Are you sure people want to see that?

JOHN PAUL

Yes, it will be about the first Filipino.

MINDANAOAN

Every week?

JOHN PAUL

Yes, believe so. It's interesting. Lots of drama. Cannibals, tigers, rhinoceros, poisonous jellyfish. Survival and all. Drama.

MINDANAOAN

The world has gone insane.

The Mindanaoan stands and approaches someone with his hand outstretched. He's a beggar.

BEGIN TITLES

EXT. FERRY - INNER PASSAGE BETWEEN ISLANDS

The ferry moves between along the inner passage.

There are several stops along the way. We see both urban and rustic scenes.

John Paul is solemn, but is clearly observant and taking notes. He has three suitcases which he builds into a desk for his laptop.

The Ferry pulls into Manila Bay and he can see the skylines.

END TITLES

John Paul looks at the skyline, and MOTHER with a BABY and then at GRACE (20). With each subject, John Paul types something.

Grace notices him and will play hard to get; she turns up her nose. She pretends disapproval. John Paul wants to explain, but before he can, Grace moves away and stands at the rail. She wants to be the first to disembark. She's left her umbrella. The mother hands him the umbrella and points to Grace.

John Paul approaches her, and she feels that he's about to speak.

GRACE

I'm not interested.

JOHN PAUL

I don't mean to be rude...

GRACE

Bugger off, creep.

JOHN PAUL

Your umbrella.

GRACE

It's not mine.

A transit security guard walks past.

GRACE

Officer, this man is trying to rape me.

JOHN PAUL

I'm not. I didn't.

The officer looks around, and there are plenty of people anxious to get off the boat. No one looks overly concerned.

JOHN PAUL

I was just...

GRACE

Arrest him.

JOHN PAUL

I'm just trying to...

GRACE

He follow me everywhere on ferry just to get my body. He touched me here and here.

She gestures to her breasts and Derriere.

JOHN PAUL

Are you out of your mind?

SECURITY

Did you touch her?

JOHN PAUL

Of course, I didn't.

GRACE

Arrest him.

JOHN PAUL

There was a lady there with a young child. She sent me with this umbrella.

GRACE

It's not mine!

JOHN PAUL

Ask her.

The security officer looks at Grace and the mother signals that the young girl is crazy. The security guard doesn't want to be teased or used, so he simply walks away.

JOHN PAUL

You tried to get me in trouble!

GRACE

Yes, so? Don't go bananas!

JOHN PAUL

Well, I didn't do anything to you.

GRACE

You might have; Manila can be a dangerous town, and I'm a defenseless woman. Look at all your big muscles.

JOHN PAUL

I'm harmless. Do you want your umbrella?

GRACE

Come to think about it, that is my umbrella.

JOHN PAUL

Can you at least say, "thank you?"

GRACE

You are welcome.

JOHN PAUL

Wait; I was being sarcastic.

GRACE

I hope you're sorry.

JOHN PAUL

Why should I be sorry?

GRACE

You walked up to me crazy, and for what? To return a silly umbrella?

JOHN PAUL

Yes. Well, it's the rainy season.

GRACE

This old thing?

She pitches it in the bay, like it is nothing.

GRACE

Why you force me to call the officer?

JOHN PAUL

Force you? You almost got me arrested.

GRACE

What are you, you can't be arrested?

JOHN PAUL

I'm a writer, well I'm here to write.

GRACE

What is your real job?

JOHN PAUL

I'm a teacher.

GRACE

Now you are going to tell me you know everything.

JOHN PAUL

I don't.

GRACE

And I know very little.

JOHN PAUL

Actually, I'm here to learn.

GRACE

Sounds to me like you are not a teacher then. But a student and maybe not even a very good one.

JOHN PAUL

But I am.

GRACE

Wait a minute.

(long beat)

You are a teacher but don't know anything? You look like you might try to persuade me that you do.

JOHN PAUL

I said, I don't.

GRACE

Then how will you write a book?

JOHN PAUL

It's not a book, it's a TV show.

GRACE

Intelligent people like me, we don't watch TV.

JOHN PAUL

I didn't say...

GRACE

But you admit that you don't know anything and you watch TV?

JOHN PAUL

You're the most infuriating girl I've ever met.

GRACE

Wait until I tell my professors about you and your silly idea. They will get a chuckle out of you.

JOHN PAUL

I didn't tell you my idea and are you kidding?

GRACE

My name's Grace.

JOHN PAUL

Grace, my name's John Paul.

They shake hands.

GRACE

Like the Pope?

JOHN PAUL

You live in Manila?

GRACE

Oh, during school. Sometime Cebu.

Sometime Visayas.

(beat)

My father's very rich, you know.
He has... three houses and a condo.

JOHN PAUL

Well, I'm honored.

GRACE

So you're a writer, huh?

(beat)

The kind of writer that cheats on his
wife? Writers always cheat.

JOHN PAUL

No.

GRACE

You aren't married or you don't cheat?

JOHN PAUL

I'm not married. And I don't cheat.

GRACE

Yes, writer always do. Unless you write
children's books. Do you write
children's books?

JOHN PAUL

No.

GRACE

Then you cheat.

JOHN PAUL

I wouldn't.

GRACE

I hear of one boy who wants to be a
writer at school; he has seven
girlfriends, one for each night of the
week.

JOHN PAUL

Well, that's wrong.

GRACE
You're an old fashion boy?

JOHN PAUL
I guess.

She takes a long look at him.

GRACE
And a virgin!

JOHN PAUL
Is that something to be ashamed of?

GRACE
No, I'm one myself.

The bang plank comes down and she begins to walk away, off the boat.

JOHN PAUL
Wait, I haven't finished talking to you.

GRACE
I don't talk to writers.

JOHN PAUL
They tend to steal my words and I'm never paid. Sorry.

GRACE
Oh, I see.

JOHN PAUL
Maybe we could...

GRACE
OK. Goodbye.

JOHN PAUL
Wait.

GRACE
Goodbye. I hope someday you'll be a famous writer.
(beat)

But it won't be possible if you're still a virgin.

JOHN PAUL

Huh?

GRACE

That's my opinion. You are in Manila now, farm boy. Try the Pegasus on Quezon Avenue.

JOHN PAUL

My professor friend lives in Makati? I think I'll stay near there.

GRACE

Makati is that way, but those clubs cater to foreigners. They might laugh at a Mindanao farm boy.

Grace disappears into the crowd.

TAXI DRIVER

Sir, you mentioned Makati. You need a taxi?

JOHN PAUL

Can you recommend a cheap hotel there?

John Paul pulls up an email on his phone.

JOHN PAUL

Something near Burgos and Kalayaan streets?

TAXI DRIVER

Excuse me, but it is not for you, sir.

(beat)

It's for foreigners and the people there are very sinful, sir.

JOHN PAUL

Great, plenty of inspiration. I'm here to write!

INT/EXT. TAXI - Burgos Street

The taxi driver is delivering him to a decent hotel but John Paul sees Grace walking on the sidewalk.

JOHN PAUL
Stop. Stop.
(out the window)
Grace!

She continues walking.

The taxi stops and John Paul pays.

TAXI DRIVER
But I was...

JOHN PAUL
I saw a friend.

TAXI DRIVER
I was taking up only a bit farther, to
a nicer area.

JOHN PAUL
It's okay. I'll find my way. Thank you.

TAXI DRIVER
Don't use your credit card at any of
these bars and put your wallet in your
front pocket.

JOHN PAUL
Thank you. Thank you, that's very good
advice.

Grace disappears into 5030 Burgos. John Paul pays and exits the taxi with three bags and a laptop.

He walks into GoGo Banana's bar and gets an eyeful and immediately exits. There is a man at the door.

JOHN PAUL
Did you see a girl just come through
here?

MAN AT THE DOOR

A girl? Man, we got plenty of girls.

JOHN PAUL

No, no. This was a nice girl.

MAN AT THE DOOR

There aren't any nice girls here.

(beat)

Maybe next door?

John Paul looks next door at 5020 and it is a two-star hotel.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - 5020 BURGOS STREET

ACHMED is behind the counter playing a video game. He pushes pause and puts down the controller.

ACHMED

Hello. Can I help you?

JOHN PAUL

Yes. That girl that just came in,
I tried to catch her. Did you see her?

ACHMED

No. I didn't notice.

JOHN PAUL

Her name is Grace. She's my friend.

ACHMED

Yes, this is a very friendly street.

JOHN PAUL

Grace?

ACHMED

Plenty of girls named Grace on this
street. But that not their real name.

JOHN PAUL

No, not that kind of girl. She's very
haughty and maybe even arrogant.

ACHMED

No. no girls like that here. Did you look around?

JOHN PAUL

Her father maybe owns this building?

ACHMED

Yes. Achmed. That's me.

JOHN PAUL

Oh. Well, thanks.

ACHMED

Very sorry. Very sorry. She was your high school sweetheart and now you are here to rescue her from the life?

John Paul considers everything, maybe writing a novel, but rather than argue he simply agrees with Achmed.

JOHN PAUL

Something like that.

ACHMED

Sounds like a very bad movie.

The taxi driver receives a text. Achmed receives a text.

John Paul is about to leave, but he turns around.

JOHN PAUL

This is a hotel, isn't it?

ACHMED

Yes. A very good two-star hotel. Best on the block!

JOHN PAUL

Can I have a room?

ACHMED

How many hours?

JOHN PAUL

Do you have monthly terms?

ACHMED

You think it will take an entire month
to find this girl?

JOHN PAUL

Yes. Can you give me a price?

ACHMED

Yes, sir.

JOHN PAUL

I want an inexpensive room.

ACHMED

I make you special rate.

JOHN PAUL

All right, but can I take a look at it.

ACHMED

Thank you, sir. Thank you. I give you
best room in the hotel.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL ROOM - TOP FLOOR

ACHMED

Very nice room. Best room in the hotel.
Top floor. Very nice bed. Clean sheets.
I think. Everything... How you say?

JOHN PAUL

First class.

ACHMED

You have private balcony. Very cool
breeze. Plenty hot water. Free soap.

JOHN PAUL

Free soap? I think I can see why.

ACHMED

Yes. Lots of action, but up here very
quiet. All the action is down in the
bars and on the street. Or call me and
I'll send the action up here.

(beat)

You like the room?

JOHN PAUL

Yes, this is perfect for my work.
I... Well, I write.

ACHMED

Yes. Understand now. You write about
girl who run away from farm for life on
Burgos Street.

JOHN PAUL

You aren't going to throw me out after
a week are you?

ACHMED

No, longtime customers are best. They
use less soap and besides Chinese virus
might put the girls out of work.

JOHN PAUL

What?

ACHMED

Rumor; the government going to protect
everyone by closing all the bars.

JOHN PAUL

Well, maybe not.

ACHMED

If government closes sex trade, girls
starve and I'll need ten writer/guests
to survive.

JOHN PAUL

If they do that... Maybe I'll be
inspired and gone by the end of the
month?

ACHMED

Maybe better for the novel if you don't
find this sweetheart for a while?

JOHN PAUL

What?

ACHMED

Nothing, sir. Nothing. My name Achmed.
Will you please correct my bad English?

JOHN PAUL

There's nothing to correct.

ACHMED

Three thousand, eight hundred pesos.

JOHN PAUL

Would you take three thousand?

ACHMED

You really going to write about this
hotel?

JOHN PAUL

This hotel might become famous.

ACHMED

It's already infamous. Haha. You think
I didn't speak English good. But I do!

JOHN PAUL

Three thousand?

ACHMED

Okay, we make a deal. But write good
about my Hotel.

JOHN PAUL

Hey, free soap.

INT. HALLWAY - MOONLIGHT HOTEL

A Chinese businessman is drunkenly walking the halls... looking.

ACHMED

A writer? For whole month. Whole month
and free publicity.

BUSINESSMAN

Oh, excuse me. Is Rhose in there?

ACHMED

I'm afraid you've got the wrong room.
Rich famous writer in there. Don't
disturb.

BUSINESSMAN

But Rhose?

ACHMED

(looking at watch)

No Rhose for you buddy. Try over in
GoGo Bananas. She take the stage about
right now. Use the yellow door in the
lobby.

BUSINESSMAN

Sorry.

Later...

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL ROOM - TOP FLOOR

John Paul finds a place in the wall... behind some boards to hide
his computer. He replaces the boards.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOONLIGHT HOTEL

As John Paul is descending the stairs, there is a drunken
Australian leading a girl upstairs

BAR GIRL

Hey. Where you taking me now?

AUSTRALIAN

I need a shower and then we'll go eat.

BAR GIRL

I go with you and wash also; this place
have free soap.

AUSTRALIAN

Good girl. Economical.

INT. LOBBY - MOONLIGHT HOTEL

ACHMED

You satisfied, Mr. John Paul?

JOHN PAUL

I'm not sure.

John Paul gestures to the couple walking up the stairs.

ACHMED

Don't write bad things. This very respectable hotel. Not a brothel. In Manila, a brothel is illegal.

JOHN PAUL

You wouldn't realize...

ACHMED

Obey law here.

(beat)

Only rent rooms.

(beat)

Neither GoGo bar belong to me.

At that instant, the door painted "banana yellow" on the left opens up and a second couple enter the hotel. Arm in arm, they walk up the stairs. And the "red" door on the right opens and a third couple enter the lobby. The adjoined bar on the right of the hotel is the "Red Slipper."

John Paul smiles at Achmed.

JOHN PAUL

How convenient.

ACHMED

Yes, of course. Two bars and two door. It's normal.

JOHN PAUL

Listen, does the soap really help?

ACHMED

No, not really.

INT. GOGO BANANAS - 5030 BURGOS STREET

John Paul looks a bit out of place, nervous. But he buys a beer at the bar and sits at a table. GRANNY CERVANTES, who seems elderly, sits beside him at the table.

GRANNY

Excuse me, would you like to buy me a drink?

JOHN PAUL

But you're...

GRANNY

I'm an old lady who's very thirsty.

JOHN PAUL

Well, sure.

Granny motions to a waitress, who is immediately there with an overpriced umbrella drink.

GRANNY

That doesn't mean you can take me into the hotel, you know.

JOHN PAUL

I wouldn't.

GRANNY

You don't like older women?

John Paul hesitates; he doesn't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

GRANNY

Well?

JOHN PAUL

(reluctantly)

You could be my grandmother.

GRANNY

I could? Why thank you!

She takes it as a compliment. Granny removes her glasses, lets down her hair, and removes her jacket to reveal the breasts (cleavage) of an 18-year old.

She looks intensely into his eyes.

JOHN PAUL

What?

GRANNY

I'm not really a Granny.

JOHN PAUL

I can see that.

GRANNY

Now you can take me over to the hotel,
if you want.

JOHN PAUL

But why?

GRANNY

You know why!

JOHN PAUL

No, I mean the costume.

GRANNY

My teacher in school said every
performer needs a trademark. They might
not remember the name, but the
trademark they remember. Hello, I'm
Granny!

JOHN PAUL

Nice to meet you. So men... they...

GRANNY

It's my niche. Every girl in here has a
niche. She does something special. Mine
is just more obvious than the others.

JOHN PAUL

Unique.

GRANNY

You write about me in your novel?

JOHN PAUL

How do you know?

GRANNY

You're the writer who rented the room for a whole month. Looking for sweetheart.

JOHN PAUL

Well, I didn't mean for everyone to know.

GRANNY

My full name is Granny Cervantes.

JOHN PAUL

Like the writer?

GRANNY

No. Grandma Moses was a painter. Even I know that.

JOHN PAUL

I'm John Paul...

GRANNY

Like the Pope?

JOHN PAUL

Yes. John Paul II.

GRANNY

Hello, John Paul. I hope you aren't celibate.

JOHN PAUL

Well, if I were in the market...

GRANNY

I'm too skinny.

(beat)

That's why I thought to play Granny, wear long sleeves and dowdy clothes, to hide my ugly body.

JOHN PAUL

A lot of men like thin girls.

GRANNY

I'm just trying to survive. I have no sex appeal.

JOHN PAUL

Oh, I'm sure you have. You just haven't found the right fellow yet.

GRANNY

Oh, I found a lot of right fellows, but unfortunately they all want a younger woman.

Granny chuckles and puts on her glasses again.

JOHN PAUL

Are those really your glasses?

GRANNY

I'm really blind as an old lady.

JOHN PAUL

You are interesting. Pretending to be old.

GRANNY

But not sexy. This is the most competitive street in the world and I simply can't survive any other way. I've tried.

(beat)

How can I compete with someone like Rhose. She does six times the business I do.

JOHN PAUL

Rhose?

GRANNY

She's over there talking to the ugly American.

John Paul sees that Rhose is Grace, the girl from the ferry. He stands from his chair.

GRANNY
See what I mean?

JOHN PAUL
You have plenty of sex appeal.
(beat)
I know that girl.

GRANNY
Rhose is your highschool sweetheart?
The girl you look for and write about?

JOHN PAUL
Maybe.

John Paul interrupts the American.

JOHN PAUL
Hello, Grace.

GRACE
My name is Rhose. Do I know you?

JOHN PAUL
Don't you remember? The ferry. This
morning?

GRACE
I think you make mistake. Wrong girl.
I never ride ferry.

JOHN PAUL
It's no mistake. I took your picture,
I remember it.

John Paul takes out his phone and shows the American the photo
taken on the ferry.

AMERICAN
Sure looks like you.

GRACE
To Americans, all Filipinas look alike,
for goodness' sake.

He shows her the phone.

GRACE

That's not me. My name is Rhose. R-H-O-S-E! I've never see you before.

JOHN PAUL

Okay, don't go bananas.

GRACE

What'd you say?

John Paul extends his hand to the American and as they shake, he looks Grace in the eyes.

JOHN PAUL

(to the American)

John Paul.

(to the Grace)

Like the Pope.

AMERICAN

That's nice, now will you please leave us alone. We're talking business.

JOHN PAUL

Sorry.

John Paul returns to the table with Granny.

JOHN PAUL

You see the girl sitting there at the bar?

GRANNY

In the red dress? You just talked to her? Rhose.

JOHN PAUL

That's her.

GRANNY

She's my best friend.

(beat)

Most popular girl in bar. She got sex appeal. Well, I don't have to tell you that; she broke your heart.

JOHN PAUL
Is she ever called Grace?

GRANNY
No. Everybody call her Rhose, "Rhose."
(beat)
You knew her by "Grace" at home?

John Paul thinks. But the American walks away from Grace.

AMERICAN
Hey, I don't think we've met?

BAR GIRL
Oh, hello, Ted.

AMERICAN
Oh, I guess we have?

Grace storms off toward the table with Granny and John Paul.

GRACE
I hope you're happy.

JOHN PAUL
What'd I do?

GRACE
You intimidate my American friend.

JOHN PAUL
What a nice fellow? He seemed so loyal.
And drunk. Too bad.

GRACE
You made a mistake. I'm not that girl?

JOHN PAUL
Well, in that case. Pleased to make
your acquaintance. Rhose.

John Paul shrugs and pulls out his phone and looks at the photo.
He toggles between the photo and Grace.

GRACE
Why you look at that picture?
(beat)

She your girlfriend?

GRANNY

The girl was his sweetheart. She came here and she's someone he's dying to find. He's writing a book about her.

GRACE

Is that true?

JOHN PAUL

No, but she sure looks just like you, Rhose!

GRACE

Why? You're crazy mad for her?

JOHN PAUL

She was arrogant, but sweet and a little innocent.

GRACE

That's not me. I'm just a bar girl.

JOHN PAUL

Well obviously, you were a nice girl once. Am I right?

GRACE

Yes, six years ago. What about it?

JOHN PAUL

So how does a nice girl finds herself in a place like this? I'd like to know.

GRACE

So would I.

GRANNY

You gonna forget your good girl farmland sweetheart and love our Rhose instead?

Some new fellows enter the bar. Granny gets up to approach them.

GRACE

I sure fooled you. I made you believe I was a girl rich enough to afford to be nice.

JOHN PAUL

Why?

GRACE

I liked you. Old fashion boys are fun.
(beat)
You looking for a girlfriend?

Granny returns.

GRANNY

He rented the best room for a whole month.

GRACE

You want me to be your regular permanent girlfriend?

JOHN PAUL

Naturally, I'd like that, but can't afford it.

GRANNY

He's saved only money enough for a year to come to Manila. Ask him after he becomes big-time writer?

JOHN PAUL

Who told you that?

GRANNY

Achmed.

JOHN PAUL

Who told him?

GRANNY

A taxi driver.

GRACE

Too bad, because I'm very good.

GRANNY

She's right; she's very popular.

JOHN PAUL

Is that supposed to persuade me?

Granny ponders the thought.

GRACE

You sure you don't want me for a permanent exclusive girlfriend?

JOHN PAUL

I just can't.

GRACE

I'm sorry, I'm not that stuck-up nice girl on the ferry boat.

(beat)

A year is a long time in Manila.

(beat)

I'll wait. You'll get lonely.

INT. UNIVERSITY - ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT

John Paul enters the office of Professor Jacob Zarsadiaz.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

John Paul?

JOHN PAUL

Professor.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

How do you do?

JOHN PAUL

Nice to meet you, finally.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

I've been expecting you since I got that email. I like your idea and I'm at your disposal. And if I'm not available, my daughter will help you. She's also an anthropologist.

JOHN PAUL

Wonderful. I want to do an accurate job.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

When did you arrive?

(beat)

Well, sit down, won't you?

JOHN PAUL

Oh, thank you. Just yesterday.

(beat)

I wanted to get settled.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

I gather from your email, you'll be with us for an entire year.

JOHN PAUL

That's the plan.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

I'm very impressed with your idea. I don't think there has ever been a TV series set in the pleistocene. A few movies, of course. It's very brave of you.

JOHN PAUL

I'm gambling, for certain.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

You know someone in industry?

JOHN PAUL

Not a soul.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

I understand. But, unless they know you or you know one of them, they don't really take a person too seriously.

JOHN PAUL

They're aware; it's really difficult.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Well, we'll have to change all of that. I'm afraid I don't know anyone in television.

JOHN PAUL

It's okay, my plan is to win on the merits. Tell a good story. And to write as many episodes as possible. To give them an idea...

DR. ZARSADIAZ

And how many do you have so far?

JOHN PAUL

None.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

I don't know how I can help you. A lot of this is in books.

JOHN PAUL

That's true, sir. But I need to sell the idea...

DR. ZARSADIAZ

... and a little archeology will help...

JOHN PAUL

A TV series might help interest young people in archeology. Increase enrollment in your classes.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Seems a drastic step.

JOHN PAUL

Using a television drama to interest young people in science?

DR. ZARSADIAZ

No. I mean taking off from your teaching for a year.

JOHN PAUL

Yes, it is. But, I intend to find out whether I can make a living writing.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

And if you can't?

JOHN PAUL

If not, I'll go back to being a teacher.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Fair enough. I'll help you in any way I can. But don't stay locked in your room working all year. Get out and experience Manila. If you find yourself back home on Mindanao, you will surely wish you'd experienced it.

A young woman appears at the door.

KRISTINE

Daddy?

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Come in, darling. I want you to meet someone.

(beat)

May I call you John Paul?

JOHN PAUL

Yes, of course.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

This is my daughter, Kristine. She's an assistant professor here. She's the co-discoverer of the famous rhinoceros you're going to immortalize on television.

KRISTINE

Hello.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

He's here for a year, writing the television series I told you about. He's only just arrived.

KRISTINE

Welcome.

JOHN PAUL

Thank you.

KRISTINE

Have you found somewhere to stay?

JOHN PAUL

I stumbled onto a hotel.

KRISTINE

Is it comfortable?

JOHN PAUL

It's... convenient. Not far from here.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Why don't you take him out to the cave?

KRISTINE

Yes, yes, why not? Yes. I'd be
delighted.

INT. GOGO BANANAS - BAR

Grace is at the bar entertaining a drunken European. She's not
her gregarious self. Grace is depressed.

GRACE

What's your name?

BJÖRN

Björn. It's short for Bear, you know.
My wife used to call me Bear.

(beat)

Oh, I wasn't supposed to mention.

GRACE

It's okay; you like me. You can have a
wife. She's not here in Manila?

BJÖRN

Of course not. She won't let me drink.

EXT. GOGO BANANAS - SIDEWALK

GRANNY

John Paul!

JOHN PAUL

Hello, Granny.

GRANNY

So glad you come along. Can you please take me into the bar, please?

JOHN PAUL

Well, can't you go in by yourself?

GRANNY

The manager is upset with me. He says I don't bring in enough customers.

JOHN PAUL

Well, you look 80 years old, what does he expect?

Granny takes John Paul's words to be a compliment.

GRANNY

I told him it's age discrimination.

JOHN PAUL

And what did he say?

GRANNY

He just laughed at me.

They enter the bar. The owner nods his head at Granny.

GRANNY

Oh, thank you very much. Everything okay now. Thank you, John Paul.

JOHN PAUL

Beer, please.

Later...

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL ROOM

John Paul has been working at his laptop on a TV script. He puts his laptop in the concealed place. He is exhausted and sits on the bed. He picks up the phone and dials the front desk.

JOHN PAUL

Achmed?

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - FRONT DESK

ACHMED

Yes, Mr. John Paul. Right away, sir.

Achmed sends a text and Grace receives a text. Grace isn't depressed any longer. Her face lights up and she abandons the European.

GRACE

Well, that didn't take long.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL ROOM

The hotel bed sheets are cheap and white.

GRACE

John Paul? For goodness' sake.

JOHN PAUL

Grace? Come in.

GRACE

You asked for me!

JOHN PAUL

That's right.

GRACE

I'm very happy. Why did you chose me?

JOHN PAUL

Well, you're easily the prettiest girl in Manila.

GRACE

You think so?

JOHN PAUL

I thought so from the first moment I saw you. I can't pay you much, but I'd like to have you read this.

GRACE

Read? What do you mean, read?

John Paul hands her a tablet.

JOHN PAUL

Here, take this and tell me what you think.

GRACE

You want me to read? Why'd you ask me up here?

JOHN PAUL

Well, I thought maybe you watch television.

GRACE

Ha! Who has time for TV? I have to make money.

(beat)

I thought you said I was pretty.

JOHN PAUL

You can be both.

GRACE

Just read? That's all?

JOHN PAUL

Please.

GRACE

You're joking?

JOHN PAUL

It's only a few pages.

GRACE

No. Sorry, I'm out of here. You've insulted me.

JOHN PAUL

Now, wait a minute. I said I'd pay you.

GRACE

I can't...

JOHN PAUL

You want to just sit and I read to you?

GRACE

I can read myself. I'm not ignorant.

(beat)

I mean I can't go downstairs.

JOHN PAUL

Okay, I don't want you to be angry.

GRACE

Why would I be angry? I got to a man's room and he asks me to read?

JOHN PAUL

I don't see the problem?

GRACE

If I'm your permanent girlfriend, I will need to be up there at least two or three hours a day. A young writer like you isn't easy to satisfy.

(beat)

And I'm only reading? You think you can write enough to keep me from looking foolish?

JOHN PAUL

I won't tell them if you won't.

GRACE

OK, I'll read for you.

She takes the tablet and lays down on the bed. She reads. He sits at a desk to watch her. Which makes her feel uncomfortable.

GRACE

Homo luzonensis?

JOHN PAUL

Yes, that's the title of my TV series.

GRACE

I don't know what that is. And that means that no one will either.

(beat)

Why not something more simple?

JOHN PAUL

Like what?

GRACE

Who is he?

JOHN PAUL

The first Filipino. 70,000 years ago.

GRACE

Well, why not that?

(beat)

And what is this?

(beat)

His house was in Indonesia and a typhoon or maybe a tsunami sweeps him and his family to sea.

JOHN PAUL

Yes

GRACE

Which? Can't you make up your mind?

JOHN PAUL

Well, they don't really know..

GRACE

You are a television writer?

JOHN PAUL

I'm trying.

GRACE

Then write. Stop all this "maybe" and "could have," "might," "probably."

(beat)

And he just stands there...

JOHN PAUL
No, he's swept to sea.

GRACE
And "he just stands there." See it says
it clearly.
(beat)
No one just stands there. His wife and
children must be panicked.

JOHN PAUL
I image they are.

GRACE
Where is that written?

JOHN PAUL
Oh, really. I thought I did. Somewhere.
It's not?

GRACE
Go away. I'll read and make notes for
you. Clearly you need help.
(beat)
Go sit in the bar, not my bar; use the
red door, watch girls dance. And, don't
touch. I'm your permanent girlfriend.
Don't forget.
(beat)
If I catch you in yellow bar while I'm
here in our room, you are in big
trouble!

Later...

INT. BURGOS STREET - CAFÉ

John Paul doesn't go into the Red Slipper. He sits in a café and
watches people pass by on the sidewalk. He turns his neck
watching the more interesting people as they pass.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL ROOM

The bed sheets are now ivory and the bed spread is burgundy, and
the curtains are now sage.

Grace is naked under the sheets, reading. But she jumps up and gets dressed totally unembarrassed. John Paul's eyes are the size of saucers, and then he looks at the room.

JOHN PAUL
The room? Achmed?

GRACE
Oh, just some things I sent for. I didn't leave. I've been working three hours. My friend Granny brought my beautiful things. No?

John Paul seems tired but not drunk and he is rubbing his neck that appears sore.

GRACE
Your neck hurts. You look too long and too hard.

JOHN PAUL
I guess.

GRACE
Notes on the tablet.
(beat)
Your three hours up.
(beat)
Make corrections. I come back tomorrow.

JOHN PAUL
You read my script naked?

GRACE
Boring stories make me uncomfortable.

JOHN PAUL
Thank you.

Grace exits the room. But as she opens the door... the European is there drunker than before and standing there.

EUROPEAN
Rhose!

GRACE
For goodness' sake, how you find me?

EUROPEAN

I knocked on every door... Achmed said to stop, but here I am.

JOHN PAUL

A friend?

GRACE

Businessman named Stefan or something like that. I left him in the bar.

EUROPEAN

Björn!

JOHN PAUL

My name's John Paul.

EUROPEAN

Like the Pope?

(beat)

Excuse me... I'm gonna need to throw up.

Björn enters the bathroom and shuts the door. We hear him barf. Grace knocks on the bathroom door.

GRACE

Stefan? This is John Paul. He now my permanent boyfriend. Understand?

We hear Björn barf again.

JOHN PAUL

Well, what now?

GRACE

Leave. Not my job to clean up.

JOHN PAUL

You wanna have some dinner?

GRACE

(shocked)

You and me? In a restaurant?

JOHN PAUL

What do we do with Stefan?

Grace picks up the phone.

GRACE

Achmed, drunk man in writer's bathroom.

Grace takes the tablet to the concealed location and opens the secret compartment. The laptop is there, and she slides the table in there with it.

Grace is ready to go. John Paul is uncertain; he thought the location in the wall was secure. But evidently everyone knows about it.

INT. JOSE QUERVO TEQUILARIA - 4888 DURBAN

GRACE

This very fancy, exotic place. You got money?

WAITER

Would you care for a drink, sir?

JOHN PAUL

Yes. Grace?

Grace pretends to know the menu, and without studying it, she points to something.

GRACE

I'll take this.

WAITER

Habanero Anti-Hero. You seem to know what you're doing but just in case. It's house-infused tequila, cucumbers, Habanero peppers, ginger beer, copper mug.

JOHN PAUL

So you like Habanero peppers, huh?

GRACE

I always have Habanero peppers at home. I'm very exotic.

JOHN PAUL
(to the waiter)
Is it hot?

WAITER
A bit.

JOHN PAUL
(to Grace)
Are you sure?

GRACE
Of course, I'm sure. I've had tequila
and peppers before.

JOHN PAUL
Make it two.
(to Grace)
Tell me, why were you on the ferry.

GRACE
It makes me feel good to pretend
I'm somebody important. Sometimes, I
have the money to leave Luzon.
(beat)
But I not expect you to understand.
(beat)
You never had to do a dirty job like
me.

JOHN PAUL
I suppose this is a predictable and
foolish question, but why do you?

GRACE
What else can I do? Manila full
of greedy people. No one hire me.

JOHN PAUL
What about your family?

GRACE
What family?
(beat)
When I was ten years old, my mom took
me to my aunt to live. She died of

cancer and two days later my aunt died walking across a street.

(beat)

Uncle threw me into the street with little baby...

She abruptly stops.

JOHN PAUL

A what...

Grace quickly thinks up a lie.

GRACE

A doll. I had a doll. I was very scared. I cry, but he not care. Then he throw me and... well he threw me out.

Grace reflects.

GRACE

Soon I wasn't good for Catholic wife anymore.

JOHN PAUL

You were ten?

GRACE

It's not so uncommon you know.

(beat)

What you think ignorant ten-year-old Filipina girl will do?

(beat)

Not good for anything, dance and fuck.

JOHN PAUL

Don't say that.

GRACE

I do it pretty good. Wanna try?

JOHN PAUL

I'm sorry I asked.

GRACE

But I'm not dirty bargirl. Inside,
I'm still good. I would make a nice
wife, if some old fool comes by.

JOHN PAUL

Don't they come by.

GRACE

No, not really.

WAITER

Your Habanero Anti-Heros.

JOHN PAUL

Thank you.

They receive the drinks and she can't drink it...

GRACE

I can't drink this. It's too hot.

JOHN PAUL

You want something different?

GRACE

No, I'll keep trying it. It's the way
pain works. After a time, you just feel
numb.

John Paul carefully considers everything she's said.

EXT/INT. JOSE QUERVO TEQUILARIA - 4888 DURBAN

It is an open-air restaurant and Professor Zarsadiaz and his
daughter walk past on the sidewalk and notice John Paul and
Grace inside at a table. They speak over the railing.

ZARSADIAZ

Hello, John Paul.

(beat)

I see you've taken my suggestion.

JOHN PAUL

Oh, good evening, sir.

ZARSADIAZ
Experiencing Manila?

JOHN PAUL
Yes.

(beat)
Oh, Grace, this is Professor Zarsadiaz
and his daughter, also a professor,
Kristine Zarsadiaz.

KRISTINE
Hello.

GRACE
How do you do?

KRISTINE
How do you do?

ZARSADIAZ
Well, nice seeing you.

KRISTINE
Oh, John Paul...

(BEAT)
Do you have you a day or two to run up
to the caves, next week?

JOHN PAUL
Certainly.

KRISTINE
Where did you say you were staying?

JOHN PAUL
The Moonlight Hotel, just down the
street.

KRISTINE
Thank you. I'll email you.
(beat)
Nice to have met you, Grace.

GRACE
Pleasure.

KRISTINE

Goodbye.

The two professors walk away.

ZARSADIAZ

(to Kristine)

Well, he seems to manage very well on his own.

Back to the table.

GRACE

She's a very pretty girl. You like her?

JOHN PAUL

I hardly know her.

GRACE

It's the cave from your story?

JOHN PAUL

She'll probably forget all about it.

GRACE

She won't forget. She's not married. And what's worse, she's a Filipina.

JOHN PAUL

She's a teacher. She's helping me with the story.

GRACE

She'll want to teach you some caveman mating strategies? You watch.

Later...

INT. JOSE QUERVO TEQUILARIA - 4888 DURBAN

Grace is a bit drunk and drinking the drinks like it's water.

The waiter brings the bill.

GRACE

How much?

JOHN PAUL
About two weeks.

GRACE
You talk funny.

Suddenly, she realizes she's drank a lot of his money.

GRACE
Oh, I understand. This drinking cut
your visit short two weeks. I'm sorry.
I'm not your permanent girlfriend any
more?

John Paul shrugs, "I don't know."

GRACE
Well, it was good while it lasted. You
had a nice time with me?

John Paul nods that he did, but he appears distracted. Life is going to be expensive in Manila. He looks at the prices. Grace seems a bit inebriated and desperate to hold on to her man.

GRACE
I know a bargirl who married a big-time
TV executive. She was my best friend
before Granny.

JOHN PAUL
Wow, you think...

GRACE
Your idea isn't ready yet. You're not
ready either. You gotta fix your head
first.

(beat)
I'll tell you when you are ready for
the big time and don't call me.

They get up to leave and clearly Grace's drunk; she stumbles onto the sidewalk.

INT. BURGOS STREET - SIDEWALK

She falls into John Paul's arms. She leans on him as and they are walking toward the Moonlight Hotel.

GRACE

I never get drunk. Against the rules.

JOHN PAUL

You're with me. I won't let anything happen to you.

GRACE

Thank you.

JOHN PAUL

Do you want me to take you home?

GRACE

No! I don't want to go back to that bar.

JOHN PAUL

Where do you stay? Well, can I be honest? With a man, but I have a permanent boyfriend now.

(beat)

Oh, that's you. You have a nice room and you got good heart.

JOHN PAUL

Where are your clothes?

GRACE

At yellow bar.

JOHN PAUL

All of your clothes are at GoGo Bananas?

GRACE

It's a very large locker.

JOHN PAUL

What do you do with all your money?

GRACE

I don't know. But I manage to spend it as fast as I get it.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL ROOM

Grace undresses and falls into bed nude. She may have passed out or she may have simply gone to sleep.

John Paul leaves.

JOHN PAUL

Achmed, are any of these rooms open? I need to borrow one, please?

Achmed flies into a rage. It appears he's really not too mad and it seems to happen all the time.

ACHMED

She bring a man into your room?

(beat)

That is a serious break in the rules. I throw her out.

JOHN PAUL

No, its not that...

Achmed barges into the room and sees naked Gloria asleep on the bed. He nervously (quickly) glances around the empty room and backs out.

Achmed steps back into the hallway. He is puzzled. He looks at John Paul with a sturn eye.

ACHMED

Oh, you still search for high school sweetheart. I understand, but I thought you gave up on her, taking a bargirl to a tequileria.

JOHN PAUL

How do you?

Achmed opens a different room.

ACHMED

It's one thing I've learned in Manila. Always keep one room open.

(beat)

Sleep in here.

(beat)

Just a word of advice. Friend, if you don't mind. Maybe you are too emotionally attached to write on this subject. Maybe you need to take a step back and look at the entire picture?

He gestures to the room with the naked woman on the bed.

JOHN PAUL
You think I should..

ACHMED
I'm just saying..

Later...

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - OTHER ROOM

John Paul is awoken by a phone call. It's Kristine.

JOHN PAUL
Hello.
(beat)
Sure, I can be ready.
(beat)
Moonlight Inn. Burgos Street.
(beat)
I'll be waiting downstairs.

John Paul dresses and is about to walk in on Grace, but he doesn't want to disturb her. He tapes a note on his hotel room door, so she will find it.

EXT. BURGOS STREET - SIDEWALK

He exits the hotel and it's clearly morning. Kristine, in a sporty convertible, pulls up and picks him up. They zoom out of town, north toward the caves.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

Grace wakes up. She is seriously hungover and dresses. She misses the note entirely and walks downstairs.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - LOBBY

ACHMED

Oh, Grace. It's terrible. What are we going to do?

GRACE

What?

ACHMED

Nationwide lockdown. All the bars, restaurants closed. All businesses closed. Quarantine!

She's walking toward the street.

ACHMED

You can't go...

GRACE

Ridiculous, this street never closes.

EXT. BURGOS STREET - SIDEWALK

She exits the hotel. It's noon and the street is empty.

She walks into the GoGo Bananas bar. There is a lone dancer and two potential clients.

GRACE

It's noon. Where is everybody?

The bartender shrugs.

She walks into the back room and is removing her clothes from the locker and packing them into a cardboard box.

An early morning raid happens. Police enter the bar... they mean to make an example of the bar and they are arresting everyone.

POLICE

You are all under arrest.

BARTENDER

Why?

POLICE

We make an example. Front page news.

The police grab her and she spills all her clothes onto the floor.

GRACE

Wait, I'm only getting my clothes. I'm not working. Does it look like I'm working? I have a permanent boyfriend.

BEGIN TWO MIXED MONTAGES

INT. JAIL

The jail conditions are bad, and Grace is in a cell with seriously marginalized people. Grace begins to cough, and she appears ill. She begins to hold her stomach. Abdominal pain.

INT. CAVE

Kristine and John Paul tour the cave. There are diggings... covered with tarps. The she pulls them back to show him where the discoveries were made. She shows him photos of the various bones and tools. There are shots where they are near each other; John Paul seems interested in the archaeology. Kristine seems more interested in John Paul.

END MONTAGES

EXT. MANILA STREETS - SIDEWALK

National Police watch Kristine and John Paul speed by in the expensive sports car. They don't bat an eye.

A homeless person is seen digging through the trash. And they spring into action. They arrest the homeless man.

EXT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - SIDEWALK

Kristine and John Paul pull up and she looks very confident. Of course, he's polite to her. But clearly she has his eyes set on him.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - LOBBY

ACHMED

Thank Allah. You are back.

JOHN PAUL

Well, I went up north to an archaeological site.

ACHMED

It's the end of the world. The police have arrested all the girls from all the bars.

JOHN PAUL

Grace? What about Granny?

Achmed shrugs, that he can't keep up with all the bar girls. But Achmed has foresight enough to text his taxi driver friend.

John Paul runs upstairs and discovers the note still on the door. He opens the room and finds it empty. He runs downstairs in a near panic.

JOHN PAUL

Achmed. I need a taxi.

Achmed only has to point to the street. The taxi pulls up immediately.

INT. JAIL - LOBBY

John Paul pays the fines and Grace is released. She's in horrible condition. She's coughing and holding her side. She's in terrible pain and walking very slowly. John Paul runs to her.

GRACE

You came to get me?

JOHN PAUL

I'm sorry. I was looking at a digging. Ancient man. You know.

GRACE

With that professor woman?

JOHN PAUL

Yes.

GRACE

I told you she not forget.

JOHN PAUL
I need to understand the science.

GRACE
Now, if you don't mind...

And she faints. He catches her and carries her to the taxi.

INT. TAXI

They pass a private hospital.

JOHN PAUL
Stop.

TAXI DRIVER
But this is a private... it's only there
is a public hospital only...

JOHN PAUL
No, stop here.

TAXI DRIVER
Oh, you think the virus has overtaken
the public hospital. I see. Good idea.

The taxi pulls into driveway.

Later...

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM

John Paul is nervous, waiting. The doctor, a very professional and successful man (wearing a lab coat but with an expensive watch and shoes) approaches him.

DOCTOR
It's not the virus, but she's in
terrible condition. She said she was in
jail?

JOHN PAUL
It was simply a misunderstanding. She's
a very respectable girl. She was caught
out in the quarantine and I was out of
town.

DOCTOR

Well, she has an appendicitis. And we'll need to remove it. Do you want to move her to a public hospital?

JOHN PAUL

How much?

DOCTOR

Well, you'll have to speak to them in the business office.

JOHN PAUL

Yes, of course.

DOCTOR

Afterward she'll need a lot of rest. And isolation. She may have been exposed to the virus.

JOHN PAUL

I understand. I'll take care of her.

DOCTOR

No problem?

JOHN PAUL

No. Thank you.

Later...

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

John Paul makes her soup in the kitchenette, and brings it to her in the bed. She's looking improved.

GRACE

What have you written for me?

JOHN PAUL

Not now, for goodness' sake.

GRACE

Surely, you wrote something?

JOHN PAUL

No, I need to make sure you are okay.
That you eat this soup.

GRACE

You make me lay here all day with
nothing to read?

JOHN PAUL

Well, you're recuperating.

GRACE

I just want you to be successful.

JOHN PAUL

Well, you can just get better and not
worry about that now.

GRACE

You leave me and go write?

JOHN PAUL

Tomorrow, Grace.

John Paul's phone rings. He ignores it. Grace instinctually
seems to know who is calling.

GRACE

John Paul, you like me as much as the
professor girl?

JOHN PAUL

You have better bones.

(beat)

Get it?

GRACE

You made a little joke. I get it. She's
an archaeologist and you are the most
witty man I know.

JOHN PAUL

Thank you. But I'm afraid it won't be
enough.

GRACE

What will you say if I give you my bones? Jump them anytime?

JOHN PAUL

I don't know what to say.

GRACE

I'm still your permanent girlfriend?

JOHN PAUL

I think we've already discussed this...

GRACE

I'll take good care of you.

JOHN PAUL

Who's taking care of who?

GRACE

Never go out with other boyfriends.

JOHN PAUL

Grace, you're very beautiful, and I'm only human.

(beat)

But unfortunately, there's no provision for anything like this in my budget.

GRACE

With you, it's different.

(beat)

You are the boy who could make it all come true. My heart has a little flutter.

JOHN PAUL

It's the medication. The doctor said that might happen.

John Paul can't respond too seriously. He needs the money to finish his TV script and stay in Manila long enough to present it to the TV people.

GRACE

It's like riding the ferry... I'm only pretending.

JOHN PAUL
Who's pretending. I'm pretending.

Intuitively, she knows what he's talking about.

GRACE
No, don't say that. Your TV show is a good idea. I think many Filipinos will want to know where they came from.

There is a knock at the door. It's Granny. But she's not in her old lady costume. Granny runs to the bed..

JOHN PAUL
Well, I'm going to buy some food. So, you girls can talk.

GRACE
The quarantine?

GRANNY
I heard you are getting better.

GRACE
Yes, but are you okay?

GRANNY
Well, Achmed got me out of jail. He said since John Paul rescued you.. he was forced to act gallantly as well. Isn't that dreamy?

GRACE
And you're staying with him?

GRANNY
Isn't it so romantic. He's the owner of this entire hotel. All eight rooms?

GRACE
Oh, he's very successful. He would make you a very nice husband.

GRANNY
Oh, financial security.

GRACE

Where is your old lady costume?

GRANNY

Police didn't confiscate it all.

GRACE

Oh, no?

GRANNY

It's okay; Achmed doesn't like older women. He says he likes me, age 19!

(beat)

So what about John Paul?

GRACE

I'm his full-time girlfriend.

GRANNY

Really?

GRACE

I'm in his bed aren't I? And I've been here a week. And he hasn't thrown me out!

GRANNY

But you're sick.

GRACE

He's crazy about me. And, he has a script for television. About the first Filipino. A man from 70,000 years ago.

GRANNY

Oh, really! He treat you like a caveman?

GRACE

Seriously, it will be a big hit. People nostalgic about such caveman stories. Millions will watch. Wait and see.

GRANNY

Achmed is jealous and won't let me enter the bar.

GRACE

It's closed.

GRANNY

Not really. Front door locked. Made to look officially closed. But the yellow door is open. Both bars are open. Red door open too.

GRACE

Really? Men just use the hotel entrance to go inside the clubs?

GRANNY

But I'm not allowed.

GRACE

Achmed?

GRANNY

Achmed said bar customers way down and hotel business struggles, but still he ordered me not to go. He said, "strictly prohibited!"

GRACE

Oh, so you and him... I'm so happy for you.

(beat)

But he's Muslim.

GRANNY

Oh, no. He said he doesn't. He wants to become a good Catholic man.

GRACE

Oh, this is serious. He loves you!

GRANNY

I think he does.

Later...

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

Grace is in bed still, but much improved.

JOHN PAUL

I've been invited to dinner at the professor's house.

GRACE

It's far?

JOHN PAUL

No, just around the corner actually; that's why I picked this area.

GRACE

So you could be close to his daughter?

(beat)

I'll go with you.

She begins to get out of bed.

JOHN PAUL

No you won't. Your stitches aren't even out yet.

JOHN PAUL

I've got to get dressed.

GRACE

Go ahead. I've seen naked men before.

JOHN PAUL

Yes, but you haven't seen me.

GRACE

No, not yet.

She sits up in the bed and turns to watch. John Paul retreats into the bathroom. He nearly closes the door. From the bed, she strains to see through opening. She can't really see much.

GRACE

If a man runs to the bathroom to get dressed, she's not the one for him.

JOHN PAUL

Grace, you don't understand. I'm putting on my pants on.

GRACE
(under her breath)
Pants on, pants off, makes no
difference. You're not the one for me.

John Paul leaves the bathroom.

JOHN PAUL
All right.

She pretends that she saw him.

GRACE
You're too skinny.

JOHN PAUL
Why do you say that?

GRACE
You left the door open.

JOHN PAUL
Look, we are locked in a hotel room
together because of the virus. Do you
have to tease me?

GRACE
Is that all we are is just locked
together?

JOHN PAUL
We ARE locked in here together.

GRACE
Still, you're not eating enough for my
taste.

JOHN PAUL
Thank you.

GRACE
I'll get you fat.
(beat)
How long you be out tonight?

JOHN PAUL
I don't know.

GRACE

I've read everything you've written.

JOHN PAUL

I will not feel like writing when I
come back.

GRACE

I'll wait anyhow. This archeologist
woman might inspire you, like I can't.

John Paul moves toward the door. Grace debates with herself
whether she should mention his shoes.

GRACE

(mumbling)

Maybe it would be better if she thinks
he's a fool.

(louder)

John Paul? You going to wear those
shoes?

John Paul looks down and he is wearing his house slippers.

INT. DR. ZARSADIAZ'S HOME - DINING TABLE

There are intellectuals, professors, and such eating dinner.

KRISTINE

Isn't this exciting?

DR. ZARSADIAZ

An illegal dinner party.

EUROPEAN

(to John Paul)

Don't I know you?

KRISTINE

You can't have met him.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

He just came to Manila.

KRISTINE

John Paul is here to write.

EUROPEAN

Oh, a scandalous novel maybe?

The European realizes where he knows John Paul from..

EUROPEAN

Burgos street. I know you...

The European hesitates and thinks twice.

EUROPEAN

I know there must be a novel down there
in all that dirt.

JOHN PAUL

As a matter of fact, I'm staying down
there. My hotel is directly between two
of the more infamous clubs.

KRISTINE

Strip clubs?

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Closed, I hope.

JOHN PAUL

Certainly look closed from the street.
But I'm not that kind of writer.

EUROPEAN

No novels about the seedy Manila
underworld in you?

JOHN PAUL

I think more in terms of television.

EUROPEAN

Do you have a show?

JOHN PAUL

I have an idea for a show.

EUROPEAN

Can you say or are you afraid someone
will steal your idea?

JOHN PAUL
I'm completely fascinated by
Pleistocene man.

EUROPEAN
Oh, professor that's your area of
expertise, isn't it.

KRISTINE
And mine.

EUROPEAN
Oh, yes dear.

DR. ZARSADIAZ
Well, I like John Paul, but I've turned
things over to my daughter. They've
spent quite a lot of time together.

EUROPEAN
That must be quite different.

The European coughs and everyone is worried.

EUROPEAN
Don't worry. It's just allergies. I've
been checked out; it took all damn day.
What sort of country doesn't have
enough nurses?

DR. ZARSADIAZ
Most of our nurses are in the virus
hotspots. They picked up and went into
the firestorm.

EUROPEAN
Is that where they are?

KRISTINE Italy, New York and London.
Yes.

EUROPEAN
Oh, yes. Yes, they are. Seems like I
remember reading something about that.

DR. ZARSADIAZ
Brave Filipinas.

EUROPEAN

But isn't it just a political hoax?

KRISTINE

My sister is a nurse and she caught the virus in New York.

EUROPEAN

Oh, my!

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

There is a knock on the door. It opens and all of Grace's professional friends enter. It's clearly a party.

GRACE

Why aren't you all working?

DANCER #1

Oh, there aren't but six men in either club. The government has frightened everyone away.

GRACE

It's a deadly virus.

DANCER #2

No one wants to get sick, I guess.

GRACE

Is that true Granny?

Granny shrugs.

GRANNY

I don't go in those places anymore. You know that. I told you. These girls just came and got me from my permanent apartment, first floor right behind the desk.

GRACE

Well, lets have a party.

(beat)

So how is Achmed?

GRANNY

Worried. Very worried.

(beat)

Shipping all messed up because of the virus. Bulk shipments of soap haven't arrived.

Later...

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

GRANNY

And... you're wearing his shirt?

DANCER #1

You better take it off.

GRACE

No, he likes for me to wear it.

The pizza guy arrives with several pizzas. The girls are clearly hungry.

PIZZA GUY

It's 1000 pesos.

Grace looks worried; all the girls stop giggling.

GRACE

Oh? I pay with the app.

The boy looks at the receipt.

PIZZA GUY

Yes. I'm sorry. And you left a generous tip. Thank you!

GRANNY

Maybe he not like you spending...

GRACE

He's crazy mad in love with me.

(beat)

He said to me, "I'm crazy about you. Buy all the pizza you want. He said I can get fat if I want."

GRANNY

For goodness' sake.

INT. DR. ZARSADIAZ'S HOME - LIBRARY

JOHN PAUL

I admire your sister; is she going to be okay.

KRISTINE

You shouldn't. I was just messing with him. I don't have a sister.

(beat)

I just hate right-wing conspiracy haters.

JOHN PAUL

I saw your father chuckle.

KRISTINE

He hates them too.

JOHN PAUL

Well, then, I admire him even more.

KRISTINE

Good, because he admires you for leaving everything for a year to write.

(beat)

How is the money holding up?

JOHN PAUL

I'll run out of money before my year.

KRISTINE

Are you serious? I mean, about your work?

JOHN PAUL

Oh, I've wanted to make this happen ever since you found the rhinoceros.

KRISTINE

Well, we owe it to you to get you an appointment. Father said they don't

want to see you unless you know someone.

JOHN PAUL

Maybe when the epidemic is over, something will develop.

KRISTINE

I'm nosy, aren't I? But I envy you. I'd give more than a year of my life if I knew what to give it for. But I don't know. So I just go on waiting, and I don't know what I'm waiting for.

JOHN PAUL

I like your father, but maybe you need a job at a different university?

(beat)

Get out from under the wing and be yourself.

KRISTINE

You really must be a great writer.

JOHN PAUL

It's television; that's not going to happen.

KRISTINE

Well, don't sell yourself short. You seem to notice things others don't.

(beat)

When will you show me some of your work?

JOHN PAUL

Anytime.

KRISTINE

Tonight?

JOHN PAUL

Well, I left my phone at the hotel. I'd email them to you.

KRISTINE

I'll drive you to your hotel.

EXT. KRISTINE'S CONVERTIBLE

KRISTINE

Maybe the obnoxious European has a point.

(beat)

There might be a novel in all this.

JOHN PAUL

If there is one, I've not found it yet.

KRISTINE

Maybe you just need to dust a little?

JOHN PAUL

Soup and water!

EXT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - STREET

Kristine pulls up, and John Paul jumps out of the sports car.

KRISTINE

And you're sure I can't come in?

JOHN PAUL

It will just be a minute.

KRISTINE

There's a curfew and...

John Paul runs inside. Kristine is a novice to Burgos Street, but even she notices the strange number of men entering and leaving the hotel.

It gets a bit creepy for Kristine waiting; a police car cruises by, reaches the intersection and pulls a u-turn. She abandons the car and enters the hotel.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - LOBBY

The police car drives by slowly. They are peering into the hotel. She stands in the lobby trying to reason what is happening.

She doesn't say anything, but she does notice men and women entering and leaving through the yellow and red doors.

John Paul opens the door and sees at least six or more bar girls, in various states of dress, sleeping around the room. Someone on a sofa, two in bed, and some on the floor. Pizza boxes and empty wine bottles are strewn about the room. The sink is full of ice and a few unopened bottles of beer.

Kristine enters the room, but she not any more shocked than John Paul.

KRISTINE You told me to wait, but the police.

JOHN PAUL
I told you to wait!
(beat)
Grace's my reader, you see.

KRISTINE
Which one is she?

JOHN PAUL
The one in pajamas.

KRISTINE
Does she just wait around for pages?

JOHN PAUL
Apparently, these are her friends.

KRISTINE
And they're having asleep over?

A bar girl wakes up and doesn't say or notice them; she simply walk past them like a zombie into the bathroom.

JOHN PAUL
It's not what it looks like.

Kristine backs out of the room into the hall.

John Paul is searching for his phone. Grace speaks without opening her eyes. It's almost as if she's dreaming.

GRACE
Is that you John Paul?

JOHN PAUL
I'm looking for my phone.

GRACE
Come to bed. I don't mind.

JOHN PAUL
Half the hotel is already in your bed.

GRACE
Yes, we had a party... the girls are under a great deal of stress, and they got their 5000 pesos.

JOHN PAUL
Have you seen my phone?

She feels around under the sheets and finds the phone. She hands it to him and returns to sleep.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - HALLWAY

Achmed arrives to find Kristine leaving the room.

ACHMED
I'm the manager; is there anything I can do?

KRISTINE
Is it always so quiet up here?

ACHMED
This is a very quiet hotel. Best place for writers. John Paul is very happy on the top floor.

KRISTINE
I imagine he is.

Achmed opens the door and enters the room. Pretends shock and backs out. He pauses and speculates.

ACHMED
You're his high school sweetheart?

KRISTINE
Uh huh.

She's soliciting more information.

ACHMED

Oh, he's been searching for you since he arrived. You've broken his heart, and now you find him in this situation.

KRISTINE

I'm just a little hurt.

ACHMED

Well, when you act like you do, you can expect things like this.

KRISTINEWhat?

ACHMED

You broke his heart first.

KRISTINE

How?

ACHMED

When you left the village, of course. You refused to marry him and for what to come to Manila to be a bargirl?

KRISTINE

Really?

There is an odd moment. Achmed feels maybe he was too harsh.

ACHMED

Well maybe it's not that bad; look at you. Your clothes. You don't dance anymore?

KRISTINE

No. I work at the university. I teach there.

ACHMED

Well, wonderful. I always in support of someone raising themselves up. From the gutter up to the ivory keys.

KRISTINE
Tower. Ivory tower.

John Paul arrives in the hallway.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

Achmed enters the hotel room and begins rattling the girls. They rub their eyes and sleepwalk back to their rooms.

ACHMED
(to various dancers)
Wake up. Go back to your rooms. You've caused enough trouble. You spend all your 5000 pesos on a party, and now you can't pay your rent.

Achmed doesn't wake Granny, but she does open her eyes.

GRANNY
(very groggy)
Achmed, darling? Can you please leave my friends alone?

ACHMED
Okay, but I want to tell you I wasn't raised to be so charitable.

GRANNY
That's nice. I love you too.

Granny doesn't stir. She's returned to sleep. He simply smiles and lets her remain.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - HALLWAY

JOHN PAUL
Oh, great. You're still here. I had no idea.
(beat)
I just emailed you my work.

KRISTINE
Fine, I'll call tomorrow if I find the time.

JOHN PAUL

Kristine. Kristine, let me see you
down.

KRISTINE

Please don't trouble yourself.

JOHN PAUL

It was a lovely dinner.

(beat)

All of it.

KRISTINE

Oh, fine.

Achmed simply looks at John Paul and gives him a hopeless look.

ACHMED

This is just never going to be set
right.

Achmed unlocks the room next-door.

ACHMED

Just in case you need it again.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

John Paul enters and Grace sits up in bed.

JOHN PAUL

You really fixed that.

GRACE

What was she doing here?

(beat)

Why you bring up here, when you know
this is the bed we share?

JOHN PAUL

We do?

GRACE

Yes, you pay for it, and I sleep in it.

JOHN PAUL

Have we ever been in bed together?

GRACE

Maybe we should coordinate our
schedules better?

JOHN PAUL

I like things just the way they are.
Thank you.

GRACE

But you're my permanent boyfriend.
And on this street that means
something.

JOHN PAUL

I told her to wait in the car?

GRACE

You told her to wait?

(beat)

And she didn't obey you!!! That hussy!

John Paul is studying his phone.

GRACE

I owe you some money.

(beat)

We got very hungry.

JOHN PAUL

Ordered some pizza?

GRACE

I bought with your app.

(beat)

Now I repay?

She hands him money.

GRACE

Now, you want me to get out of these
pajamas?

JOHN PAUL

Grace, for a small Filipina, you're
the biggest pain...

(beat)

Look, I'm going next door.

GRACE

You'll want me in the morning. I'll wake you up.

JOHN PAUL

No.

John Paul doesn't leave, but he sits at the table. He sits and thinks.

GRACE

You have good time tonight?

JOHN PAUL

Yes.

GRACE

Jumbo shrimp at the party?

JOHN PAUL

Plates of it.

GRACE

They have a sexy library?

JOHN PAUL

Sexy?

GRACE

You go in dark library with that Kristine, the one who will not obey you?

JOHN PAUL

As a matter of fact, we did.

GRACE

And what archaeological evidence did she give you?

JOHN PAUL

Nothing. We didn't talk about it.

GRACE

What? You went into a dark library with that woman, and she didn't even give you any scenes?

(beat)

Really, why do you waste your time with her then?

(beat)

What is she doing for you?

JOHN PAUL

Nothing. Really.

GRACE

She's using you? She's taking your time and not paying you.

JOHN PAUL

Paying me?

GRACE

She should be giving you archaeological scenes for your TV series. If she loved you, you would be done.

JOHN PAUL

That's true.

GRACE

Then why don't you let me help you?

JOHN PAUL

Now, listen, you're becoming too jealous. And I don't like that.

JOHN PAUL

She might help me.

GRACE

Might? I know the wife of the director of...

She glances at the TV.

GRACE

LMA

John Paul doesn't take her seriously.

JOHN PAUL
Still, she's a smart woman. She might
help me, you know, give me some scenes.

GRACE
(mumbling)
That's what I'm worried about.

JOHN PAUL
What?

GRACE
I'm worried about you.

JOHN PAUL
Well, I'm going now.

GRACE
Wait.

JOHN PAUL
I'll see you tomorrow.

She runs to him and kisses him on the cheek!

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - LOBBY

Granny quietly descends the stairs and enters the lobby. She's looking for Achmed. She finds him sleeping and moves toward the forbidden yellow door.

INT. GOGO BANANAS - LOCKER ROOM

Granny enters the nightclub and makes it to the backroom. There is very little action, but a DRUNKEN FOOL follows her into the locker room.

DRUNKEN FOOL
Hello, Granny. Do you want to give me a
private dance? And, none of that old
lady crap.

GRANNY
Will you leave me alone, please. I
don't work here anymore.

DRUNKEN FOOL

You ditched me for a dirty stinking inn keeper. But I'd still like to see you dance.

GRANNY

Please, I don't want any trouble.

DRUNKEN FOOL

You dance, and we have a little fun right here then there won't be any trouble.

He grabs her violently and pulls her.

GRANNY

You let go of me! You...

Granny resists him.

DRUNKEN FOOL

You filthy Filipina bar slut!

The drunken fool slaps her. And she kicks him in the balls. And while he's bent over in pain she tries to pull a locker over on him.

ACHMED

You killed him?

GRANNY

No, that locker was empty. He's definitely hurt though.

Achmed is trying to sort it out.

GRANNY

I came get my things.

Achmed might become angry.

GRANNY

National emergency! Don't say a word!!!

Achmed doesn't become mad.

Later...

INT. ACHMED'S ROOM

Achmed brings a bag of ice for Ganny's face. Also, he cleans the blood from her lip.

GRANNY

I think this his blood.

ACHMED

No, it's your blood. There is a cut.

GRANNY

I bit him hard.

(beat)

I kicked him in coconuts.

(beat)

I think maybe I break his stomach.

ACHMED

How did you learn to fight like that?
The women in Saudi Arabia can't fight
like that.

GRANNY

The bar girls there can. I guarantee
it. Bar girls everywhere can fight.

Achmed looks at her a bit concerned, but he doesn't correct her.

GRANNY

Asshole break my rib once.

ACHMED

You mean this has happened before?

GRANNY

Sometimes men drink too much, get very
mean. Like to beat up bar girls.

ACHMED

See. That's why I don't want you in
those bars. When this epidemic is over,
what do you think, we sell this place

and find a more respectable
neighborhood?

Granny is surprised.

GRANNY

Achmed, you do me a favor?

ACHMED

Of course.

GRANNY

Please call your taxi driver friend.

(beat)

Rhose and I need a ride to the
television station.

Achmed is surprised.

INT. LARGER MANILA NETWORK - LOBBY

Granny looks eighty. She has sunglasses and is walking very fast
for an older woman. Grace is having difficulty keeping up.

SECURITY is about to stop her, but he hesitates.

GRACE

I'm an assistant. I'm sorry. She has an
appointment

SECURITY

But everyone is working from home.
There isn't anyone up there but human
resources.

GRACE

Excellent; exactly who she needs to
see. This is a special trip. She's the
author of Chika Chika Chicks.

SECURITY

From 1979?

GRACE

She says she never got her last check,
and now she wants paid.

SECURITY
But the quarantine.

GRACE
That's why she needs paid.

The security guard doesn't stop them; he just picks up the phone.

Granny and Grace get on an elevator.

INT. LARGER MANILA NETWORK - HUMAN RESOURCES

Upstairs there is only one HR LADY there.

HR LADY
Can I help you? There isn't anyone here, and I'm just closing up. There's a national...

GRACE
I'm sorry. I'm in the employ of...

Granny walks right past the desk. It appears she has a purpose.

HR LADY
Madam, you can't.

Granny keeps walking.

HR LADY
Wait. You can't go back there.

GRACE
She's a little hard of hearing. You'll have to look her in the face, for her to hear you.

The HR lady follows Granny on a long goose chase from desk to desk. Then the HR lady tries to get in front of her, she turns.

Grace finds the most important looking desk in the HR department, a corner office. She turns on the computer and there are hundreds of documents.

She opens her purse and takes out a flash drive.

The HR worker finally corners Granny, and she collapses into a chair. Granny breaks into tears. Granny is a convincing actress.

GRANNY

How am I going to feed my cats?

HR LADY

Cats?

GRANNY

There is an epidemic and I can't work. I worked here 40 years ago. I wrote a popular sitcom.

HR LADY

And...

GRANNY

You still owe me money.

HR LADY

We do?

GRANNY

I never got my last check.

HR LADY

Okay.

GRANNY

And I need to feed my cats.

HR LADY

The security guard said you were a writer? For?

GRANNY

Chicks to Chicks but you people illegally changed the name to *Chika Chika Chicks*.

Grace appears with a smile.

HR LADY

Madam, that wasn't us. That was a different network.

GRACE

She gets confused sometimes.

(to Granny)

Granny are you ready to go?

HR LADY

Well, I don't know. Are you ready?

GRACE

I think we've bothered this lady
enough, don't you?

Granny rises and calmly exits toward the elevator. Grace follows.

Later...

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF TV EXECUTIVE - ORTIGAS

A taxi delivers Grace and she rings the doorbell and a woman answers. The WIFE is nervous about strangers at her door.

GRACE

Hello. I work at LMN and I'm an
administrative assistant.

WIFE

You called earlier.

GRACE

Yes, I just wanted to stop by and make
sure everything is okay and you have
everything you need.

WIFE

Yes. I understand.

GRACE

And the network doesn't want you to
take any unnecessary risks.

WIFE

Oh, that's good.

GRACE

So, if you'll call me. It's my job to
do your shopping or run any errands.

(beat)
Here is my number.

WIFE
This is just written on a piece of paper.

GRACE
Well, there's an epidemic and maybe the print shop is closed? But I'm going to be working on that.

WIFE
Okay.

GRACE
Your husband is the head of the creative department?

WIFE
Yes, he's in his office now..

GRACE
Probably creating.

WIFE
Hopefully.

GRACE
So, the directing manager specifically asked me to take care of you and and Juan. I have a very clean taxi, the driver sanitizes it after every stop. I have three different masks and tons of hand sanitizer, a giant can of Lysol, and soap, tons of soap.

WIFE
That sounds nice.

GRACE
Is that live music?

The wife relaxes a bit.

WIFE

Why, yes, it's my son. He's only ten
but he wants to be a performer.

The women listen.

GRACE

He wrote that?

WIFE

Yes, I think. He takes after his
father.

GRACE

I like it. Please tell him to keep it
up. He may be working on a hit.

WIFE

Well, thank you.

GRACE

Just call me.

WIFE

Well, wait a minute. Please come in.
There is some shopping.

GRACE

I just need a list and I'll be right
back with your things.

The wife goes to the kitchen and writes out a list.

Grace sits on the sofa, smiles and waves to Ricky. She makes a
quasi dance move and the kid chuckles and plays some more.

The wife returns with some money and the list.

Grace reviews the list and..

GRACE

Okay, now this mustard; do you like the
American Hotdog, Dijon, or the Spice.

WIFE

We like the Dijon, please.

GRACE
Okay, I'll be back.

WIFE
Thank you.

INT. THE TAXI

We see Grace has a list and she checks off the first name, "VP of Creative Department - Juan"

TAXI DRIVER
Where to?

GRACE
The grocery, please.

BEGIN MONTAGUE

INT. MANILA SUPERMARKET

Grace carefully buys groceries.

END MONTAGUE

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF TV EXECUTIVE - ORTIGAS

Grace returns and is let into the house with two bags of groceries. Grace is handing it to the wife and she's placing it in the cabinets.

GRACE
Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce,
paprika, sugar, salt, and ground black
pepper.

WIFE
Good. Perfect.

GRACE
Are you making Rasa Malaysia?

WIFE
Why, yes.

She looks at a calendar/schedule.

WIFE

I'm making that, Saturday.

GRACE

Would you mind helping me? It's just that my boyfriend's favorite, actually he's my fiancé. He's a writer.

WIFE

Oh?

GRACE

Yes, his mother and Rasa Malaysia. He's been dropping hints, and I've been trying. I've tried every recipe on the internet, and I just can't master it.

WIFE

Oh, sure. Come over. I'll teach you the secret. Honey and garlic.

GRACE

Oh. Okay. I would be so grateful. You know he sits at the computer all-day..

WIFE

Juan does too.

GRACE

And when they're done, we want them to enjoy their meal. It's an artist's right!

WIFE

I agree. You said he was a writer?

GRACE

I think he has some pretty amazing ideas, but I'm bias.

WIFE

You love him?

GRACE

Like a maniac.

WIFE

I can tell.

Grace shows her the engagement ring on her left hand.

WIFE

Oh, it's so nice.

GRACE

Thank you.

WIFE

I'll be happy to show you. Be here at 5 pm.

GRACE

(smiling)

Maybe you can save the marriage even before it starts.

INT. TAXI

Grace gets into the taxi and she tries to return the ring to the driver.

GRACE

It worked.

TAXI DRIVER

Keep it 'till the end of the day. It's fake, of course. We'll put it in the glovebox.

GRACE

Well, thanks.

TAXI DRIVER

Don't let John Paul see you with it. He might not understand. In fact, I can guarantee he won't.

GRACE

Oh, I won't.

TAXI DRIVER

Where to next?

GRACE
Antipolo, H. Otley Beyer, Board of
Directors. He's eighty-six. He doesn't
need to be out shopping anyway.

The taxi moves out.

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF OTLEY BEYER - ANTIPOLO

Grace rings the bell and waits a long while. Finally, OTLEY
BEYER shows up with a walker. He's in a painter's smock with
paint splashed all over it.

GRACE
Mr. Beyer?

OTLEY
Huh? I'm hard of hearing.

GRACE
Okay. I'm Grace. I'm from the network.

OTLEY
What?

GRACE
I'm Grace. I'm from the network.

OTLEY
What network?

GRACE
You work for LMN.

OTLEY
Larger Manila Network. Yes, I'm on the
board there.

GRACE
Well, the Larger Media Network. Yes.

OTLEY
I really don't give a shit.

GRACE
What?

OTLEY

Are you deaf too?

GRACE

No. I'm supposed to do your shopping.
Because of your age...

OTLEY

Because of my age?

GRACE

Because of maturity, you're in a
vulnerable group but they, we, feel
you're indispensable to the network.

OTLEY

Bull shit!

GRACE

I'm here to make sure you're okay. So
you don't have to leave the apartment.

OTLEY

I leave the apartment.

GRACE

But there's a virus.

OTLEY

Who gives a shit?

GRACE

Well, we don't want you to get sick.

OTLEY

I'm deaf. I'm dying. My prostate is
the size of a coconut. My skin is so
thin, I get a rash when the wind blows,
and people think my art sucks. So why
not go out?

GRACE

Do you have food?

OTLEY

No, but I have money.

GRACE

Okay. You go out to eat?

OTLEY

But the bastards won't let me sit down. I'm 87 years old and they tried to make me eat standing up.

GRACE

You ate standing?

OTLEY

Fuck no, I sat down. What are they gonna do? Arrest me?

GRACE

Well, there's a nationwide lockdown.

OTLEY

Screw the politicians.

GRACE

They are just looking out for you.

OTLEY

They're looking out for themselves.

GRACE

How would you feel...

OTLEY

I'd feel terrible.

GRACE

Terrible?

OTLEY

I'd feel terrible stealing you away from your fiancé.

GRACE

My fiancé?

OTLEY

Your ring.

GRACE

Well, he'd love the competition.

OTLEY

He would?

GRACE

It would give him something to write about.

OTLEY

He's a writer?

(beat)

A writer stole my high school sweetheart from me. That was 1950. Maybe it's time for some payback.

They chuckle.

GRACE

Well, you are charming. Can I come in and look in your cupboards?

(beat)

I need to see what you have.

(beat)

So, I can go shopping?

OTLEY

I don't cook. Never did.

GRACE

So, let me in and I'll take care of that. No problem.

OTLEY

Who sent you?

GRACE

The president of the network.

OTLEY

What network?

GRACE

LMN

OTLEY

He's a bastard. He shit on every idea I've had for the last ten years.

(beat)

Well, aren't you coming in?

She enters the apartment and looks around. Mr. Beyer is looking at her ass.

OTLEY

Anyone ever tell you have a great body?

GRACE

This is embarrassing but yes, all the time.

The older gentleman chuckles.

The apartment is a wreck. There are half-completed paintings. Paintings that have been ruined by spilled paint.

GRACE

So you're retired?

OTLEY

Hell no! I'm old not dead.

GRACE

Have you always been a painter?

OTLEY

No, I edited, directed, and then I produced and then I ran a tv station and then I ran a network. At least, they say I did. I really can't remember if I ran it into the ground or not.

GRACE

So how's the art going.

OTLEY

The art critics, fuck them, spineless jellyfish, they say I'm washed up... talentless and too old fashion.

GRACE

Well, you gotta keep up.

Grace takes the remote control and changes it to a modern (young peoples) tv channel. There are beautiful people and upbeat music and programming. Otley watches.

OTLEY

Yeah, yeah.

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF TV EXECUTIVE - ORTIGAS

Grace and the wife are cooking. Best of friends quickly.

GRACE

And the typhoon blows the man's house over into the ocean and it floats away...

WIFE

With wife and kid?

GRACE

Two kids.

WIFE

How traumatic!

GRACE

Tell me about it. But what a great way to start a series.

WIFE

Did the first Filipinos, ok and tell John Paul, that's a great title. Did the first Filipinos really come to Luzon that way?

GRACE

That's what this lady professor at the university told him. But he's added so much emotional content. I can just feel the danger. Poisonous jellyfish, sharks, the house is getting water logged and just the roof is above water by the time it gets here.

(beat)

My future husband is a genius.

WIFE

Your voice changed when you mentioned
the lady professor.

GRACE

Oh?

WIFE

Like you don't like her?

GRACE

She better not have designs on him.
I'll scratch her eyes out.

The wife clearly has befriended Grace.

The kid, RICKY, shows up in the kitchen.

RICKY

When's dinner?

WIFE

When it's ready.

GRACE

Smells good, huh?
(beat)
That's your music?

RICKY

Yes.

GRACE

You didn't copy it from an American pop
star?

RICKY

No.

GRACE

It's not SAINT JHN, Powfu. Sounds like
DaBaby.

RICKY

Really? You think so?

GRACE

So you didn't copy it?

RICKY

No.

GRACE

It sounds like maybe you did.

RICKY

Is that supposed to be some sort of compliment? I wrote it and I can prove it.

GRACE

Well, it's good.

WIFE

Say, "Thank you."

GRACE

I'm sorry, it's just that you are good.

RICKY

Thank you.

GRACE

So you have the music, but if you wanna make it, you gotta have the whole package. You gotta move.

RICKY

I'm not good at that.

GRACE

Oh, I bet you can. You ever had someone show you?

RICKY

No. My music teacher is an old lady.

GRACE

Well, I used to dance for a living.

RICKY

Yeah, you were a professional dancer?

GRACE

Want me to show you some stuff?

Grace looks to the wife, and she sees how interested her son is. The wife nods okay.

GRACE

Now, this is the Philippines, you can't be lazy and be a star here. A few American dance, but ALL the Filipino celebrities dance. Right?

And they leave the kitchen.

GRACE

Let's see what you got?

She picks out some music... They dance.

GRACE

Now play your song?

The kid starts the drum machines and goes to the keyboard and plays his song. Grace starts recording it on her phone. He's lifeless, concentrating on the notes.

GRACE

Okay, you wrote this!

(beat)

Look at this video... I just recorded you?

(beat)

What's the matter?

RICKY

I'm not moving?

GRACE

You aren't feeling it.

RICKY

It's hard.

GRACE

Why? This song is going to make you a several million pesos. Your parents

will love that. And the kids at school.
You'll be unstoppable.

RICKY
You think?

GRACE
What is the first thing you're gonna
buy with your money?

RICKY
A BMW motorcycle.

GRACE
Cool, but, before you can even look at
something that expensive, you're gonna
have to feel the music.

RICKY
I do, in my fingers.

GRACE
No, you got to feel it in your ass.

The kid chuckles...

GRACE
Why are you laughing? Cause I said
"ass."
(beat)
Listen, you're gonna be in show
business, you're gonna hear worse than
that?

RICKY
Yea. I already have.

GRACE
But you don't fall into that. You keep
it clean. You hear me?

RICKY
Okay.

GRACE

Well, you aren't even in showbiz yet.
But don't you have a potty mouth. Play
the song and have fun.

She makes another recording and plays for him.

GRACE

Now, this time shake your tits AND
your... Oh, my gosh, I can't believe I
just said that. Don't listen to me!

RICKY

I'm a boy.

GRACE

Well, good point... but you have these
big strong shoulders. Shake them.
Pretend you have "tits."

RICKY

Like yours?

GRACE

Okay, if that works for you.

(beat)

Play the song and shake everything.

(beat)

Okay, not the head so much... You're
shaking your head too much.

(beat)

Okay, you'll get better.

(beat)

We'll work on it.

RICKY

Thanks.

She's affected by the "thank you." She turns heartfelt.

GRACE

You're welcome? You are such a little
gentleman.

(beat)

Can I be the first to ask for your
autograph?

She grabs pen and paper... The kid's parents happen to look in the door. Their son is shining brightly, his first fan.

GRACE
I'm your first fan, right.

Grace is making some solid friendships.

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF OTLEY BEYER - ANTIPOLO

The house has been cleaned. The old ruined paintings are in the trash. She's blasting modern upbeat music. Even Otley's dog is old.

GRACE
I found a dog. I think he was under some of those paintings.

OTLEY
Rosco? I knew he wasn't dead.

They take the dog for a walk. She uses her phone and shows him some modern paintings from galleries in New York, Paris, etc. He wrinkles his nose.

She's cooking and cleaning.

Otley is painting. Evidently, she's been teaching him to dance as well, because he's painting and moving about like a 50-year old. Otley is dancing.

GRACE
How old are you, anyway?

OTLEY
Fifty-seven!

She looks over his shoulder at the painting.

GRACE
More blue.

OTLEY
More blue?

GRACE

Blue is known to have a calming effect when used as the main color of a painting – but go for softer shades.

OTLEY

Fuck calm, I'm going for sadness. You're easy on the eyes, but I miss my wives.

GRACE

If you don't mind me asking... How many wives have you had?

OTLEY

Three.

GRACE

Three?

OTLEY

I'm not fifty-seven. Actually I'm eighty-seven. I think.

(beat)

I know you're worried. Never had a woman less than 22 years.

GRACE

Not even a little fling?

OTLEY

Nope! Too scared.

GRACE

That's amazing.

OTLEY

For a television executive... that's outstanding. Because I coulda.

GRACE

Then go with the dark blue.

OTLEY

Thank you, I will.

GRACE

So you think you could help my fiancé?

OTLEY

I never helped a writer in my entire life. Scum sucking dogs.

GRACE

But he's good. Very good.

OTLEY

Maybe its' better that I let him starve. If you didn't notice my cupboards are full!

The man chuckles.

GRACE

Maybe it's better if I stop coming over here?

OTLEY

Why would I help the competition?

GRACE

Because it would show that you're a generous and magnanimous man.

OTLEY

Women like that?

GRACE

You like this woman?

OTLEY

Who is she?

GRACE

She's single and she lives in the condos across the street.

OTLEY

I'll think about it.

GRACE

She's sixty-eight and fit. Rides a bike every day. Her ass is like a rock.

Grace shrugs and takes a photo of his more recent painting.

OTLEY

What are you doing?

GRACE

Posting your painting on Facebook?

OTLEY

I have that?

GRACE

You do. This Italian woman in Milan
thinks you're hot.

(beat)

Wanna see?

She shows him the woman's profile photo.

OTLEY

Tell her I think she's hot too.
And tell her what you just told me...

GRACE

What?

OTLEY

That I'm generous and...

GRACE

Magnanimous?

OTLEY

Yes, that's it.

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF TV EXECUTIVE - ORGIGAS

Grace and Ricky are working together, doing art...

GRACE

You don't seem yourself.

Ricky shrugs.

GRACE

You have a problem with your song?

RICKY
Can you help me?

GRACE
Well, I don't know. What is it?

RICKY
There is a blank.

GRACE
You are having writer's block.

RICKY
There is this ten second thing...

GRACE
Thing?

RICKY
Yes, I don't know what to say?

GRACE
Background singers maybe? Aren't there any hot chicks at your school you wanna use there? They ought to jump at the chance.

RICKY
It's a quarantine.

GRACE
Email them.

RICKY
No.

GRACE
You afraid of girls?

RICKY
Maybe.

GRACE
Well, that's a good thing. At your age, you don't need any women F I mean messing up your life. Lets' hear this "thing."

The kid, son of a TV executive, has a sophisticated multitrack recorder and he pays his song. And sure enough, there an odd empty spot.

RICKY
It's the sad part.

GRACE
Sad, why sad? You're a kid; you got nothing to be sad about. Look at this house. Look at your mom and dad.

RICKY
It's my trademark.

GRACE
Happy and sad in the same song?

RICKY
Yep.

GRACE
Well, when a cowboy is sad and doesn't know what to say, he yodels.

RICKY
What?

GRACE
A cowboy told me.

RICKY
You know a cowboy?

GRACE
I've known a few.

RICKY
Real cowboys?

GRACE
Real cowboys.

RICKY
Singers?

GRACE

One was a singer.

RICKY

What's yodel?

GRACE

Well, I can't. He tried to teach me.

RICKY

How do you know a cowboy?

GRACE

Never mind that. You worry about your music. I'll tell you all about it when your forty-two.

RICKY

Okay, so teach me to yodel.

GRACE

Okay, listen.

She finds some examples on her phone.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAYwYscqXJQ>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYG9Q2oO_3Q
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-atDtS7iHx0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMxUrBcXKSU>

RICKY

Wow. I never heard that before.

GRACE

If you can do it, you'll be the only Filipino ever.

RICKY

That might be different.

GRACE

Sure, you have to do something to attract everyone's attention.

RICKY

It might work...

GRACE

Try it.

Ricky sings...

RICKY

This singing cowboy, he's your fiancée?

GRACE

No. He went back to Texas. Got famous. Never came back, but I did hear him on the radio once.

RICKY

He broke your heart?

GRACE

No one breaks my heart.

RICKY

But you're kind a different.

GRACE

It's his loss.

The kid tries to sort it out in his head..

GRACE

Listen. Girls will treat you badly, no matter how handsome or how you dance; that's what we do. And it doesn't matter how many hit songs you have.

The kid contemplates.

GRACE

Forget the vampires and move on. Okay?

RICKY

Vampires?

GRACE

Yeah. Eighteen year old girls. Don't let them steal from you.

RICKY

Girls steal?

GRACE

Your money, time, your enthusiasm, even your creativity. Maybe even your soul! You watch them because they will if you let them. Okay?

RICKY

Okay.

(beat)

You wanna help me write a song?

GRACE

Well, let's hear it?

RICKY

I don't have anything.

GRACE

To be a songwriter, you gotta have something to say.

Grace looks around the room. She hears something outside. Grace walks to the window and there are three girls jumping rope. She and Ricky look out at them. He sets that drum machine to the beat of the rope hitting the pavement.

The girls' parents are fighting in the apartment next door.

The girls pause and clearly hear, but continue.

GRACE

Oh, listen what the children hear when they play..

They hear something crash inside the apartment.

WOMAN

I hate you!

MAN

I hate you too!

GRACE

Now ain't it kinda funny what the children hear?

RICKY

Skip a rope.

GRACE

Daddy hates mommy, mommy hates dad,

RICKY

Last night you shoulda heard the fight
they had.

GRACE

Good.

RICKY

Gave my little sister another bad
dream,

(beat)

She woke us all up with a terrible
scream.

(beat)

Skip a rope.

Grace approves.

RICKY

It's just a hit. A little dope never
hurt anyone.

Grace is shocked and looks into the other apartment.

RICKY

A little toke's good for everyone.

(beat)

Skip a rope.

RICKY

Forget the rules, just play to win.

(beat)

And hate somebody for the shade of
their skin.

(beat)

Skip a rope.

RICKY

Stab 'em in the back, that's the name
of the game,

(beat)

And mommy and daddy are who's to blame.
(beat)
Skip a rope, skip a rope,
(beat)
Just listen to what the children hear,
(beat)
It's really not funny, what the
children hear.
(beat)
Skip a rope.

Tears in her eyes, Grace is visibly effected by the song. They both are. Grace hugs Ricky!

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - ISOLATION

Otley is laid up in a hospital bed. Masked doctors and nurses. We see he's on a ventilator and has tubes running in and out of him. On the door is a bright red "quarantine" warning. The doctors and nurses enter and leave and dispose of their protective gear.

Grace is outside the ICU looking in through a window. She has tissues and is crying.

DOCTOR
Don't you think you should go home?

GRACE
No.

DOCTOR
This could take days!

GRACE
I'm not leaving. He's eighty-seven and
I'm his only family!

Several days later...

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - ISOLATION

The doctor and nurses all rush to the side of Otley's bed. They act like it's an emergency. He's fighting the tubes down his throat. The gagging stops when they remove the tubes. Through all the medical staff surrounding the bed, Otley makes eye-contact with the Grace through the window. Otley gives her the

thumbs up. She's relieved and waves back to him. He looks relieved as well.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

Grace returns to the room after shopping, cooking and cleaning all day. Her feet hurt and she lays on the bed. But immediately she goes to the concealed place in the wall. The laptop isn't there. Grace panics. She looks under the bed, in the bathroom, and in the kitchen cupboards. Nothing. She runs downstairs.

John Paul is on the roof with the laptop, working in the sun.

GRACE

What whore has been in John Paul's room? Someone stole his laptop from the secret place.

GRANNY

No one that I know.

GRACE

This is serious, all his information is there. And every bar girl in a mile radius knows about that hiding place and I want to know who he's cheating with in our room.

GRANNY

Stealing? Cheating?

(beat)

No, I don't think...

John Paul comes downstairs in time to hear... but he doesn't reveal himself yet. He hears Grace who is in tears.

GRACE

I work and slave every day to make a career for him and now this has happened. He has no idea what I do for him!!! It's not easy you know, you used to do it!

(beat)

They don't pay because, well you know, and these people don't tip enough.

GRANNY

So quit.

GRACE

Run back the tape.

GRANNY

Tape?

GRACE

Achmed has cameras.

GRANNY

Yes, but I don't know how...

GRACE

Go wake him up. John Paul won't love me if he can't have his TV series. Disappoint a man and he never comes back.

GRANNY

Okay. I'll get him.

GRACE

I need to find the whore who stole the laptop before she deletes the files...

John Paul reveals himself. He has the laptop in his bag over his shoulder.

JOHN PAUL

The laptop? I have the laptop.

GRACE

Where have you been?

JOHN PAUL

On the roof.

Grace cries like a baby.

GRACE

Why? You hurt me deeply.

JOHN PAUL

I hurt you deeply?

GRACE

Yes!

Granny returns.

JOHN PAUL

I don't know how. I was on the roof.

Granny shakes her head; that isn't the correct answer.

JOHN PAUL

I know and I'm sorry.

GRACE

You made me think you let another woman into our room.

JOHN PAUL

Another woman? I heard you just tell Granny your new clients don't tip you enough.

Granny shakes her head; wrong response.

GRACE

I don't.

Grace is despondent and embarrassed beyond measure; she runs upstairs and locks herself in the bathroom.

JOHN PAUL

Why are you always shaking your head at me?

GRANNY

Because you always say the wrong thing. I was trying to help you.

Achmed arrives and is yawning.

GRANNY

False alarm. Go back to sleep. Sorry.

JOHN PAUL

Where does she go all day?

Achmed takes the key to the empty room and hands it to John Paul.

GRANNY
Shopping. She's trying to help you.

JOHN PAUL
She sure shops a lot.

GRANNY
Shopping legal even in quarantine, you know. Can not stop.

A couple enter the hotel from the Red Slipper.

JOHN PAUL
Yes, but...

GRANNY
If you marry her, she probably not shop so much.

JOHN PAUL
Shopping? You keep saying that. "Is that some secret code for stripping. Both start with an S.

GRANNY
No. Not a code for anything. She's a very economical girl, you know.

JOHN PAUL
Yes, yes. I'm sure.

GRANNY
Okay, hotshot TV writer. You live in your imaginary world.
(beat)
She shops for many important clients.

JOHN PAUL
Important clients? You said, "clients."

GRANNY
And she does this for you!

JOHN PAUL
How does that help me?

GRANNY
This is really none of my business.

JOHN PAUL
You won't help me?

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

John Paul enters and knocks on the bathroom door.

JOHN PAUL
I'm sorry. Will you please come out?

GRACE
Go away, please.

JOHN PAUL
I can't; I'm worried about you.

GRACE
You were never worried before, too much.

JOHN PAUL
Well, I am now.

GRACE
You show script to professor woman?

JOHN PAUL
Yes.

GRACE
She had some suggestions?

JOHN PAUL
No.

GRACE
She know somebody want to buy?

JOHN PAUL
No, but.. She's gonna send them to colleagues in London and Tennessee.

GRACE

Other professors? They don't make TV.

JOHN PAUL

Maybe someone knows someone.

GRACE

They live in their own private world.

JOHN PAUL

Well, we'll just have to wait and hope.

(beat)

Are you going to come out now?

GRACE

Come back in five hours.

JOHN PAUL

And you'll be okay then? Ready to negotiate?

GRACE

Ready to forgive you then. Yes.

JOHN PAUL

So, I have to wait five hours?

GRACE

Yes.

JOHN PAUL

Can I use the bed during those five hours? Or do I need to use the couch?

GRACE

Go to sleep in bed! I'm busy pitching a fit.

John Paul finds Grace's phone on the table. He pushes a few buttons on the phone and then leaves it where he found it.

INT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - ROOM

John Paul is asleep in the bed. Grace slips out of the bathroom and into bed beside John Paul. She's sleeping soundly, but her phone chimes. Grace gets out of bed, but it wakes John Paul.

JOHN PAUL
It's my turn for the bed.

She reads the text messages.

GRACE
Yes, I only want to apologize.

JOHN PAUL
Have I been sleeping five hours?

GRACE
No, I just concede early.

JOHN PAUL
Why, would you...

GRACE
Okay, I'm sorry. I've been a bad girlfriend. I not cause you any more trouble. I resign from permanent girlfriend.

Very long beat. She turns to leave.

JOHN PAUL
Well, don't do that.

GRACE
No?
(beat)
You still want me here in your bed?

JOHN PAUL
I'm almost out of money.

GRACE
It's been a very expensive epidemic!
(beat)
But I'm still your permanent girlfriend?

JOHN PAUL
If you'll have me.

GRACE

Oh, that's wonderful news.

She runs to him and jumps on top of him and kisses him ten times. And then she runs away.

JOHN PAUL

Where are you going?

GRACE

Shopping.

John Paul is confounded. But he jumps up and runs to the window. There is a taxi waiting.

EXT. MOONLIGHT HOTEL - STREET

Grace gets into the taxi and they pull away.

John Paul gets dressed rapidly and runs downstairs.

Achmed pulls up on a performance motorcycle and John Paul gets on the back. John Paul uses his phone to track Grace's phone.

INT. SUPERMARKET

Grace shops rapidly. The men are out-of-sight and watch the app. She fills the entire taxi, front, back, and trunk are now full of food. It's all organized and labeled.

The grocer comes out into the parking lot with a box of meat. It's scraps or expired cuts from the butcher's shop. Grace is clearly appreciative.

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF TV EXECUTIVE - ORTIGAS

Grace delivers groceries. The men watch from a distance.

JOHN PAUL

(into phone)

Who lives at 2555 MacArthur Terrace,
Ortigas?

PHONE

Anthony Del Rosario, director of
Creative Energies Department, LMN
Television.

EXT/INT. UPSCALE HOME OF OTLEY BEYER - ANTIPOLO

Grace walks the dog. The men watch.

JOHN PAUL
(into phone)
Who lives at 25555 Halang Creek Road,
Antipolo?

PHONE
Otley Beyer, LMN television Chief
Operations Officer 1991-2001. Currently
Board of Directors. Painter.

MONTAGE BEGINS

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MANILA

Grace and the taxi driver deliver over 20 bags of groceries.

She directs the taxi to slow, and she pitches a scrap of meat for the local feral dogs. She seems to know where the dogs will be.

MONTAGE ENDS

EXT. THE SISTERS OF SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

Grace is about to enter the gates of the girl school. The lockdown makes Manila silent and she hears the big motorcycle engine. And she catches a glimpse of Achmed's motorcycle wheel, which is only partially concealed around a corner. Achmed has stepped away to get a bite to eat.

JOHN PAUL
She's coming this way.
(beat)
Achmed!

He waves for Achmed to hurry, but it's useless. They are caught!

Grace rounds the corner and she's not amused. They've been spying on her!

JOHN PAUL
You really went shopping.

GRACE

Why would I lie? It's just shopping!

JOHN PAUL

So you're like a professional shopper?

GRACE

Never again. I'm more like an epidemic shopper. This is just short term.

JOHN PAUL

They paying you?

GRACE

They give me tips. Not like at the bar, but it spends like all money.

JOHN PAUL

But, you're working for LMN people?

She has tears in her eyes.

GRACE

I told you I knew some of them.

JOHN PAUL

How many?

GRACE

How many stops did I make today, Mr. James Bond.

JOHN PAUL

Twenty-one.

GRACE

Well, there you have it?

JOHN PAUL

You've been shopping for twenty-four families?

GRACE

More than that.

JOHN PAUL

Why so many?

GRACE

I don't know which can help you.

(beat)

How do you know who has power? One might like caveman television and another might not. I couldn't just say if you like the story of the first Filipino, then I'll shop for you.

JOHN PAUL

No, I guess you couldn't.

GRACE

See?

JOHN PAUL

I'm sorry I didn't trust you.

GRACE

I'm only a little bit mad.

JOHN PAUL

What's here?

GRACE

My sister.

JOHN PAUL

Your sister?

GRACE

See the second window on the third floor.

Grace exchanges waves with a girl.

GRACE

She needs me. She can't be a bar girl. She must be a good Catholic wife! Important.

JOHN PAUL

Why didn't you tell me?

GRACE

Afraid.

JOHN PAUL

Nuns aren't like that.

GRACE

Afraid she'd find out about me. I've made sure no man ever follow me here.

JOHN PAUL

That explains why you have the nice clothes. She doesn't know.

GRACE

That and I just don't like to look like a bar girl all the time.

JOHN PAUL

You look nice. Well, go see her.

GRACE

Epidemic. No one is better at locking up girls than nuns. Even family can't get in.

JOHN PAUL

Listen, I have an idea about the money.

GRACE

John Paul, use this, please.

JOHN PAUL

No seriously.

(beat)

They tipped you all this?

GRACE

I come here everyday with money.

JOHN PAUL

It looks very expensive.

GRACE

But you use the money now.

(beat)

Pretty soon you'll be big TV writer.
Then you can pay for her education. So
now use the money. Keep writing.

JOHN PAUL
They'll kick her out.

GRACE
It's an epidemic; they can't kick her
out.

Grace walks back to the taxi. Achmed and John Paul ride the
motorcycle to the front door and hand the cash to one of the
sisters.

Achmed requisites some information. One of the priests comes out
and speaks with him and a sister brings some literature.

EXT. DR. ZARSADIAZ'S HOME - DARK OVERCAST SKY

Achmed lets John Paul off the cycle.

ACHMED
It's about to get nasty. Typhoon Ambo.

JOHN PAUL
I'll be okay; this won't take a minute
and it's only a few blocks.

ACHMED
But...

JOHN PAUL
Really, it's okay.

INT. DR. ZARSADIAZ'S HOME - KRISTINE'S BEDROOM

DR. ZARSADIAZ
He said it was a personal matter. He
wants to see you and not me.

KRISTINE
I know what he wants.

DR. ZARSADIAZ
You're asking for my permission?
Shouldn't I be talking to him?

KRISTINE

What? You think he wants to marry me?

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Well?

KRISTINE

His money's gone.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

We don't run a bank.

KRISTINE

You've got tons. He's very talented. I've read his script, and a TV series, even if it's shown only here in the Philippines, would sure bolster our discoveries. In fact, I've worked out a deal.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

A deal?

KRISTINE

A college in the south, the Ivy League of the south...

DR. ZARSADIAZ

United States?

KRISTINE

It's in Tennessee and they are interested. I'll need to be credited as a co-writer. Unpaid, but credited.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Is that honest?

KRISTINE

I took him to the site. Talked to him for two days nearly non-stop. I've loaned him over twenty books.

(beat)

Anyway he wants an answer?

DR. ZARSADIAZ

Do you even want to go to the US?

She gives him a blank stare.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

How much?

KRISTINE

His hotel bill and food for the rest of
the year.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

How much is that?

KRISTINE

Dad, come-on; it's the United States.

(beat)

I'll pay you back.

Dr. Zarsadiaz gestured his consent.

DR. ZARSADIAZ

He's in the library.

EXT. MANILA STREETS - TYPHOON AMBO

The typhoon has hit. Wind is incredibly strong. And it's blowing
directly in the face of John Paul as he tries to get home.
Flying debris strikes him in the head and he doesn't get up.

INT. TAXI - MANILA STREETS

The taxi arrives and Grace exits. She runs to John Paul. She
can't get him up, but together she and the taxi driver get him
into the taxi.

The taxi driver is making for the hospital when John Paul
becomes conscious.

GRACE

I think he's gonna be okay. Let's get
him to the hotel?

The taxi turns toward the hotel.

JOHN PAUL

Grace! You're the reason our kids are ugly.

GRACE

Nope, he's not okay.

The taxi turns toward the hospital.

Grace runs into the hospital for help.

The taxi driver takes the ring box out of the glove compartment and holds it up in front of John Paul.

TAXI DRIVER

Do you know what this is?

John Paul nods, yes.

The taxi driver slips it in John Paul's jacket pocket.

Two days later...

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL

JOHN PAUL

Did I say anything crazy?

GRACE

Only that our kids will be ugly.

JOHN PAUL

That is crazy?

The doctor knocks and then sticks his head in the door.

DOCTOR

Okay, he's good to go? I signed the discharge papers.

Grace gets John Paul up out of bed. She helps him put on his pants and shirt. She puts the jacket on him and he reaches into his pocket. He pulls out the ring box and opens it?

GRACE

What ya got?

JOHN PAUL
It's a ring?

GRACE
Who's it for?

JOHN PAUL
Don't know.

GRACE
Where'd you get it?

JOHN PAUL
Don't know that either.

GRACE
Where did you go?

JOHN PAUL
Zarsadiaz's

GRACE
Maybe he wants you to marry his
daughter?

JOHN PAUL
No. She's going to Nashville.

GRACE
Maybe, before you hit your head, you
knew another girl to marry?

A curious smile crosses John Paul's face. We have no idea what he's thinking.

INT. GOGO BANANAS - SIDEWALK

The street is back to normal. We hear the club music in the background. Bar girls are going to and from work. The neon lights are flashing. And the crowds are back.

There are some drunk foreign-looking men, looking inside, wanting inside the GoGo Banana's club.

A van pulls up, and a huge cake box is carefully delivered inside. A second van arrives and trays of catered food is carried in.

A bouncer at the door stops the foreigners.

DRUNK #1

What do you mean you're closed? The quarantine is over.

Grace's friends from the pizza party leave the hotel and enter the night club. They are dressed in their matching formal dresses, the same exact color of sheets Grace put on the bed.

DRUNK #2

There's been nation-wide shutdown and now it's lifted and TODAY you're closed?

The camera pulls back and there is a Rolls Royce white limousine parked there. There are bells, flowers and it's decorated for a wedding.

DRUNK #1

Come on, let's go in the red bar?

Days later...

INT. LMN - INSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM

A female staff member is commenting on the First Filipino script.

FEMALE STAFF

Your writing has such an emotional intelligence. Most men can't do that. Frankly, I don't know how you did it. I've read thousands of scripts and ... well, how did you do it?

John Paul turns to look at Grace through a window. He begins speaking to the group around the table.

INT. LMN - HALLWAY OUTSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM

Grace is sitting in the hall, but watching John Paul through the glass. He's pitching his TV series to the executives.

The wife with the kid comes down the hallway.

WIFE

Oh, hello Grace.

RICKY
Mom, I told you, she'd come.

GRACE
You're gonna be great. Break a leg.

The wife waves at her husband, the creative director, inside the room. And she points to Ricky and then to the live studio down the hall. The husband understands that she and the kid will be on TV live soon. He signals her, okay one minute.

WIFE
That's him?

GRACE
That's him.

WIFE
Handsome man and so determined.

RICKY
You wanna come with us?

GRACE
If it's okay, Rick, can I just watch from here?

She points to the TV this is in the hall.

RICKY
Sure, I'll see you afterwards?

GRACE
Remember I'm your first fan!

RICKY
No I won't forget.

GRACE
Well, good luck.

WIFE
And good luck with you as well.

The wife and Ricky walk down the hall into the studio.

Other LMN employees stop and greet her. She's been delivering the groceries for the entire department. They all turn and either smile or give John Paul the thumbs up.

INT. LMN - INSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM

MALE STAFF

Now if we were to purchase your series. It would be for our top tier actors. Maybe you realize. Dingdon Dantes was actually an archeology major in college and he's taken an interest in the project.

JOHN PAUL

I didn't realize that.

MALE STAFF

However, we do have some more meetings and outside consultants

INT. LMN - HALLWAY OUTSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM

Otley is not using the walker. But he has a walking cane.

GRACE

Hello, Mr. Beyer.

She stands and extends her hand to shake, but he hugs her like a daughter.

OTLEY

After all we've been through, call me Otley.

GRACE

I'm surprised to see you.

OTLEY

Really, why? You didn't think a pissant little virus would force me into retirement, did you?

GRACE

You're the only person in the world over 80 to survive.

OTLEY

No, there's a fellow in Italy and another in California.

GRACE

Oh, but only three.

OTLEY

Well, between you and I, it was almost worth it.

(beat)

My paintings... That critic that said I was finished now says I'm a "tough old goat."

GRACE

And he also said, you were "someone to be reckoned with, again!"

OTLEY

He said that too?

GRACE

He did.

OTLEY

How's my rival?

GRACE

He's good.

Otley looks at the ring on her left hand.

OTLEY

Let me see that thing.

Grace holds up her hand.

OTLEY

Damn, that thing seems to get bigger everytime I see you.

Grace shrugs and smiles. She makes eye contact through he glass with John Paul.

GRACE

So, how are things at home?

OTLEY

Good, good. Maria said, "hello," and between you and I, you were right about that bicycle thing. She's fit as a fiddle.

GRACE

You going to the studio to see little Ricky?

OTLEY

No, young lady. I have some business in here.

Otley opens the door to the conference room.

OTLEY

My name is Otley Beyer; I'm on the board of directors and I wanna know what the hell is holding this project up.

The door closes behind him, but from his hand and facial gestures it's clear he wants the project to move forward. He has a loud and commanding voice but we can't make out the details. He points to John Paul and then through the glass to Grace in the hall.

Outside the conference room, still more LMN employees walk by and greet Grace. They all appear very appreciative, and one even gives her money, or perhaps a gift.

Otley seems to ask the head of the creative department a question. The executive stands and looks a bit intimidated and he points left and then right as he speaks. He's giving Otley directions to an office. Otley appears to thank him and gives a polite nod to John Paul, who nods his appreciation in return.

Otley opens the door to leave, but he turns.

OTLEY

All this time working at home rotted your brains? Don't you people know art when you see it? Now stop dragging your asses and get to work!

Otley signals to Grace to follow him.

OTLEY
Come with me, please.

They reach an office door with a job title "Talent Coach."
Otley takes his cane and pushes the door open. It's an empty
office, nothing but desk and chair.

OTLEY
You don't have to commit today.

GRACE
Talent Coach? Me?

OTLEY
Who else?

ROLL END CREDITS

INTERRUPT END CREDITS

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO

Ricky sings a Filipino version of the Henson Cargill song "Skip
A Rope."

FINISH END CREDITS

FADE OUT