

THE AFTERLIFE OF SUZIE WONG

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For Goodness Sake, a novel of the afterlife of Suzie Wong

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1 INT: KAI TAK AIRPORT, HONG KONG [DAY] JULY 4, 1997

CLOSE UP. ILLUMINATED SIGN IN BOARDING LOUNGE: "CATHAY PACIFIC 867, SAN FRANCISCO, NOW BOARDING" (FLASHING). ALSO BELOW IN CHINESE CHARACTERS.

PULL BACK AND DOWN TO MARCO PODESTA.

Marco is standing in boarding line. He turns, looking.

WIDE: CENTERED ON TWO CHINESE, A WOMEN AND A YOUNG GIRL

They are waving. The girl blows kisses. The woman has a tissue in her hand.

REVERSE ANGLE: MARCO IN LINE

He waves back, looking sad. Then line moves, he surrenders boarding pass and disappears down jetway.

2 INT: 747 AIRLINER [MOMENTS LATER]

DISSOLVE TO LONG SHOT DOWN AISLE OF INTERIOR B747.

Marco tosses case on seat and putting bag in overhead at emergency door row. Passengers filing past, many are Chinese. Marco flops into window seat, looking weary.

[TITLE: NAME OF MALE LEAD (Playing Marco Podesta) SCRIPTED IN SWIFT CHINESE BRUSH STROKES IN REVERSE ORDER UPPER RIGHT OF FRAME]

REVERSE ANGLE TO MEDIUM SHOT BEHIND MARCO

Skinny Chinese kid in his twenties begins stuffing his carry-ons into the overhead bin, tossing various digital devices on the aisle seat of Marco's row. A Western couple file past carrying their sleeping adopted Chinese baby. A few more passengers come forward and out of frame.

[TITLE: NAME OF FIRST LEAD CHARACTER SCRIPTED IN SWIFT CHINESE BRUSH STROKES IN REVERSE ORDER UPPER LEFT OF FRAME]

REVERSE ANGLE BACK TO MED CLOSE UP: MARCO.

(CONTINUED)

Marco turns his head back with slightly quizzical expression. He buckles his seatbelt. An elderly Chinese lady then takes the middle seat next to Marco. Marco regards her with some interest, but she ignores him and says something in Cantonese to the young man on her left. The young man surrenders the armrest between them to her.

TWO SHOT: MARCO AND CHINESE LADY

MARCO (SMILING)

Excuse me, but do they consider you strong enough to operate the emergency door?

She turns her head, staring directly up into Marco's eyes.

CHINESE LADY

I am stronger than you see.

MARCO

That's re-assuring. Excuse me again, but you look fam . . .

CHINESE LADY (INTERRUPTING)

Anyway, my horoscope say 'no emergency today'.

MARCO

Now that's very re-assuring. I am lucky to be sitting nex . . .

She turns her head and shuts her eyes. Marco abridges his sentence and smiles with a little shake of his head. Two pretty Chinese flight attendants strap themselves into the jump seats facing Marco's aisle. One looks up and smiles at Marco.

Marco smiles back, then turns his head and looks out window. His head wobbles slightly with plane's acceleration.

SLOW TILT UPWARD TO SUGGEST PLANE AT ASCENT ANGLE.

AUDIO: THEME MUSIC COMES UP

DISSOLVE TO LONG SHOT OUT OF WINDOW.

Star Ferries and other watercraft far below trace wakes in Victoria Harbor. Plane gradually ascends and clouds obscure view until

FADE TO WHITE

3 INT. KOWLOON, TSIM SHA TSUI, STAR FERRY TERMINAL BOARDING AREA, (DAY) JANUARY 15, 1996 [SEVERAL MONTHS EARLIER]

FADE INTO MED. LONG SHOT: MARCO

Marco in crowd of (mostly Chinese) passengers waiting to board Star Ferry to Central. Gate opens and crowd surges down ramp toward gang plank.

TRACK TO FOLLOW

[TITLE OF MOVIE SCRIPTED IN SWIFT CHINESE BRUSH STROKES IN REVERSE ORDER OVER SCENE IN CENTER OF FRAME]

4 INT: STAR FERRY TERMINAL [DAY] CA 1959

INTERCUT BRIEF SHOTS OF WILLIAM HOLDEN IN *THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG*, MOVING WITHIN A SIMILAR CROWD AS SAME LOCATION [2-3 SECONDS]

5 INT. STAR FERRY TERMINAL [DAY] 1997

CONTINUE TRACKING: MARCO

Marco walks down ramp, boarding ferry and taking a seat in center section. More people file in over gang plank and take seats.

6 INT. STAR FERRY [MOMENTS LATER] CA 1959

INTERCUT BRIEF SHOTS OF NANCY KWAN IN *THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG* (TWSW), JUMPING ABOARD FERRY JUST BEFORE GANG PLANK GO UP. [2-3 SECONDS]

7 INT. STAR FERRY TERMINAL [DAY] 1997

From behind Marco we see, a few rows ahead, the back of a young woman wearing a beige trenchcoat, her hair, in a ponytail, dangling over the collar.

REVERSE ANGLE, CLOSE UP: MARCO. QUIZZICAL (JUST SEEN A GHOST) EXPRESSION.

8 INT. STAR FERRY TERMINAL [DAY] CA 1959

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK FROM TWSW. SELECTED SEGMENTS FROM "NO TALK" SCENE AT RAIL OF STAR FERRY TO WHEN SUZIE DISAPPEARS OFF FERRY. [NO AUDIO FROM TWSW].

RETURN TO CLOSE-UP: MARCO

Marco stares intently at the back of the young woman who resembles Suzie Wong. He leans from side to side to try to catch her face, but can't see. She is sitting beside large Australian guy with rugby team jacket.

EXT. LONG SHOT FROM STAR FERRY, APPROACHING TERMINUS.

Boat slows to dock, dock workers catch mooring lines.

INT. STAR FERRY. MED. LONG BEHIND MARCO.

Passengers begin to get up from their seats to. Marco tries to intercept young woman with ponytail.

PULL IN ON YOUNG WOMAN AND TRACK

Young woman quickly gets up and vision of her face is blocked by large Australian. She gets past Marco's position heading toward gang plank.

PULL BACK TO MED. CLOSE-UP BEHIND MARCO AND TRACK

Marco tries to get around the funnel housing, but is blocked by other passengers.

Marco crosses gangway and on to exit ramp. Ramp is crowded with passengers surging upwards. Back of young woman with ponytail. Marco is some distance behind her

FOLLOW CLOSE UP BEHIND MARCO TO OUTSIDE STAR FERRY TERMINAL

He turns head left and right trying to locate the young woman with ponytail. Marco scans left and right, his face perplexed.

9 EXT: LONG SHOT OF MARCO, CENTRAL

Marco walking in streets.

INTER CUT CLOSE UPS OF MARCO FACE, SEARCHING AND FRUSTRATED. WITH MED. LONG SHOTS OF VARIETY OF YOUNG WOMEN WITH PONYTAILS.

[TITLES: SUPERIMPOSE REMAINDER OF OPENING CREDITS (SAME CHARACTER GENERATION) OVER ABOVE MONTAGE OF SHOTS]

(CONTINUED)

PULL BACK AND UPWARDS SLOWLY INTO EXTREME LONG SHOT FROM HIGH RISE BUILDING.

Marco walking and dissolving into crowds in street.

FADE TO BLACK

10 INT. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB (DAY) JANUARY 17, 1997

WIDE: BAR AREA CROWDED AT LUNCH TIME

Dexter Poon is sitting alone at a table. Marco approaches. Poon sees him approaching and rises.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND POON

MARCO

Don't get up, man.

Poon sits and Marco sits

POON

Got to show some respect for a guy with a National Book Award Award.

MARCO

No ring-kissing please. Especially from you, old friend. Christ, it was you who got me into this journalism biz.

POON

I remember, you were going to go to medical school afterwards. Vietnam seems long ago and far away.

MARCO

Sometimes not so far away. . . How have you been Dex? Your still shooting New Asia Publications Group after all these years.

POON

Yup. And how are you? Still have that great flat in San Francisco? (Pause) You still have those recurrences?

MARCO

No so often these days. A friend says I might have PTSD. [he laughs] "Post terrible shit denial."

(CONTINUED)

POON

It was a bloody business back there. (pause) What was that soldier's name again?

Marco looks off, in discomfort. The waitress comes by and Poon orders beers.

MARCO

[changing subject]
The "handover," the "Chinese take-away." What are Hong Kong's journalists saying off the record?

POON

The speculation is all over the place. What kind of an angle are you taking on it?

MARCO

It seems everybody is concentrating on the business and political aspects. I'm thinking of approaching it from the perspective not of the western colonialists, but from the indigenous Hong Kong people. You know, the Cantonese speakers who are the people who really keep the place running, who live in what you could call 'Cantoville' and, whatever the handover might bring, have nowhere else to go.

POON

I like it. Being myself from what you call 'Cantoville,' I really like it. I'd like to hear more about how you plan to approach it. How about I buy you lunch.

Poon signals the waitress they want to order. They order.

MARCO

OK, I'll go first. You might want me to pay for my lunch after you hear this. It's preliminary, mind you, but since that book award got me pretty much *carte blanche* from my sponsor.

Poon smiles, nods and lifts his beer class Marco.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (CONT'D)

OK, you payed for it. . . Well, you remember that movie *The World of Suzie Wong*, don't you? It was a book before that, by Richard Mason.

POON

It would be hard to find many Hong Kong yan my age who don't know the story. Suzie Wong is still an icon in Hong Kong.

MARCO

Exactly. Well, I saw it again on TV just before I came over. So, a few days ago I was boarding the Star Ferry in Tsin Sha Tsui and I got this strange feeling that I was like "time warped" into the opening scene. I saw this pretty girl, only from the back, but she could have been Nancy Kwan playing Suzie Wong. That gave me the idea of using Suzie Wong, the western exploitation, as a metaphor or container for my story on the handover.

POON

I can kind if see that, but then I'm a photo-journalist; I'm "visual." But . . .

MARCO

Hold on, because you're gonna think this is a little weird. Remember the ending of the movie, where Suzie as Robert, the William Holden character, are in love and just walk off into a sort of Hollywood sunset. He's an American artist, twice her age, and she's a hooker who's serviced a legion of sailors. How can that work, you ask? Especially in 1950s British Crown Colony Hong Kong!

POON

Now you're losing me.

MARCO

Well, if Hong Kong, or Cantoville, was Suzie and the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (cont'd)
 Brits have been her client since
 1841, but it's going to end in a
 few months, what's going to become
 of Suzie. The ending that
 Hollywood wrote is over.
 [Pause] Think I'm onto something,
 or the PTSD is kicking in?

POON
 I'd have to mull that over a
 bit. So Hong Kong is Suzie
 Wong? You might catch some shit
 for that . . .

The food arrives and they begin eating. After a minute . . .
 .

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO
 Quigley.

POON
 Huh?

MARCO
 Quigley. . . the soldier . . . back
 in Nam. He was Larry Quigley.

POON
 You did well to switch to
 journalism, my friend.

FADE TO BLACK

11 EXT: SHEUNG WAN (A FEW DAYS LATER) LATE AFTERNOON

LONG SHOT, FROM BUILDING TOP OR CRANE: ROOF AND COURTYARD
 OF MAN MO TEMPLE FROM ELEVATION ABOVE LADDER STREET AND
 HOLLYWOOD ROAD

Marco in courtyard watching as elderly Chinese lady stuffs a
 paper mache piano into the flames of an incinerator. She
 bows her head three times, hands clasped, picks up two
 shopping bags and shuffles off.

FOLLOW MARCO OUT OF TEMPLE COURTYARD AND DOWN LADDER STREET
 STEPS.

CUT AWAY TO WIDE: UP LADDER STREET STEPS FROM BELOW
 INTERSECTION OF LADDER AND CAT STREETS. PULL IN ON MARCO
 DESCENDING

(CONTINUED)

Marco stops at corner stall to examine trinkets and souvenirs. Tourists.

WIDE, DOWN CAT STREET, FOLLOWING MARCO

He casually examines more stalls, then stops at one stall

TWO-SHOT: OVER MARCO'S SHOULDER AT OLD MAN VENDOR

Vendor picks up a statue of Mao Zedong and shows it to Marco

OLD MAN VENDOR
Mao Zedong. Zhongguo leader.

TRACK TO SIDE, INCLUDING MARCO AND VENDOR, PANNING TO FOLLOW DIALOGUE

MARCO
Yes, I know. He's dead

OLD MAN VENDOR
I make good price for you.

MARCO
Thanks, but I don't think I would want him for free.

Marco turns and begins to walk on down the street.

OLD MAN VENDOR (SHOUTING)
Son of Bitch!

MARCO (TURNING TO FACE OLD MAN)
What?

OLD MAN VENDOR (LOWERING VOICE)
Mao. Mao Zedong, son of bitch. Make ruin of my life. Now I can not sell son of bitch.

MARCO (SMILING)
At least the son of a bitch is still dead.

FOLLOW MARCO, MED. WIDE FROM BEHIND

Marco walks on down the street. Then turns and stops suddenly.

CLOSE UP: MARCO, LOOKING TRANSFIXED. THEN RAPID (BLUR) PAN OVER TO WINDOW.

(CONTINUED)

In small shop and focus in on painting of beautiful girl in blue cheongsam with hair in ponytail, gazing straight at him.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP: MARCO WITH FACE ALMOST AGAINST WINDOW GLASS. PULL BACK AND PAN TO CLOSER SHOT OF GIRL IN PAINTING. RETURN TO MEDIUM CLOSE UP AND FOLLOW MARCO.

Marco enters shop (activating bell on door).

INT. WIDE: ELDERLY MAN SITING BEHIND DESK IN SHOP WITH EARLIER HONG KONG ATMOSPHERE

Man taking drag on cigarette, rises slowly and walks around desk.

MAN (RASPY VOICE)

I was just about to close for the day, (exhaling) but maybe I can sell you a picture.

REVERSE ANGLE: MARCO. PAN BACK AND FORTH TO FOLLOW DIALOGUE

MARCO

Yes. The picture in the window. There is no price on it.

MAN

That one's not for sale.

MARCO

Is that firm?

MAN

Do you like urban realism. There's a lot of other work in here.

MARCO

The girl in the window . . . she's absolutely fascinating.

MAN

Yes, she is.

There is a pause in the exchange as Marco flips through some canvases stacked against the wall. The man lights another cigarette.

MARCO (STILL LOOKING AT PAINTINGS)

The girl . . . in the painting, is she in Hong Kong?

(CONTINUED)

MAN
She's not here.

MARCO
Not in Hong Kong?

MAN
She is just in the painting . . .
in the window

MARCO
Might you consider selling it
sometime?

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND MAN

Man takes another drag and snuffs out his cigarette. He takes a card off his desk and hands it to Marco.

MAN
You can visit her here anytime.

MEDIUM: FROM BACK OF GALLERY TOWARD DOOR

Marco turns back toward Man as he opens door (bell rings)

MARCO
I will, and I just might buy one of
your other paintings.

Marco pauses to have a parting look at the painting in window

CLOSE UP: PAINTING OF GIRL IN WINDOW. PULL BACK AND FOLLOW MARCO INTO MIDDLE OF STREET

Marco turns and looks at gallery

WIDE: FROM OPPOSITE GALLERY, INCLUDING MARCO AND GALLERY SIGN- "MEE LING GALLERY"

FADE OUT

12 INT: PODESTA'S SMALL FLAT IN SHEUNG WAN (SUNSET) SAME DAY

WIDE: APARTMENT, TOWARD SMALL BAY WINDOW (LOW ILLUMINATION)

Marco empties contents of his pockets on small dining table, and takes a beer from the fridge and sits on the window sill.

LONG: FROM WINDOW, LINGERING PANORAMA OF SKYLINE AT

(CONTINUED)

SUNSET. THEN PULL BACK TO INCLUDE MARCO ON SILL, NOW IN SILHOUETTE

Marco gets up and moves to the table, turns on light overhead and picks up the business card from the gallery and reads it.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: BUSINESS CARD, HELD BY MARCO

"MEE LING GALLERY Original Hong Kong Paintings by Robert Lomax"

MARCO (BARELY AUDIBLE)
What the . . . That can't be!

DISSOLVE TO

13 INTERCUT: FLASHBACK FROM TWOSW [SCENE ON STAR FERRY AT RAIL, HOLDEN INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO SUZIE AS ROBERT LOMAX [APPROX. 10 SECONDS]

14 INT: PODESTA'S FLAT [EVENING] MOMENYS LATER

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO
Can't be!

FADE OUT

15 EXT. GRASSY BATTLEGROUND, VIETNAM 1968 [DAY]

WIDE: GRASS FLATTENED AND BLOWN BY DESCENDING CHOPPERS, COLORED MARKER SMOKE AND DIRT BLOWN BY CHOPPER BLADE WASH [AUDIO: CHOPPER NOISE AND BATTLE SOUNDS]

Skids of Hueys descend into frame and land on flattened grass. Four American soldiers and a medic [Marco Podesta] jump out of one Huey. Out of another jump several soldiers and a photo-journalist [Dexter Poon]. Podesta rushes forward.

PULL BACK TO EXT. WIDE: TO REVEAL WOUNDED AND DOWN AMERICAN SOLDIERS

One soldier in foreground is writhing in pain and several others are in periphery. Mortar shells explode and bullets are ripping up turf, forcing choppers to take off.

(CONTINUED)

SOLDIER [SCREAMING]
Medic! *Medic!*

MARCO [SHOUTING]
On my way!

Marco arrives at the soldier, dropping to his knees in the ground muddy with blood. Pulls his medical bag off his shoulder. Soldier is squirming with blood flowing from right side of his chest.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND SOLDIER

MARCO
Let's see what needs fixing, my friend.

Soldier squirms and moans.

SOLDIER [NOW SHOUTING]
Shit, doc, I'm fuckin' hurtin.'
Fuck! this really hurts! Gimme
somethin' doc! *Gimme somethin!'*

Marco tears open a packs of quik-clot and gauze, presses them into the wound, and puts the soldiers left hand over them. The soldier moans loudly.

MARCO
What's your name, soldier?

SOLDIER
Larry. Can ya gimme somethin'
quick, doc. Holy Jesus this
fuckin' hurts awful. Hard to
breathe.

Soldier's eyes flutter, begins to look ashen. Marco becomes concerned.

MARCO
Hold on now, Larry. Hold
on. [Under his breath] Restore
breathing/Stop bleeding.

Marco ducks his head as a line of automatic weapon rounds throws up dirt just a couple of meters away. He pulls a morphine syrette from his bag and plunges the needle into the soldier's thigh, then puts the needle through the soldier's shirt next to his name patch (Quigley, L.) and bends the needle to secure it. Blood flow is slower.

Then there is another scream for a Medic and Marco looks over his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Be right back, Larry. Hold on.
Keep pressure on that. We're gonna
get you 'vac'd' out of here
soon. Just hold on.

WIDE: SOLDIER IN FOREGROUND, FROM BEHIND; MARCO RUSHING TO
SOLDIER IN DISTANCE

Marco returns in a few moments. Also, the photo-journalist
(Poon) arrives where Quigley is lying.

POON

How's he doing, medic? Mind if I
take a couple of photos?

Marco looks up (face grim). Quigley is not moving.

MARCO

Might as well. He's in no position
to object.

Poon takes a couple of pictures, thanks Marco and
leaves. Marco is shaking his head, wondering why the
soldier died. Then he decides to turn the soldier over and
discovers a huge exit wound that bled the soldier out.

MARCO (SHOUTING TO HIMSELF)

Oh, Jesus! Why the fuck didn't I
check the
exit! Goddammit! Restore
Breathing/and stop the *fucking*
breathing. Why didn't I check!

CUT TO:

16 INT: UH-1 HUEY, AIRBORNE

WIDE: HUEY INTERIOR

Marco, some KIAs, including Quigley, and Dexter Poon, on the
bloody floor. The wind is making the body bags
ruffle. Marco is staring into space as Poon grabs a shot of
him from the side. Marco turns to Poon and glares.

TWO-SHOT: POON AND MARCO

POON

Sorry. . .

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Not half as sorry as I am. Jesus
Christ, why didn't I check?

POON

Sorry, . . . What? . . .

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO (SHOUTING INTO THE NOISE)

Restore breathing / Stop bleeding.
Stop fucking . . .

CUT TO:

17 INT. BEDROOM IN MARCO'S FLAT IN SHEUNG WAN

CLOSE UP: MARCO

Marco, sweaty, wakens with a shudder

MARCO (CONT'D)

. . . bleeding!

FADE OUT

18 INT. DESK IN MARCO'S FLAT IN SHEUNG WAN

Marco sets his coffee down on the desk. He picks up Lomax's
card again, looms at it, shakes his head. The phone
rings. Marco answers.

POON (VOICE ON PHONE)

Hey *Bac-Si* [Vietnamese term for
"doctor" Poon called Marco in
Vietnam] How are things going?

MARCO

Nobody's called me that in a
while. What's up, Dex?

POON (VOICE ON PHONE)

Got some info for you about your
Suzie Wong interest. There's a
symposium up at Chinese U next week
on "Perspectives on Hong Kong in
Western Film and Literature." You
might want to check it out.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

I'll do that. Thanks.

POON (VOICE ON PHONE)

And, oh, I nearly forgot. There's a fellow "jurno," Filipino guy, I want you to meet. I gave him your numbers; he'll call. Name's Pagan.

MARCO

Thanks. That's three lunches I owe you. When I see you I want to tell you about a picture I saw the other day. But first I want to check something out.

Marco hangs up.

FADE OUT

19 EXT: HOLLYWOOD ROAD [A FEW DAYS LATER] DAY

WIDE: MARCO ON NORTH SIDE OF STREET

Marco walking along sidewalk, stops an art gallery window, then enters through heavy glass door with a large "Z" painted on it.

INT: WIDE: MARCO AND INSIDE OF GALLERY

Marco views various expensive paintings by contemporary Chinese artists and overhears a man in the back apparently in an argument with someone on the phone. Phone conversation ends and tall, thin, Englishman in his thirties approaches Marco.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND IAN PENDLETON

PENDELTON (SLIGHTLY ILL-AT EASE)

Sorry about that. Ian Pendleton. Can I answer any questions for you?

Marco fishes in his pocket for the calling card of Mee Ling Gallery, and hands it to Pendelton.

MARCO

Perhaps. I am looking for some information about the name on this card.

Pendelton looks at the card and smiles with a wry condescension.

(CONTINUED)

PENDELTON

Sorry; don't know this Lomax.

WIDE: [INCLUDING MARCO AND PENDELTON]

Two well-dressed American women tourists enter the gallery.

TWO-SHOT: PENDELTON AND MARCO

PENDELTON (NOW FOCUSED ON THE WOMEN)

What sort of painting does this
Robert Lomax do?

MARCO

I'd call him a realist. He paints
the urban scene mostly. Old Hong
Kong and its Chinese residents. He
paints "Cantoville," if you know
what I mean.

CLOSE UP: PENDELTON, GRINNING WITH TOBACCO-STAINED TEETH

PENDELTON (CONDESCENDLY)

"Cantoville,?" And a realist. The
Canaletto of Cantoville . . . will
you excuse me a moment.

WIDE: GALLERY INTERIOR

Pendelton glides over to the Americans who are looking at a
group of paintings of pandas. Marco turns to look at more
paintings.

AUDIO: Inaudible conversation between Pendelton and women.

After a few minutes the women start to leave. Pendelton
calls after them.

PENDELTON

Rest your minds, dear ladies, your
lovely pandas are completely
insured for their flight to
America. Thank you very much and
come again when you are in Hong
Kong. . . [to Marco] I'll just be a
moment more, sir.

Pendelton returns from back room smiling.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND PENDELTON

(CONTINUED)

PENDELTON

Those awful pandas just made my commission for the month. Perhaps you should advise your Mr. Robert Lomax to turn his subject to pandas.

MARCO

Actually, I prefer his work as it is.

PENDELTON

Do you mean his work, or his pretending to be a character played in a rather famous film about a painter and a Wanchai bar girl? Maybe that works as well as pandas on gullible yanks.

Marco glares at Pendelton

CLOSE UP: PENDELTON

PENDELTON

Look here. Sorry. What I mean is that there are a lot of scams. For example, he can pretend his paintings are one-of-a-kind, and then when the tourist buys one he puts another, just like it in his window. The tourist is gone and never the wiser.

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO

So you never heard of this Lomax?

WIDE: PENDELTON AND MARCO

PENDELTON

I know most of the painters and art dealers in Hong Kong.

MARCO

Thanks, then.

Marco walks to the door.

PENDELTON

Do come back if you tire of paintings of "Cantoville."

Marco turns just before going out of the door.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Don't run out of pandas, now.

Marco walks down into Lan Kwai Fong.

FADE OUT

20 INT: LARGE ROOM (LOW-CEILING) RUN RUN SHAW BLDG, CHINESE U,
HK. [DAY] TWO-WEEKS LATER

EXTREME WIDE SHOT: AUDIENCE AND SPEAKER'S TABLE

Audience of fifty plus Chinese and Westerners applauding as a Chinese woman professor has concluded her presentation. At the speaker's table sits another, stunningly beautiful Eurasian woman professor, Dr. Grace Loh, and moderator Dr. Geoff Michaels. Applause subsides.

Marco enters the room and sits beside a pretty Chinese woman. They regard one another simultaneously, exchanging polite smiles.

WIDE: SPEAKER'S TABLE [SIDELONG]

MICHAELS

Thank you Professor Yeung. Your remarks should set the stage well for our final paper in this panel. [Pause] Professor Loh came all the way from Santa Barbara, California to speak to speak to us. Well, not quite, she is here as the Fulbright Scholar in Urban Sociology at HKU. But for the moment she will focus our attention on the beguiling subject of "Failed romances between Western Men and Asian Women." Professor Loh.

WIDE: FROM BEHIND SPEAKER'S TABLE [INCLUDING SPEAKERS]

Marco enters through the door at the back of the room and takes a seat next to a pretty Chinese woman in the back row.

GRACE

Thank you Dr. Michaels. . .

Why don't things seem to work out for Western man Asian woman couples? Literature and film are replete with their tragic endings--*Madam Butterfly*, *Liat* in

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRACE (cont'd)
South Pacific, *Maiamiti in Mutiny on the Bounty*. Whether by suicide in *Sayonara*, or the misfortune of one of the lovers in *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing*, and in many other romances, and they go back to David and Bathsheba and Paris and Helen, somebody usually dies because this interracial love is forbidden. Most of these tragedies can be put down to good old racism and suspicion of "the other."

AUDIO: Grace's voice fades into inaudible

WIDE: PAN FROM BEHIND GRACE TO FRONT OF SPEAKER'S TABLE INTO MONTAGE OF ATTENDEES

Grace can be seen to be still speaking as there are reactions from various members of the audience and the speaker's table

WIDE TO CLOSE UP (GRACE):

Audio: Grace's voice gradually becomes more audible as he is near the ending of his address.

GRACE
 But the conclusion is not so clear for Suzie Wong and Robert Lomax. Unlikely as it might seem for a love affair between a 20-yr-old illiterate Chinese prostitute and a down-to his last-dollar American painter old enough to be her father to "make it" in a the culture of 1950s Hing Kong leaves us incredulous. . . . In the movie, which has more social impact than the novel--debated and deconstructed in academic forums like this--the conclusion is ambiguous. Let me recall for you that final scene . . .

DISSOLVE TO

21 FLASHBACK: FINAL SCENE FROM TWOSW [DAY] CA 1959

Robert and Suzie emerge from the temple where they have burnt offerings to Suzie's dead baby and now walk away from the camera, hand in hand, along the waterfront as the movie ends.

DISSOLVE TO

22 INT: LARGE ROOM (LOW-CEILING) RUN RUN SHAW BLDG, CHINESE U, HK. [DAY] MOMENTS LATER

Grace resumes speaking

GRACE (V.O.)

. . . where Robert and Suzie emerge from that temple on to the no-longer existent praya walking hand-in-hand into a small, but significant, chapter in cinema history, and a larger chapter of Hong Kong lore. . . Did Robert and Suzie "make it"? Did their love story prove the exception to all those East-West tragedies?

WIDE: SPEAKER'S TABLE FROM FRONT

GRACE

The romantic in me roots for them to prove my hypothesis wrong. But am I the only one who cares? Thank you.

Polite applause.

MICHAELS

Thank you very much, Dr. Loh. We have time for a question or two for the professor.

PAN TO YOUNG CHINESE MAN

Michaels scans the audience. A male Chinese student sitting in the front row raises his hand and a young woman rushes over to him with a hand-held mic.

STUDENT

Dr. Loh, with respect, how can we care about these people who are not real? And do not their lives end when the movie ends?

(CONTINUED)

PAN BACK TO GRACE

GRACE (SMILING)

It's a fair question. Perhaps we continue to care because Suzie and Robert are a metaphor for Hong Kong and its Western overlords--a relationship that is soon to change.

PAN BACK TO MICHAELS

MICHAELS

OK, then, is there another question. Yes, the gentleman in the back.

WIDE: AUDIENCE AND REAR OF ROOM

Young woman with mic rushes to back of room.

PULL IN TO CLOSE UP ON MARCO

MARCO

Professor, would not your premise that all East-West romances end tragically resolve the ambiguity of the movie ending?

CLOSE UP: MARCO

GRACE (SMILING)

Well, it is supposed to be the exception that proves a rule. Perhaps this is where the romantic in me struggles with the rationalist. My premise is certainly not intended to discourage mixed couples from trying. Let's not forget another rule: that love conquers all. Otherwise there would be no Eurasians, like *me*.

WIDE: AUDIENCE

Laughter, especially among the westerners

REVERSE ANGLE TO PANEL

MICHAELS

Well, Dr. Loh. Your very presence seems to challenge your premise. .

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICHAELS (cont'd)

. And now, unfortunately, we are out of time. Thank you all, panelists and audience. There are refreshments in the courtyard.

23 EXT. COURTYARD, CHINESE U, HONG KONG [A FEW MINUTES LATER]
DAY

WIDE: PEOPLE AND TABLES

Tables with coffee, tea and Audience members and speakers in groups around tables. Grace is in (inaudible) conversation with Geoff Michaels. They shake hands and a few students and Marco approach Grace.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND GRACE

MARCO

May in introduce myself, Professor (extending his hand) I'm Marco Podesta, with Media Nova. I very much enjoyed your remarks about one of my favorite movies. Now I am even more curious about the fate of Robert and Suzie.

GRACE

Nice to meet you, Marco. I think Robert and Suzie went on to make other movies, didn't they.

MARCO

William Holden and Nancy Kwan did, for sure. But Robert and Suzie belong to the movie. I suppose they are consigned to an afterlife that exists at the intersection of fact and fiction.

GRACE

You have been thinking about this a lot. I can tell.

MARCO

[fishing out his name card] Maybe I could pick your brains at coffee or lunch some day soon?

The students give Marco a curious look at the strange expression. Marco offers card in the two-handed Asian style.

(CONTINUED)

GRACE

[accepting the card and offering hers] So long as the picking can be reciprocal.

MARCO

Great. I'll be in touch soon.

Marco backs away, looking at the students.

MARCO (CONT'D)

She's all yours.

FADE OUT

24 EXT. KCR STATION, UNIVERSITY [DAY] 20 MINUTES LATER

WIDE: CROWDED PLATFORM

People lining up at designated places marked in platform. Marco in line. Train arrives; doors open and there is a rush for the limited number of seats for passengers entering from doors at each end of the car. Marco acquires a seat and immediately a Chinese woman beats out a student for the last seat beside him, bumping against Marco. Marco turns to see and recognizes the woman who had been sitting next to him at the symposium

TWO-SHOT: N MARCO AND WOMAN

MARCO (SMILING)

This is getting to be a habit.

WOMAN (LILY)

I read somewhere that three times is a tradition.

MARCO

Do you read a lot?

WOMAN (LILY)

I'm a librarian . . . at Hong Kong University.

MARCO

I'm Marco Podesta, by the way.

She offers her hand, to the disapproving scowl of an older woman across from them.

(CONTINUED)

LILY

Lily, Lily Han. May I ask what you do?

MARCO

I write a lot. Well, I'm researching at present. [Pause] Tell me. Did you think that question I asked at the symposium made me sound like some *gweilo* who hasn't had much experience with Asian women?

Lily laughs.

LILY

It seems some men don't learn anything from experience. Are you researching now?

MARCO

Are you saying that from experience? Sorry, that's improper of me . . .

LILY (SMILING)

As a librarian I read about a lot about experiences.

MARCO

Well, as long as we are being candid, research work on this subject is distinctly non-empirical. So, therefore, could I interest you in having a coffee or tea, and perhaps something to eat, and you can tell me what you think of my Suzie Wong hypothesis?

LILY

I get off at Hung Hom. Where do you live.

MARCO

Sheung Wan. But that's OK. My friends call me Polo, for Marco Polo; so I can find my way home from anywhere. And you get to choose where . . .

LILY

That's fine, then . . .

She looks at her watch.

(CONTINUED)

LILY (CONT'D)

. . . I have an hour before I must
be home.

Marco smiles at Lily and she returns the smile. The elderly woman across scowls. Marco notices and gives her a big smile.

FADE OUT

25 EXT: CAT STREET [DAY] A FEW DAYS LATER

WIDE: MARCO APPROACHING MEE LING GALLERY. TRACK AND PULL IN.

When Marco reaches the door the gallery is dark and the "Closed" sign is on the door. Marco turns to the picture of the girl in the window.

CLOSE UP: PICTURE OF GIRL (STARING BACK AT MARCO) PULL BACK TO INCLUDE MARCO.

Marco backs away and walks down the street. Passing the stall of the old man who sells Mao statues the old man calls to him.

MED WIDE: OLD MAN AND HIS SOUVENIR STAND

OLD MAN VENDOR

Hello, American.

MARCO

Nihao, my friend. Might you know anything about Mee Ling Gallery? I have been here two times and it has been closed.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND OLD MAN

OLD MAN VENDOR

Sorry. Know nothing. Come. I show you special something.

MARCO

Mao?

OLD MAN VENDOR

Not Mao. Much better. No fake. Real antique.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

You're just playing with the
gweilo, right?

OLD MAN VENDOR

No, no. You friend. Come. Just
look.

TRACK ON MARCO.

The old man gestures Marco to come to the back of the stall and Marco resignedly walks over. Old man takes a box from amid the clutter and places it on a display case.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND OLD MAN

OLD MAN VENDOR

Open. Look. See.

MARCO

Spring snakes are gonna jump out,
right?

OLD MAN VENDOR

No snick. No snick. Open

CLOSE UP: MARCO'S HANDS ON BOX

Marco slowly opens box, revealing two exquisitely-carved hand-sized wooden statuettes that appear to be very old. He gently takes the out turns them around.

OLD MAN VENDOR

God and goddess. Very old. From
temple in Sichuan. Earthquake break
temple and . . .

MARCO (INTERRUPTING)

Are the cheaper if I provide my own
cover story?

TWO-SHOT: MARCO, OLD MAN

OLD MAN VENDOR

You want buy?

MARCO

Yeah. I like 'em. I want the
special price for American friends.

OLD MAN VENDOR (LOWERING VOICE)

Five-hundred, for both. Good
price. *Meigwok* price.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO
Hong Kong dollar?

OLD MAN VENDOR
No, American dollah.

MARCO
Unh, unh. I got 1500 Hong Kong in
my pocket. You got no papers on
these and I could get a knock on my
door from the authorities and . .
.

Old man puts his hand out to shake.

FADE OUT

26 INT. MARCO'S FLAT [LATE AFTERNOON] SAME DAY

CLOSE UP: MARCO

Marco sitting at his desk arranges the statuettes beside his
computer speakers.

MARCO
OK. "Robert," you got the left
speaker. And "Suzie," you look
after the right.

Marco leans back in his chair looking at his acquisition
with a satisfied smile on his face.

FADE OUT

27 INT: TINY BEDROOM IN MARCO'S FLAT [MORNING] A WEEK LATER

EXTREME CLOSE UP: THROUGH LILY'S GLASSES ON NIGHTSTAND

Magnifying the girlish butterfly barrette beside them and
blurring the cartoon characters on the fluttering drapes of
what must have been a child's room.

PULL SLOWLY BACK TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LILY [HORIZONTAL
AND NAKED]

Marco is propped up on one elbow in his bed. Lily sleeps
beside him on her back, dead still, her breathing is
imperceptible, her full lips slightly open, arms raised
above her head, a skein of hair across her brow, seemingly
totally at ease in her nakedness. Lily awakens and turns
toward Marco.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

You dropped off to sleep again. I told you before: we are supposed to have a cigarette afterwards, like in the movies.

LILY

Marco, we have been together more than one month and you must know that I do not smoke.

MARCO

I'm just being ironic, sweetheart. It's something from American movie lore, smoking after making love. Should we start over then?

LILY

I just want to go sleep and dream it all over again. Did you dream, Marco? Don't tell me . . .

MARCO

I should lie to you, Lily, but . . .

LILY

I dream of you, but you dream only of Suzie Wong . . . Does it mean you would prefer to be with her?

MARCO

When we are making love, please believe me, I think of no one else but you, Lily. As you were sleeping I was just thinking how beautiful you are.

LILY

I'm too skinny. Like that Ginny in the movie.

Sher extends her arms upward.

MARCO (SMILING)

Gweny, Gweny Lee. She was cute-sexy, like you.

LILY (WITH A LITTLE FROWN)

Were you chasing Suzie again in your dream?

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Yes, she took the No. 5 Bus to Pacific Place again . . . to go to the movies. But I never catch up with her.

LILY (WITH A LITTLE FROWN)

I am afraid that you will . . . and afraid that you will not. Suzie might be a bad girl, but maybe you will choose her over a divorced librarian with an eleven-year-old daughter. I hope you will like my Millie, Marco; she is a nice girl.

Marco pulls Lily over on top of him and holds her face in his hands.

MARCO

Now you stop worrying about this. Remember, people keep reminding me that "it's just a movie." Anyway, dreaming of Suzie is preferable to the dreams I am used to having.

Lily rolls over to look Marco in the face.

LILY

Marco, please tell me again that in Vietnam you did not kill Asian people.

MARCO

I was a medic, Lily. I trained to help people who were wounded because I was opposed to the war. I volunteered for that because I was about to be drafted, and then I would have had to carry a weapon.

LILY

So you saved everybody's life.

Marco frowns and turns away from her.

MARCO

My job was not to kill. . . .
[Marco mumbles almost inaudibly]
Restore breathing / Stop bleeding.

Lily rolls to him, putting her head on his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

LILY
What did you say, Marco?

MARCO
Nothing, . . . nothing.

PULL INTO EXTREME CLOSE UP: FLUTTERING DRAPES THROUGH LILY'S GLASSES ON NIGHTSTAND.

FADE OUT

28 EXT: SHEUNG WAN DRIED FOOD MARKET [DAY] FOLLOWING DAY

EXT LONG: MARCO, FROM BUILDING TOP HEIGHT

Marco walks among the lanes and stalls of the market.

Audio: Marco's cell phone rings

MARCO
Nihao . . . Marco Podesta

PAGAN (PHONE VOICE)
Hello, Mr. Podesta. Aurelio Pagan. Dexter Poon said we should connect.

MARCO
Oh . . . yeah, Filipino journalist.

PAGAN (PHONE VOICE)
A journalist who happens to be Filipino.

MARCO
Sorry. Yes, he said you had some connection to someone who worked on *The World of Suzie Wong*.

WIDE: MARCO AND STALL

Still on phone, Marco stops and looks at a large sack brimming with dessicated, finger-length silver fish with big staring eyes. Chinese lady asks him, in Cantonese, if he wants to buy some.

MARCO (TO LADY)
Ngoh m'yiou. No thanks.

PAGAN (PHONE VOICE)
What?

(CONTINUED)

Marco walks on and stops in front of a stall that sells dried lizards crucified on sticks.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO STARING AT DRIED LIZARDS

MARCO

No, not you, I was just . . .

PAGAN (PHONE VOICE, INTERRUPTING)

Where are you?

MARCO

Ah . . . I'm in Cantoville.

PAGAN (PHONE VOICE)

Really. My father used to know a painter who had something to do with the movie. It's a little sensitive, and I need to give you some specific information. How about lunch, but away from the FCC. There's a New York style Italian place near the top of the escalator, right at Elgin St. Can't miss it. Pick a time.

MARCO

Tomorrow, 1 PM work for you?

PAGAN (PHONE VOICE)

See you there. I'll be asking for a return favor later.

MARCO

I refuse to kill anybody.

PAGAN (PHONE VOICE)

[Laughing] *Joi gin.*

PULL UP TO ROOFTOPS ALONG QUEEN'S RD. W. AND DRYING SHARK FINS

FADE OUT

29

EXT. ESCALATOR, CENTRAL HK, [DAY] FOLLOWING DAY

Marco is riding up various sections of escalator during nthe crowded lunch period.

Marco arrives at intersection of escalator and Elgin Street. and walks into Italian restaurant.

30 INT: ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Middle-aged Filipino man rises from table by the window and signals Marco over.

PAGAN

Dexter described you to me. You could pass for Italian.

MARCO

Careful now, you're on our turf.

They sit; Marco's back to the window and looks back over his shoulder.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND PAGAN

PAGAN

I know, this place looks like one of those restaurants in *The Godfather* . . . where somebody is going to be whacked.

MARCO (SMILING)

Just tell me when to duck. What's good here?

PAGAN

I think that the Caesar salad and the *oso buco* will meet even the standards of an Italian from New York.

The waitress arrives and they order.

MARCO

So what's this hot info that Dexter says you have on Suzie Wong?

PAGAN (SMILING)

Don't get too excited. You'll have to decide later if its worth the lunch you're buying me. But here it is. My father knew this guy named Chen. Chen was a painter who had something to do with the American painter hired for the Suzie Wong movie. I did a little checking--he has a sister living near the Wong Tai Sin Temple--and Chen is still alive, but living on a small farm in Guandong. She wrote the directions in Chinese; so I gave them to Dexter.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

You just want to make sure I pick up this check.

PAGAN

Oh, I can still afford lunches. I'm hoping--since you have higher-placed sources on the handover than freelancers like me--you might be willing to give me a little taste . . . if the Chen source pans out for you, of course. . . ah, here comes our *oso buco*.

MARCO

I see. Since you are expecting something beyond this lunch I assume . . .

Marco looks back over his shoulder

MARCO (CONT'D)

that it is in your interest to tell me when to duck.

FADE OUT

31 EXT. BENCH IN SMALL PARK ON HONG KONG UNIVERSITY CAMPUS,
[DAY] A FEW DAYS LATER

WIDE: MARCO AND GRACE SITTING ON BENCH EATING LUNCH; PULL IN TO TWO-SHOT, MARCO AND GRACE; FOLLOW DIALOG

MARCO

Try some of this Coronation Chicken sandwich if you like curried chicken.

GRACE

I'd rather eat all your chips.

MARCO(FEIGNING ENGLISH ACCENT)

I think you mean *crisps*, my dear.

TWO-SHOT: REVERSE ANGLE, FROM BEHIND

GRACE

That's right, we're in a British Crown Colony, aren't we.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (ACCENT)

Alas, not for much longer. Another
crisp, my dear?

Marco holds up the bag of chips. Grace reaches in for a few.

GRACE

Which reminds me. Aren't you
supposed to be concentrating on the
handover? What are you up to
chasing the ghost of Suzie Wong?

MARCO

Maybe, as you said in your paper,
they're similar in some ways

Grace smiles

GRACE

I was speaking metaphorically. And
even so, one has to be careful here
with the Suzie Wong subject because
there are people who feel that
image taints the reputation of Hong
Kong.

MARCO

Really?

GRACE

Don't you think films like *The
Godfather* creates the impression
that all your people are gangsters?

MARCO

No. Well, some people are
prejudiced against us . . . but we
have our ways of dealing with them.

PULL BACK TO LONG SHOT: MARCO AND GRACE IN FOREGROUND, BUT
EXPOSING LILY ON PATH ABOVE

Lilly is walking on path with some files in hand, sees Marco
and Grace and stops to watch unobserved. Grace bursts into
laughter and reaches over to slap Marco on the thigh. They
laugh together.

PULL IN TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AD GRACE

GRACE

I think you might not see *The
Godfather* as negative because it

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRACE (cont'd)
was made by Coppola and starred famous Italian-American actors. But the iconic film about Hong Kong was authored by Westerners, and is the story of a prostitute. There are Hong Kong people who are resentful of that.

MARCO
But I see Suzie as an exception to the exploited Asian woman. She actually finds love--in spite of her profession. That's what fascinates me about her and Robert. The movie ends ambiguously. That's why I would like to know what Hollywood would call "the back story"; was there a real Suzie and Robert behind the fictional couple?

GRACE
You're a romantic, Marco. There's not much of a line between art and life for you. You need some reality. That's why I would like you to be my escort when I do some primary research in Wanchai.

MARCO
Escort? Why can't I be a customer?

GRACE
I want to interview girls, not join them, silly boy.

MARCO
OK, sign me up. Maybe I'll learn something, too.

GRACE
It's a date, then?

MARCO
You've got an escort, professor.

Grace leans over and gives Marco a hug with one arm, while reaching into the bag of chips with her other hand.

PULL BACK TO LONG SHOT: LILY STILL LOOKING AT MARCO AND GRACE

FADE OUT

32 INT. PUBLIC CHINESE BUS, GUANDONG [DAY] A FEW DAYS LATER

Marco and Dexter Poon seated among local Chinese peasants and factory girls being jostled by rutted road through farmlands

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND DEXTER (PASSENGERS BEHIND)

MARCO (LOOKING OUT WINDOW)
I give it ten years and we will be traveling between factories and high rises right where these farms lie.

TWO-SHOT: REVERSE ANGLE SHOWING WHITE-GLOVED BUS DRIVER

DEXTER
Mao could turn this country around in a week. Now that Deng has given permission to capitalism you will not have to wait ten years. The Chinese have been patient long enough.

TWO-SHOT TO WIDE: [FROM BUS WINDOW] FARMLANDS GOING BY

FADE TO WHITE

33 EXT: CHEN'S DUCK FARM [DAY] AN HOUR LATER

LONG: MARCO AND DEXTER WALKING ON FARM UP TO HOUSE

Marco following Dexter along muddy path to farm house door. Ducks scurrying.

MEDIUM WIDE: DEXTER AND MARCO AT DOOR.

DEXTER
When I phoned him he said his English wasn't as good as it used to be.

Door opened by white-haired Chen. Dexter speaks to him in Cantonese and Chen invites them in to be seated at an old table. Marco observes some Chinese landscape paintings on wall and a poster of an Anna May Wong movie.

DEXTER
May we speak English for the sake of Mr. Podesta? As I told you, he is doing some research on the movie about Suzie Wong.

(CONTINUED)

PAN TO CHEN

CHEN

I still speak some English. Say English bad words. "Fuck." I like say "Fuck." (chuckle) Sound more bad than Chinese word. May I serve you *cha*, ah tea?

DEXTER AND MARCO [TOGETHER]

Doh je. Thanks

Chen brings teapot and cups to table.

MEDIUM: THREE MEN AT TABLE

CHEN (POURING TEA)

You want to know about *Si-fu*?

PAN TO MARCO; PAN TO FOLLOW DIALOG

MARCO

Si-fu?

DEXTER

Sort of like a "master."

CHEN

Si-fu call himself Art Roman. Born in East of America. He paint new way, modern way, from study in Paris. I want to learn new way from *Si-fu*.

MARCO

How did you come to know this Art Roman?

CHEN

I sell painting things, like cloth . . . canvas, and paints in shop. He come to buy things. He say he will show me some new ways if I give him good price. *Si-fu's* way is to paint like real life. He like to go in bars in Wanchai, drink lot of *pi-jiu* and make drawing of girls. But he also make some of old people, and mothers and babies. Very good paintings, much alive.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Did you ever see him when he was working . . . painting? Like the paintings he was doing for the movie?

DEXTER

How about the paintings of Suzie Wong?

CLOSE UP: CHEN

CHEN

No, not Suzie Wong. He very private to make these paintings. The model was *yum yum* girl from bar, not the actress Kwan Ka Shen, but very beautiful, too. But this girl model is 'all Chinese,' Shanghai girl.

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO

Do you remember her name?

TWO-SHOT: CHEN AND MARCO

CHEN

I not forget. Her name Ling Mei-ah.

MARCO

Are there any paintings of her that exist?

CHEN

Don't know. Maybe. But I have sketch.

MARCO (SLIGHTLY EXCITED)

A sketch? By Art Roman?

Chen gets up and walks to a cabinet, takes out sketchbook and brings it to the table. He opens to a few pages of charcoal sketches of a nude girl. The faces are only lightly rendered, but the beautiful girl wears a ponytail.

CLOSE UP: PAGE OF SKETCHBOOK. SKETCH OF NUDE GIRL. CHEN'S FINGER POINTS TO UPPER RIGHT CORNER.

CHEN (V.O)

See.

Upper right corner signed "alHK/59"

FADE OUT

34 INT. CHINESE BUS [DUSK] SAME DAY

Marco and Dexter returning through Guandong farmlands.

TWO-SHOT: FROM BEHIND, MARCO AND DEXTER

DEXTER

That was interesting.

MARCO

Yes. That girl in the sketch could easily be the girl in the painting. [PAUSE] But who the hell is Art Roman?

Marco gazes out the window

PULL OUT THROUGH WINDOW AT BLURRED FOCUS OF PASSING FARMLAND, DISSOLVE INTO

35 INT. TWOSW, ROOM IN LUK KWOK, SCENE IN THAT ROBERT EXPLAINS PAINTING TO SUZIE [APPROX 30 SECONDS]

FADE OUT

36 EXT: LIBRARY COURTYARD, HONG KONG UNIVERSITY [LATE AFTERNOON] A COUPLE DAYS LATER

LONG: DOWN AT COURTYARD FROM STAIRS ABOVE.

Students crossing courtyard and in and out of library. Marco waiting on bench outside library.

PULL IN TO WIDE SHOT: LILY EXITING LIBRARY

Marco get up and rushes up to Lily

MARCO

Lily, Lily, I've been waiting for you

Lily stops and turns slowly. At first she looks like she is about to cry. Then her face changes, her brow furls and she becomes angry. Marco looks perplexed.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LILY

(CONTINUED)

LILY (ANGRILY)

How could you do this to me, Marco?
Why do you use me as some cheap
thing you can throw away when
someone better comes along?

MARCO

Lily, please try to calm down. I
don't know what's troubling you.
Can't we talk about . . .

LILY (MORE ANGRILY)

Talk about what? Your new
girlfriend, Marco, your new . . .
new . . . Suzie Wong, Marco, damn
you . . .

Lily then rattles off an expletive sentence in
Cantonese. Students begin to take notice, embarrassing
Marco.

TRACK IN CIRCULAR PATTERN HOLDING MARCO AND LILY AGAINST
SHIFTING BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS AND COURTYARD

MARCO

Can't we go somewhere more private
and talk about this?

LILY

I don't want to be anywhere private
with you, Marco. Never again! Go
somewhere private with your Suzie.
I'm sure you have already.

MARCO

Please stop saying that, Lily. Has
this something to do with Professor
Loh?

LILY (STILL VERY ANGRY)

You know damn well, Marco. In fact,
probably everybody knows! I saw you
together having your jokes at your
secret lunch. Your tryst.

MARCO (PLEADING)

There's nothing secret going on,
Lily, nothing. Really. Now can we
please just go somewhere?

LILY

Nothing secret now because you
don't care. Now you have your

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LILY (cont'd)
 laughing together right in front of
 everybody, everywhere, in the
 little park, and where else I
 would like to know! You can dismiss
 me right here and now, and be done
 with it, Marco. No, I dismiss you.
 Go to your Professor Suzie Loh, and
 straighten things out with her.
 Have a good laughing about your
 dismissed skinny girlfriend . .

MARCO (UNDER HIS BREATH)
 Fuck!

LILY
 What, Marco?

MARCO
 Lily, there's nothing going on
 between me and Grace Loh. I was
 even going to introduce her to you
 but mistaken . . .

Lily grabs Marco's forearm, digging in her nails

LILY (INTERRUPTING)
 You know, Marco, you made me lose
 face. There are people around here
 who know about us. Now I have been
 shamed.

MARCO (FRUSTRATED)
 There's nothing to be shamed about,
 Lily. I've done no more than chat
 with a friend a few times about
 some common interests.

LILY
 I don't want to hear lies, Marco.
 You don't understand, you should
 have regard for my feelings, but
 you openly act like you and this .
 . . this Professor Loh are . . .
 lovers. So you go and be happy to
 have found your Suzie Wong, Mr.
 Podesta. It looks like you found a
 Chinese girl who is white enough
 for you.

MARCO (TRYING NOT TO BE ANGRY)
 Lovers? *White?* [now hissing]
 That's ridiculous! I'm not going
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (TRYING NOT TO BE ANGRY) (cont'd)
anywhere until you hear and know
the truth.

LILY
Then I will go.

STOP TRACKING AND HOLD ON LILY FROM OVER MARCO'S SHOULDER

Lily begins to storm off in the direction of the elevators.
Then she turns back to Marco.

LILY (CONTROLLED ANGER)
I was going to have you meet Millie
this weekend. Now what do I tell my
daughter?" [Right into Marco's
face] Damn you, Marco, I wish I had
never met you and your Suzie Wong
on obsession. Just leave me alone.

TWO-SHOT: TRACK TOGETHER

Lily turns and begins to leave again. Marco starts to
follow. Lily turns on her heels, glowering at Marco. Marco
stops.

LILY (ANGRILY)
Alone!

Lily heads into a group of students.

HOLD ON BACK OF MARCO AND RECEDING LILY

MARCO (CALLING)
No, wait, please . . . Gwennie . . .
. [voice dropping to a whisper] I
mean . . . I mean . . . Fuck!

FADE OUT

37 INT. MY THO, VIETNAM 1968 [DAY]

MEDIUM: MARCO AND DEXTER IN TENT

Marco is putting on a clean set of clothes. Dexter sitting
on cot, putting film in his 35mm camera.

MARCO
Your going up to Saigon
tomorrow. Who knows when I'll have
the services of a great
photographer.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER

Save the flattery. I just don't think this is a good idea, Marco. You should keep a low profile with this girl. I know she's educated and speaks English, but the locals just figure you're using her . . .

MARCO

[Interrupting] Isn't Vanh gorgeous, Dex? I gotta have a nice photo of her. A nice one of the both of us, too. It's just because she's Asian and I'm a 'whitey,' isn't it? I'll let you do the wedding photos. . .

DEXTER

OK, let's find a little non-public place and get this over with.

Marco checks himself out in the mirror.

MARCO

Thanks, man. I meant it about the wedding . . .

Marco throws his arm around Dexter's shoulder and they head out the door.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. MY THO, VIETNAM 1968 [DAY] MINUTES LATER

WIDE: MARCO AND VANH BESIDE A SMALL BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Marco (in mufti) and Vanh (in Aodai) acting like playful young lovers as Dexter checks the lighting and sets up his tripod.

MONTAGE: STILLS OF MARCO AND VANH IN DIFFERENT POSES AROUND THE TEMPLE

DISSOLVE TO

39 EXT. SMALL VILLAGE NEAR MY THO (1968)

Same stills are scattered in mud and blood in smoldering ground. Scattered dead local residents, including Vanh. Marco standing, looking down at the photos.

SOLDIER (CALLING)

Marco. We got some still breathing over here. Let the dead . . .

Marco turns, glaring.

MARCO (SHOUTING)

Fuck you. Fuck you and your fucking war. Who called in the strike on this village? What callous bastard called it in? Why?

SOLDIER

They were harboring VC at night.

Marco looks down at the photos and Vanh, staring.

SOLDIER (CALLING)

Marco. Marco! this kid over here needs you. Marco. **Marco!**

CUT TO

40 INT. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB (DAY) MARCH, 1997

CLOSE UP: MARCO'S FACE

Audio: Bleeding in of last call of **"Marco!"**

Marco blinks, coming out of a reverie.

PULL BACK TO WIDE SHOT: UPSTAIRS ROOM AT FCC SPEAKERS TABLE AND TABLES FULL OF GUESTS

Dexter is standing at the podium, Marco sitting beside him. Dexter's voice comes up after the fading of **"Marco!"**

DEXTER (ADDRESSING AUDIENCE)

. . . so, I have known today's speaker since I was covering the Vietnam war and he served there as A U.S. Army medic. Most of you know him as the National Book Award recipient for his powerful book, *Blood On My Hands: A Medic's Memoir of Vietnam*. I won't keep him

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER (ADDRESSING AUDIENCE) (cont'd)
 seated longer than necessary
 because I happen to know what part
 of his anatomy still contains some
 mortar shrapnel. Marco is here
 today not as a former medic, but as
 a journalist covering the upcoming
 "handover." It's a pleasure and
 honor to give you over to my
 friend, Marco Podesta.

There is applause as Marco moves to the podium and adjust
 the mic to a higher position. A few photo flashes go off.

MARCO
 Thank you Dexter. Now that you
 have publicized my one physical war
 wound rather than take umbrage I'll
 just "turn the other cheek."

Mild laughter from the audience and Dexter.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 What I hear a lot in discussing the
 handover with other journalists and
 some academics is the question of
 "identity." What will Hong Kong
 be, when it is longer a Crown
 Colony? But Hong Kong's new
 identity can only be compared to
 what identity it currently has. We
 all know its origin as a depot for
 the British opium dealers in the
 1840s . . .

Marco's audio slowly fades.

DISSOLVE TO

41 EXT. SMALL VILLAGE NEAR MY THO (1968)

WIDE: MARCO SITTING ON GROUND BESIDE BODY OF VANH

Vanh's body is face down in ground made muddy by her own
 blood. Her upper back is torn open.

Marco sits quietly, shuffling through the muddy photographs,
 over and over.

Two elderly women and three young girls come over with a
 sheet and respectfully place Vanh on it. As they are about
 to leave with the body an elderly woman asks Marco for the
 photos and he hands them over.

(CONTINUED)

DISSOLVE TO

42 INT. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB (DAY) MARCH, 1997

CLOSE UP: MARCO'S FACE

Audio comes back up on Marco's address.

MARCO

I think that Hong Kong's identity comes from what side of Hong Kong you come from. That was evident from a symposium I recently attended at Chinese U where I heard a Hong Kong Chinese woman academic say that "after 150 years of rape by foreign powers China now has the power to consolidate itself geographically and purify its Chinese culture of barbarian contamination." The colonization of Hong Kong was, of course, a part of that rape.

There is some murmuring in the audience.

MARCO (CONT'D)

I see I have awakened some somnolent members. Well, maybe the UK should expect to get its butt kicked on its way out the door. It's fair to say that this place has been run like a private British Club. The system of governance is sort of like a 'corporate club.' The boys at the top, who belong to the club, compete in a gentlemanly way, but they also cooperate to maintain the power at the top of the social pyramid. The universities are run like a club; The judiciary is a club and, of course, there is the Jockey Club. That Hong Kong identity is like some stuffy, class-conscious Brit who likes everything in the colonies all Brit-like, like a proper Englishman's club in Mayfair, ey what, old boy?"

There is more murmuring, some light laughter.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (CONT'D)

Let me close with my working metaphor. Colonized people often find it necessary to accommodate to their overlords. So my personification of Hong Kong is a figure I am sure you will all recognize--Miss Suzie Wong, of yesteryear Wanchai. Like Suzie, the Chinese side of Hong Kong accommodated itself to foreign hegemony, first as a bolt hole from the Communist revolution, and then as a beneficiary to the Colony's unfettered capitalism. Hong Kong, like Suzie, necessarily played the hand life dealt. Not long ago I saw *The World of Suzie Wong* again. But this time, with the handover looming, the ending haunted me. In that final scene Suzie and Lomax walk off into the closing credits--an ambiguous ending. Did their romance overcome all it had going against it? How will Hong Kong endure? If we only could slip down to Wanchai and ask Suzie, she might have a better answer than any of us. . . . Thank you.

There is applause, but people are already leaving.

FADE OUT

43 INT. DOOR OF GRACE'S FLAT [DUSK] A FEW DAYS LATER

CLOSE UP: BACK OF MARCO [PUSHING BELL] THEN MOVE UP OVER MARCO'S SHOULDER AS DOOR OPENS

Door opens and little elderly Chinese lady wearing an apron and holding a feather duster opens the door and stares up at Marco.

MARCO

Ah . . . *neiho* . . . I am here for Grace.

Chinese lady steps aside and motions Marco in.

MARCO

M'goy sigh.

(CONTINUED)

Interior of flat is spacious, clean and bright. A Western woman emerges from the hallway as the Chinese lady disappears into the kitchen. The lady is tall, handsome, in her mid-sixties, but with dark brown hair.

PAN OVER TO HALLWAY: WESTERN LADY. PULL BACK AND FOLLOW UP TO TWO-SHOT WITH MARCO

WESTERN LADY

Hello. You must be Marco. Grace told me all about you. I'm Fionna.

She offers her hand to shake, has a goblet of white wine in the other. She wears her hair mid-length and un-coiffed, the way a younger woman might.

MARCO (SLIGHTLY SURPRISED)

Ah . . . very nice to meet you.

WESTERN LADY

Grace tells me you're originally from New York.

There is a touch of "Yaak" in the York. Just then Grace emerges from the hallway in black slacks and a pearl Mandarin blouse and comes up alongside Fionna and puts her arm over the older woman's shoulder. They are about the same height.

TWO-SHOT: GRACE AND FIONNA (FROM MARCO'S P.O.V.)

GRACE

Now you sleep off some of that jet lag, luv, and don't worry about your little Gracie in Wanchai. She is quite safe with Mr. Podesta. As you can see he's a big, strong, Italian-American boy. Any mother could entrust a daughter to him.

Grace winks at Marco. Fionna smiles and gives Grace a kiss on he cheek.

GRACE

That's my signal. Off we go, escort.

The door slams, clipping off Marco's "Nice to meet you, maam." Grace and Marco enter the elevator.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND GRACE

MARCO

I can see some resemblance.

GRACE (SMILING)

Well, at least from my Western side.

MARCO

And you Fulbright scholars get a maid as well. I think I will apply.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. LOCKHART ROAD, WANCHAI, [NIGHT] 20-MINUTES LATER

WIDE: MARCO AND GRACE AT RIGHT SIDE OF FRAME

Marco's and Grace's faces are painted in the glowing hues of the street's neon signs.

GRACE

Well, this is where the legend began. Are you ready to dig in, sailor?

MARCO

I was concerned that I might be taken as the pimp for a high-priced call girl. Want to begin with that joint?

Marco points to a place aptly called Club Suzie, with a stout *mama-san* guarding the doorway.

The short *mama-san* addresses Grace in Cantonese and they have a brief conversation while Marco and the dancers (in tight shorts and on absurdly high platform shoes) exchange ambiguous glances. The conversation ends and the *mamasan* steps aside, smiling up at Marco. Grace leads Marco in.

INT: FOLLOW GRACE AND MARCO IN TO CLUB

GRACE (LEADING MARCO)

That wasn't too difficult. Once I assured her that we were not missionaries.

MARCO

So what was that *mama-san* smile at me about, then.

FOLLOW GRACE AND MARCO TO SMALL BOOTH. FOLLOW DIALOG

(CONTINUED)

GRACE
She asked me if your were
"proportional."

MARCO
"Proportional?" What's that? Why?

GRACE (SMILING)
Because you're so tall.

MARCO
So what did you say?

GRACE (SMILING)
I told her that you are very
proportional.

MARCO
Oh, great. I thought I was
supposed to be protecting you. We
need a couple San Migs.

Grace starts to walk away, toward some idle dancing girls.

FOLLOW GRACE OVER MARCO'S SHOULDER

GRACE (CALLING BACK AND LAUGHING)
I'm dying for a margarita. . . Have
one sent over to me. You stay
here; I can't have you
contaminating my data.

WIDE: (FROM MARCO'S P.O.V.) GRACE AT A TABLE BESIDE THE
STAGE

The stage is elevated only a couple of feet. Three of girls,
in thongs and skimpy halters, slither languidly, and
unartfully around their poles, illuminated by twirling
spotlights above. [MUSIC: Local]

CUTAWAY

45 INT. LUK KWOK HOTELS, WANCHAI CA 1959. FLASHBACK FROM
TWO SW, NAM KOK BAR, HOLDEN AT BAR, GIRLS DANCING (LOCAL
MUSIC) APPROX. 5 SECONDS

46 INT. CLUB SUZIE [NIGHT] A FEW SECONDS LATER

WIDE: (FROM NEW MARCO P.O.V. AT END OF BAR, ORDERING DRINKS)
OF GRACE AT TABLE TALKING TO A DANCER

PULL IN TO TWIRLING BALL.

FADE OUT

47 INT. LANCELOT CLUB, WANCHAI [NIGHT] A FEW MINUTES LATER

WIDE: MARCO AND GRACE AT BAR. FOLLOW GRACE

Marco hands Grace her margarita and she walks to a booth beside the low stage similar to the last to speak with two dancing girls state.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP TO TWO SHOT: MARCO AT BAR

Marco is approached by a man in his late forties, tall, thin with receding hair. Man [Martin] sits on bar stool next to Marco.

MARTIN (AUSSIE ACCENT)
Evening. I'm Martin. Can I shout
you to a beer.

MARCO
No thanks. Got one.

There is a pause. Marco is looking at stage. Martin a Grace at the table.

MARTIN
She's a real beaut, that one.

MARCO
What?

MARTIN (MOTIONING WITH HIS HEAD)
Her. The one you came in with.

MARCO
Yes, she is.

MARTIN
May I ask . . .

MARCO (INTERRUPTING, FIRMLY)
You may not.

(CONTINUED)

MARTIN

Sorry, mate, I just meant that she is something special.

MARCO

Why don't you just drop the Crocodile Dundee routine concentrate on those two sinuous lovelies polishing those poles for your prurient interest.

MARTIN

Had both of 'em, actually.

MARCO

What?

MED. WIDE: GRACE AND GIRLS AT TABLE [MARTIN V.O.]

MARTIN

Those two, Barbie and Nadine--not their real names of course. Yes, had them both. Barbie is a Filipina, used to be a domestic; Nadine, she's just from Semarang, over in Indonesia."

MARCO

That's very . . . a . . . international of you.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND MARTIN

MARTIN

It's my favorite pastime, shagging these little lovelies.

MARCO

So, tell me Martin, is there a Mrs. Martin somewhere unaware that you are engaged in your favorite pastime?

MARTIN

Oh, yes, she's probably putting together a contract or something. Makes scads of money doing that. My salary's is like a domestic's compared to her's. She's Chinese and fluent in Mandarin. Big law firm, all of that. Unless she's spending her obligatory half-hour with our

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARTIN (cont'd)
son. Not sure he turned out to her
satisfaction; got my sandy hair and
her Chinese features. . . . Well,
then, nice chatting with you . . .
never got your name . . .

MARCO
Mark.

Martin leaves to speak with the *mamasan*.

MARCO (TO HIMSELF)
Ben. Life imitates art.

CUTAWAY

48 INT. LUK KWOK HOTELS, WANCHAI CA 1959. FLASHBACK OF TWOSW,
PARTIAL SCENE OF BEN IN LOMAX'S ROOM EXPLAINING ARRANGEMENT
WITH SUZIE [APPROX 5-10 SECONDS]

FADE OUT

49 EXT. LOCKART ROAD, WANCHAI [NIGHT] MINUTES LATER

TRAVELING: MARCO AND GRACE ON STREET

MARCO
So how did your interview go with
Barbie and Nadine,

GRACE (SURPRISED)
How did you . . . ?

MARCO
We journalists have our sources.

GRACE
Well, actually. I have some good
information, but I don't know if
it's an article yet.

MARCO
Well, give me the basics.

GRACE
I thought you journalists had your
sources. Well, the clientele here
is predominantly expats and some
military. The *mama-san* gets them to
chat with the girls, and depending
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRACE (cont'd)
 on how she sizes them up they can be paying up to US\$30 for a drink for him and what is really a little tea for the girl. Sometimes a guy can get serviced manually, or orally, in a room behind the bar. The Filipina girl told me it's full of bottles and cleaning stuff--and that can cost him HK\$2000 to \$3000. If you want to take her out it's HK6 to 7 thousand, plus the room.

MARCO
 Hey, that's expensive!

GRACE
 You *gweilo* guys are always devaluing us Asian girls. And who was that other *gweilo*?

Marco and Grace walk by several other clubs. At one a *mama-san* is lighting joss sticks for her little shrine by the door as a dancing girl smiles invitingly at Marco.

MARCO
 Remember Ben from *The World of Suzie Wong*? The Brit who hired Suzie to put some steam in his boiler because his wife was boring?

GRACE
 Michael Wilding, one of Liz Taylor's husbands.

MARCO
 Right. Well, *gweilo* No. 2 is a contemporary Ben, who is is intimidated by successful lawyer Chinese wife.

GRACE
 That's more your paper than mine.

They arrive at a tram stop in Johnston Rd.

GRACE
 Tram? It won't look like I am taking my customer to a hotel.

MARCO
Barbie and Nadine might say Ben
belongs in your paper.

GRACE (SURPRISED)
How do you know Barbie and Nadine?

MARCO (SMILING)
I don't. But Ben sure does.

GRACE
You naughty *gweilos*.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. MID LEVELS NEAR GRACE'S APT [NIGHT] 20 MINUTES LATER

MED WIDE, TRACKING: MARCO AND GRACE

Marco and Grace approach her apartment building

GRACE
Door to door escort service. You
really didn't have to, Marco.

MARCO
Actually, I've been trying to get
up the courage for a confession.

GRACE
Don't tell me that you have
intimate knowledge of Barbie and
Nadine, too?

MARCO
No . . . Lily.

STOP TRACKING, PULL IN TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND GRACE

Grace stops abruptly.

CLOSE UP: GRACE

GRACE
Lily?

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO
Lily Han . . . she's a librarian at
HKU.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND GRACE

(CONTINUED)

GRACE

Well, you are the romantic, aren't you, Marco.

MARCO

I'm not so sure about that now . .

.

Grace cocks her head attentively, looking Marco directly in the eye

MARCO

Ah . . . we were together--since we met at the presentation of your paper . . .

Grace raises her eyebrows and gives a tight smile

MARCO

. . . and about two months ago it all blew up

GRACE

Oh, Marco, what happened?

MARCO

You.

GRACE

Me?

MARCO

Well, us.

GRACE

What us? We're compatriots. Friends.

MARCO

That isn't what Lily concluded when she happened to observe us having our picnic lunch.

GRACE

Lunch? That? Oh, no!

MARCO

Oh, yes. She ripped me up in public and has since gone to ground. She has not been at work, doesn't answer calls, and I don't know where she lives, except over in Kowloon.

(CONTINUED)

There is a few moments of silence

CLOSE UP: GRACE

GRACE
Do you love her, Marco?

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO
Checking to see if we might fit
your 'failed East-West romance
hypothesis? [Pause] Yeah, I think
this is . . . was, the real thing
for both of us.

Marco takes her arm and leads her up the walk.

TRACK UP TO GRACE'S BUILDING: TWO SHOT, GRACE AND MARCO

They walk together up to the door of Grace's
building. Grace turn and hugs Marco.

GRACE
I don't think Lily saw
that. Marco, I would like to help,
if I can.

MARCO
You could start by calling me
"Polo." That's what my friends
call me.

GRACE
OK, I rather like that . . . Marco
Polo.

PULL BACK TO MEDIUM WIDE

Grace opens her building door and Marco, turns to leave and
turns around.

MARCO
Thanks, Grace.

Marco walks a few meters away. Grace turns before going in.

GRACE
I assume, Mr. Polo, that I
shouldn't worry about your being
able to find your way home. [She
points off into the night.] Just
in case, I think Italy is sort of
off in that direction.

(CONTINUED)

FADE TO BLACK

51 EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN HONG KONG STREETS [EARLY MORNING]
SEVERAL DAYS LATER

AERIAL SHOT [HELICOPTER] TRACKING: MARCO

Marco leaves his building in the early morning, wandering empty streets, almost alone except for some mini buses, cabs and Haaka ladies collecting cardboard.

INTER-CUT WIDE: STREET-LEVEL SHOT TRACKING MARCO

Marco walks through nearly empty past closed shops, empty streets, other signs that accentuate his loneliness.
[Music: "Lament" (Pharaoh Sanders)]

INTER-CUT AERIAL: MARCO ASCENDING LADDER STREET

CUT TO: MARCO APPROACHING, FROM TOP OF LADDER STREET STEPS

Marco standing at Ladder Street and Hollywood Road.

WIDE: MARCO'S P.O.V UP LADDER STREET

CUTAWAY TO:

52 EXT. "WANCHAI STREET", FLASHBACK FROM TWOSW [LOMAX
ASCENDING LADDER STREET IN SEARCH OF SUZIE]

FADE OUT

53 INT: MEE LING GALLERY

MEDIUM: MARCO

Marco comes through the door.

MARCO
Well, you must have been on an
extended vacation.

MED. WIDE: LOMAX

Lomax is putting some tape around a bundle of canvasses. Other bundles lie about.

LOMAX
Something like that.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Looks like you made a big sale.

LOMAX

Not yet. These are going to an exhibit in Chinatown in San Francisco. I'm counting on the Hing Kong refugees to buy a bit of nostalgia generated by "handover."

MARCO

Really? Well, good luck with it. . . Is *she* going?

Lomax looks up at Marco with a questioning expression. Marco motions with his head toward the front window display.

LOMAX

She stays.

There is an awkward silence as Lomax turns to looking through some papers, picks up a pack of cigarettes, starts to take out a cigarette, but stops and puts the pack in the drawer.

MARCO

Well, I can come and keep her company while you're away.

Lomax looks up with a slightly sad smile and nods his headz

MARCO

Be seeing you.

FADE OUT

54 EXT: PROMENADE, TSIM SHA TSUI, KOWLOON [DAY] A WEEK LATER

WIDE: MARCO AND OTHERS TAKING THEIR LEISURE ON PROMENADE

Marco is eating a sandwich while sitting on the bench and looking across the harbor at Hong Kong side. Behind him is a wedding picture shoot taking place with a Chinese bride in flowing white wedding gown. There is much activity with people coming and going who sit on Marco's bench.

LONG: HONG KONG SIDE, MARCO'S P.O.V.

[GIRL'S VOICE]

I like to look at Hong Kong at Christmas time, too, when all the lights are on the buildings.

(CONTINUED)

TWO SHOT: MARCO AND YOUNG GIRL WHO HAS SAT BESIDE HIM

Marco looks at her. She is a pre-teen, gamine like, and pretty.

MARCO

Are you speaking to me?

GIRL

Yes.

MARCO (SMILING)

Didn't your mother caution you against speaking to strangers, especially *gweilo* strangers?

[GIRL]

No. She asked me to do it.

MARCO

I don't believe that. You're a naughty girl. Where's your mo . . .

[GIRL] (INTERRUPTING)

Right there.

The girl points past Marco down the bench. Marco turns, then looks back at the girl in surprise.

PULL BACK AND FOLLOW

MARCO (BEAMING)

You must be Millie! I am so happy to . . . I . . .

MILLIE

Yes. That's my mom. And you are Marco, aren't you?

Millie stands, takes Marco by he hand and leads him down the walk a few meters to where Lily is sitting. Lily stands, lifts her sun glasses, and looks into Marco's eyes.

TWO-SHOT: (TIGHT) LILY AND MARCO

MARCO

I kept trying to find you . . . I

LILY (INTERRUPTING)

It's alright now Marco.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Buy why . . .

LILY (INTERRUPTING)

Dr. Loh is a very persuasive . . .

MARCO

Gra . . ? Dr. Loh? What's going on here?

PULL BACK TO INCLUDE MILLIE

Marco puts his hand on Millie's shoulder

MARCO (BEAMING)

You inscrutable Chinese women, you even enlist pretty, young girls in your schemes. So what . . .?

LILY (INTERRUPTING)

Later I will explain all. But now Millie would like us to take her over to Hong Kong side on the Star Ferry to her favorite *dim sum* restaurant. Is that OK? . . .
. Like a family?

MARCO

You're very persuasive yourself, Lily Han. Millie, lead the way.

WIDE: MARCO, LILY AND MILLIE, (FROM BEHIND) PROMENADE

Marco, hand around Lily's waist and holding Millie's hand with his other hand, walk toward Star Ferry entrance.

FADE OUT

55 INT: MARCO'S FLAT [MORNING] A FEW DAYS LATER

WIDE: LILY, SITTING AT TABLE

Morning light streams in through the bay window. Lily, in a bathrobe is reading the newspaper at the table.

LILY

Marco. . . . Marco. Marco, did you see this?

Marco steps out of the bathroom, toweling himself off from the shower.

REVERSE ANGLE: MARCO

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Read what, sweetie?

LILY

This is the paper from a few days ago. I came across this, buried in with advertisements. "Richard Mason, author of the 1957 popular novel of Hong Kong, The World of Suzie Wong, dies, in Rome, at age 78."

MARCO

Really? Well that probably explains why there were no replies to my letters. . . But Suzie lives, there was a real Suzie, I am certain of it.

Lily gets up and comes over to Marco, putting her arms around his waist and pulling tight against her.

TWO-SHOT: LILY AND MARCO

LILY

You are such a romantic soul, Marco. That's what I love about you. Grace said you are like the brother she always wanted. Even Millie says you have a good heart.

MARCO (IRONIC TONE)

That's me, the answer to any pretty Chinese girl's prayer--if she's praying for a brother.

Lily pulls him closer and squirms against him, letting out little moans.

LILY

Mmmmm, it feels like I might be the answer to someone's prayer.

They kiss.

FADE OUT

56 INT: SHANGHAI TANG SHOP, CENTRAL [DAY] JUNE 30, 1996

WIDE: MARCO, LILY AND GRACE AND OTHER SHOPPERS

Lily and Grace are placing a Mandarin jacket on Marco in front of a mirror.

PULL IN: MARCO, LILY AND GRACE

MARCO (WINCING)
I look like a triad boss in a 1930s
Shanghai movie.

GRACE
Don't go flattering yourself. You
look . . . very . . .

LILY (INTERRUPTING)
Intellectual?

GRACE
I was going to say handsome.

LILY
OK, handsome and intellectual.

MARCO
How about "impoverished." Did you
see the price of this thing?

FADE OUT/FADE IN TO:

57 EXT: THEATRE LANE, CENTRAL [DAY] MOMENTS LATER

LONG: THEATRE LANE INTERSECTION WITH QUEEN'S ROAD WEST,
MARCO, LILY AND GRACE WALKING AMONG NOON THRONGS

GRACE (VOICE)
You shouldn't stint, Marco, these
are the people who are paying
you. And you just might get a
great angle . .

MARCO (VOICE)
Yes, but I hate these kinds of
events; a 'handover party'. I wish
I could take you two along for
support.

GRACE (VOICE)
You show up with a Chinese lovely
on each arm and they will think
you're mis-using their funds.

(CONTINUED)

[AUDIO] Lily and Grace laughing

FADE OUT

58 INT: PRIVATE ELEVATOR FOYER, UPPER MID-LEVELS [THAT EVENING]

WIDE: MARCO, MRS. NYQUIST

Marco is greeted by "Kitty" Nyquist, Chinese-American wife of B.J. Nyquist, successful entrepreneur and CEO of Media Nova

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND MRS. NYQUIST

MRS. NYQUIST (EFFUSIVELY GREETING)
Well, you must be our honored
guest, Mr. Podesta. We have been
awaiting you. Come, let
me introduce you to some other
guests.

PULL BACK TO EXTREME WIDE: ROOM

She leads Marco into and around a very large living room adorned with expensive Chinese sculpture, paintings and furniture. A broad window looks down on to Central and the harbor. All are strangers. She then leads Marco to a sofa with a large, leather-bound folio on a beautiful tea table. They sit.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND MRS. NYQUIST

MRS. NYQUIST
While my husband is on a phone call
I have a chance to show you one of
my special projects.

The Folio is embossed with the words "Beatific Smiles." She opens it to before and after photos of Chinese children, many with her and doctors as well. The children had cleft palates and other facial injuries and deformities.

CLOSE UP: FOLIO PAGES

MRS. NYQUIST
These are my little angels. Aren't
they beautiful? I tell them that
Jesus wants them to be
beautiful. They are my new angels
for Jesus.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND MRS. NYQUIST

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

That's very nice, you must be . . .

MRS. NYQUIST (INTERRUPTING)

Oh, here he comes. B.J., I have been occupying your guest.

PULL BACK TO MED. WIDE: B.J. NYQUIST P.O.V FROM BEHIND MARCO AND MRS. NYQUIST

A large, paunchy man approaches, hair pulled back in a ponytail, rimless glasses, and a leather vest.

B.J. NYQUIST

Mr. Podesta, pleased to meet you at last. We're only here for my wife's buying out China.

Nyquist waves his hand to indicate the numerous treasures in the room.

MRS. NYQUIST

Now, B.J., you know that's not true.

B.J. NYQUIST

Mr. Podesta wrote one of the best damn books on the Vietnam war.

Turning to Marco

B.J. NYQUIST (CONT'D)

I mean that, Marco. I read it twice and bought copies for at least fifty people.

MARCO

My publisher thanks you, sir.

B.J. NYQUIST

Let's go out on the deck.

They begin walking to the deck.

B.J. NYQUIST

Have you kept up on your *muy thai* boxing?

MARCO

Not really. I take my anger out on my readers these days.

DISSOLVE TO TWO SHOT: MARCO AND B.J. AT DECK RAILING

(CONTINUED)

B.J. NYQUIST

I supposed you didn't ask Kitty that if Jesus didn't mess up those kids' faces in the first place, she wouldn't get to say she fixed them.

Marco remains quiet

B.J. NYQUIST

Nah, I don't ask her either. Belief trumps logic.

He pauses, looking down at the fireworks of the handover that are just beginning.

EXTREME LONG SHOT: FIREWORKS OVER HARBOR

B.J. NYQUIST

Look, Marco, I don't want to influence your report, but the British taking their leave after 150 years down there is really anti-climax. When Deng told his people they could get rich like the capitalists it was game over. Oh, it will survive because its big money boys has already made their deals with Beijing.

MARCO

Like the way a bar girl switches clients?

B.J. NYQUIST

I wouldn't put it that way in you report, but then I'm not trying to influence your . . .

CUT-IN; TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND NYQUIST

MARCO (INTERJECTING)

Of course not, sir.

[Pause]

B.J. NYQUIST

Nice fireworks. Great Chinese invention.

EXTREME LONG SHOT: FIREWORKS OVER HARBOR

FADE OUT

59 INT: KAI TAK AIRPORT, BOARDING LOUNGE JULY, 4, 1997

TRACKING SHOT: MARCO, LILY AND MILLIE

Marco and Lily walking hand in hand. Millie is pushing Marco's luggage trolley.

MILLIE (EXCITEDLY)

Marco, when we come to see you at Christmastime in San Francisco, it will be my first time in an airplane.

MARCO

We'll have celebrate that event at the best *dim sum* restaurant in Chinatown.

MILLIE

No, I want to see a football game and eat hot dogs.

MARCO

You will not be denied, so long as you bring your mother.

They reach Marco's boarding area.

TRACK OVER TO BOARDING AREA AND HOLD ON MARCO, LILY AND MILLIE

LILY (TO MARCO)

And will there be a special treat for me?

MARCO

Oh, yes. Just remember to wear your butterfly hair clip.

LILY (SMILING)

You are very sentimental, Marco.

[AUDIO] Marco's flight it called: "Cathay Pacific 869, San Francisco, Now Boarding First and Business Class."

MED. SHOT: MARCO, LILY, AND MILLIE

MARCO

OK, this is China--its *really* China now--so no public displays of affection. I want to be allowed back in.

Mario gives them a quick hug and a kiss on top of the head.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

I'll do better when you arrive at
SFO. Till then.

Marco squeezes Lily's hand, releases and begins to walk to the boarding line. Lily rushes to him and grabs his arm.

TWO-SHOT: LILY AND MARCO

Lily quickly takes the butterfly clip from her hair and puts it in Marco's hand.

LILY

Take good care of this, Marco, I
will need it, and not until I see
you again.

MARCO

The same with me, Lily.

PULL BACK TO WIDE SHOT: MARCO GOING THROUGH GATE WITH LAST
WAVE.

FADE TO BLACK

60 INT: 747 AIRLINER [SAME DAY] TWENTY-MINUTES LATER

CLOSE UP: MARCO [CONTINUITY FROM SCENE 2]

Marco is sleeping, head against the window. A (visible) turbulence bump jars him awake. He blinks, clearing his head.

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

Did you have good dream?

Marco is surprised and turns his head.

PULL BACK TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Ling Mei-ah is in center seat, looking up at Marco with a little smile on her face.

MARCO

You still look fam . . .

LING MEI-AH

Yes, you remember from the flat of
Dr. Loh. I have a letter for you
from her. I get you some water.

She hands Marco a small envelope and leaves to get water. Marco still looks puzzled.

(CONTINUED)

MEDIUM CLOSE UP: MARCO (OPENING NOTE); ZOOM TO CLOSE UP OF MARCO'S HANDS HOLDING NOTE.

GRACE (V.O.)

"Dear Polo, I hope you can forgive me for not being as forthcoming as I should have been. There are good reasons I held back. But, if things go as I hope they will, a lot of questions you have might be answered. Those answers can only come from the lady who has given you this note, someone who is very special to me. You have also become special to me.

PAN UP TO CLOSE UP ON MARCO

GRACE (V.O.CONT'D)

I have come to regard you as a brother, and one who can be a vehicle of deliverance. You will know what that means if she can find the courage and you can make her feel safe and comfortable. Love and gratitude, Grace.

Ling Mei-ah returns with a cup of water to Marco still holding the note. She sits and hands him the cup.

TWO-SHOT: LING MEI-AH AND MARCO

LING MEI-AH

Drink. You must drink much water on long airplane ride.

MARCO

Maybe I need something stronger than water. I'm not sure what's going on here.

LING MEI-AH

My horoscope say this is a good time. [Pause]

MARCO

Good time for what?

LING MEI-AH

Grace say so, too. She is very smart.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Yes, she is, but I didn't know she
did horoscopes. You still haven't .
. . .

LING MEI-AH

Number of flight is good number,
too. 869. Grace say it is good
time.

Marco turns and takes a good look at Ling Mei-ah. His face registers that the 70-yr-old woman retains the features of what must have been a very beautiful young woman.

MARCO

You are, excuse me for using the
expression, a rather inscrutable
woman. . . . Good for what?

LING MEI-AH

Good time to tell things I know
about Robert Lomax.

MARCO (SURPRISED)

Robert Lomax? How did Grace know
that I met Robert Lomax? I never
told her about my meeting him. I
thought she would think I was crazy
or something. That is the name
William Holden has in the Suzie
Wong movie. What can you tell me?

CLOSE-UP: LING MEI-AH

LING MEI-AH

What I will tell you has never been
told before. [she pauses and takes
a deep breath] Robert Lomax once
live in the Luk Kwok Hotel, in
Wanchai, the same hotel of Richard
Mason. I know this Robert Lomax a
long time.

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO (EXCITEDLY)

Then you must know who who he
really is . . . excuse me, I don't
mean to be . . .

TWO SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH

Dim, it is OK. I will tell you more. [Pause] After Japanese war Robert was art teacher in New Jersey America. Then his father commit suicide. His mother die one year later. He come to Hong Kong in 1956. Robert used to go to the Luk Kwok Hotel bar, where he meet Mason. They both hoping to find success in Hong Kong.

MARCO

So Robert might have been the model for Robert Lomax, Mason's character?

LING MEI-AH

No, Robert is not Robert Lomax. He is not even Robert, but he is called that for a long time.

MARCO

So what is his real name, if I may ask?

LING MEI-AH

His real name Arthur Lohman. His father was a Jewish man, and his mother was from *ngoi yi laan* . . . Ireland. He have one sister. Perhaps you do not wish to know all of this, Professor. But Grace say I should tell everything.

MARCO

Yes, please tell me all of it . . . as much as you care to tell me.

PULL BACK TO WIDE: FACING MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Flight attendant comes by with cart of drinks.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT [TO MARCO]

A beverage before the dinner service?

MARCO

Campari and orange juice, please.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT [TO LING MEI-AH]

Madam?

Ling Mei-ah waves her hand, signaling, "nothing".

(CONTINUED)

RETURN TO TWO SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

MARCO

I didn't know Robert, Arthur, had a sister.

LING MEI-AH

Fionna is Robert's sister. You met her, when you come to get Grace.

MARCO

Yes, Grace's mother. I could see the resemblance.

LING MEI-AH

They are both tall.

PULL BACK TO MED. WIDE: FACING MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

The flight attendant returns with Marco's drink

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

MARCO

I also noticed that there is some resemblance between Robert . . . I mean Arthur, and William Holden, at least the way Holden looked in his later years.

LING MEI-AH (SMILING)

Others think that, too. But I see Holden once when he was in Hong Kong to make that movie about Han Suyin, "Love is Many Splendored Thing." Robert is more better looking.

Marco smiles and takes a sip of his drink.

MARCO

What I am dying to know is did Robert do the painting for the Suzi Wong movie?

LING MEI-AH

Yes, Robert was recommended by Mason to do the paintings. . . And, then, because what happened . . .

Ling Mei-ah hesitates, frowns, swallows hard
they are not the paintings you see in the movie. Those paintings look

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH (cont'd)
like Robert's paintings, but they
are not his.

Ling Mei-ah's demeanor becomes even more serious and she looks directly into Marco's eyes.

Marco, Grace tell me that you are a man with a good heart, a true heart, and that I can trust you. She is good judge of people, but I must have your word now, from your own mouth that what I will tell you now you will not repeat to anyone, ever, unless Grace releases you from your promise. Will you promise?

MARCO
You have my most solemn promise.

LING MEI-AH
Then I can tell you. (pauses) Even before Robert meet Mason in the Luk Kwok bar Robert had been taking some girls from the bars to his room to use as models. It was not problem. He just pay them the same as for . . . you know.

She hesitates, instead just squeezes Marco's arm a couple of times.

But Robert found one girl who became very special to him, a girl who come from Shanghai.

MARCO
Did you know this girl?

LING MEI-AH
Yes, I know her. You know what they say about Shanghai girl's, don't you?

MARCO
Yes, of course, they are the most beautiful of Chinese girls. And let me venture a guess: this girl's name was Mee Ling.

LING MEI-AH
No, it was not. Mee Ling was the Chinese name Richard Mason gave to Suzie Wong, and the name Robert

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH (cont'd)
take for his gallery, as you know.
And now I see no reason to keep all
truth from you, professor.

Ling Mei-ah fixes her gaze on Marco, still holding his arm.
*I, Ling Mei-ah, am the Shanghai
girl, just maybe not so beautiful
now.*

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO
I have so much to ask you . . . so
much.

LING MEI-AH (RELEASING MARCO'S ARM)
Later, now I must leave you for a
while to return to my seat and take
some pills.

MARCO
But this flight might not be long
enough for all my questions.

LING MEI-AH
It will be, remember my horoscope.
No more talk now.

WIDE: FACING REAR OF PLANE

Marco watches her pad off back down the aisle.

CLOSE UP: MARCO

He turns back, pensive, then closes his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 INT. ROOM IN LUK KWOK HOTEL, WANCHAI [NIGHT] CA 1958;
FLASHBACK FROM TWOSW

WIDE: LOMAX PAINTING AND SUZIE POSING

DISSOLVE TO:

62 INT: 747 AIRLINER [1 HOUR LATER]

FADE UP TO CLOSE UP: MARCO

Marco awaking from nap, sniffing the air

PULL BACK TO TWO SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

LING MEI-AH

I hope that you do not mind smell
of White Flower. The man next to me
in my seat make complain about it.

She leans in closer to Marco and whispers
I tell him he is too fat and should
buy business class ticket for
bigger seat.

MARCO (RUBBING HIS EYES)

Actually, I like that aroma. Isn't
it supposed to be good for motion
sickness?

LING MEI-AH

I am not a good bird and not a good
fish.

She straightens up, takes a deep breath and looks straight
ahead. She remains quiet for a few moments.

MARCO

Are you feeling a little sick right
now, Mei-ah?

LING MEI-AH

A little . . . but more in heart
than stomach.

Marco gives her a questioning look.

LING MEI-AH

Do you remember what I ask you
before, and your promise?

MARCO

Yes, of course, you can trust me
not to forget it.

Mei-ah adjusts herself so that she is leaning over the arm
toward Marco. She checks to make certain that the young
Chinese guy to her left still had his headphones on. There
is plaintive look in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH (WHISPERING)
 Maybe you should send me away,
 Marco.

MARCO (SURPRISED)
 What? What are you talking about,
 Mei-ah. You can stay in this seat
 as long as you like.

LING MEI-AH
 I don't mean that, Marco. You have
 a nice woman, your Lily. She is
 educated, a good woman for you.

MARCO
 I agree, but what has that to do
 with this?

She moves closer and whispers.

LING MEI-AH
 Perhaps you would not want your
 Lily to find out you have been
 speaking with a bad woman.

Marco stifles a laugh, sensing that she is serious.
 Now that I have told you I was one
 of the *yum yum* girls at the Luk
 Kwok.

She again checks the guy sitting next to her.

Ayiiiah, Grace is going to be very
 upset with me.

MARCO (TENTATIVELY)
 Mei-ah, I have no such thoughts. I
 don't, I can't, think if you in
 that way.

LING MEI-AH
 I will understand if you do not
 want to be seen with me. I did not
 want to be such a girl, Marco, I
 want you to know. I was made to be
 . . .

MARCO (INTERRUPTING)
 Please, Mei-ah, there is no
 necessity for you to explain to me.

LING MEI-AH (GRABBING MARCO'S ARM)
But I want to tell you, Marco.
Things have change and I must get
pains out of my soul. I am an old
woman now, and too long I carry my
shame and sorrow. Grace says I must
say things to you, because you have
a good heart.

MARCO
I will listen. And I will keep your
confidence.

WIDE: FROM FORWARD OF AREA WHERE MARCO AND MEI-AH ARE SEATED
The meal cart arrives to their row.

LING MEI-AH
We will be Chinese. First we must
eat.

They eat in silence

FADE OUT

63 INT: 747 AIRLINER [20 MINUTES LATER]

WIDE: AREA IN FRONT OF MARCO'S AND LING MEI-AH'S SEATS, FADE
IN TO MEAL SERVICE BEING COLLECTED

When the dinner trays are removed Ling Mei-ah checks to see
if the Chinese boy still had his headphones on. As the cabin
lights and window shades are lowered for the inflight movie
she reclines her seat and invites Marco to do the same and
moves closer, their heads almost touching.

PULL IN TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

LING MEI-AH
You have promised me, Marco. I
trust you. So now I will tell you
my story. [Pauses and takes a deep
breath] When my father and I came
to Hong Kong in 1951 the waters
were very dangerous from Shanghai
to the South China Sea.

PULL IN TO CLOSE UP: LING MEI-AH

DISSOLVE TO

64 EXT. FRONT OF LARGE HOUSE, SHANGHAI, 1951 [DAY]

WIDE: DRIVEWAY IN FRONT OF HOUSE [SEPIA TINTED]

Man, carrying two suitcases and young girl with small suitcase leaving in car.

CUT TO

65 EXT. STEAMSHIP, SHANGHAI

MONTAGE: BRIEF SEGMENTS OF BOARDING STEAMER, AT SEA AND ARRIVING HONG KONG

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

My mother went away with Communist official a few months before we left. She choose the new way, not me. She was second wife of my father, whose family owned a large textile factory in Shanghai, but was taken over by the Communist Party. Big house, too. All gone now. When we left my father had not much money. I was ten years old when we come to Hong Kong. We stay for a year in a flat in Yau Ma Tei, and I went to school. I learn Cantonese very fast but only some English words. But my father was not lucky. He lose money in gambling and more went away in smoke in his dream pipe.

CUT TO

66 INT. SQUALID ROOM IN HONG KONG SQUATTER SETTLEMENT (1952)

Young Ling Mei-ah and her father sharing space with several other squatters.

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

We have no choice but to move to the squatter area at Shek Kip Mei. My father tried to work but his bad luck follow him there, too.

DISSOLVE TO

67 INT. 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY]

CLOSE UP: LING ME-AH

LING MAI-AH

Then the fire on Christmas Day in 1953 destroy everything. My father asked a woman that he knew if she could arrange for me to be a *mui-tsai* in the home of a good family. Maybe I can earn some money and help my father, then we can live together again in a clean house. I did not know then that I would never see him again. I was brought to the home of an English lady in Lyndhurst Terrace. It was my first time in Victoria city.

MARCO

Mui-tsai?

DISSOLVE TO

68 INT: HOUSE, LYNDHURST TERRACE, 1953 (DAY)

WIDE: LING-MEI AH, FATHER, AND MIDDLE AGED ENGLISH WOMAN (MRS. LAUGHTON)

The three are seated in a parlor. Woman speaking and, after a few moments, father is seen leaving.

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

Like much Chinese words there can be many meanings. It supposed to mean 'little sister,' a girl that is taken into a house to be a servant. But being a *mui-tsai* was often being a slave of someone who bought them from parents who could not care for them, and that usually mean they could be used for any purpose. British outlaw making of *mui-tsai* in 1930s but it is not easy to change the customs of the Chinese. They began to call the 'adopted daughters' and other names. . .

CUT TO

69 INT. ROOM IN LYNDHURST TERRACE HOUSE, ONE DAY LATER

WIDE: LING MEI-AH AND DR. ALVAREZ

Dr. Alvares is instructing Ling Mei-ah to remove her clothing. She resists. Alvarez approaches her and forces her down onto a table, pulling her clothes off her. Ling Mei-ah struggles, but Alvarez is a large, strong man. He unbuckles his belt and proceeds to rape Ling Mei-ah, slapping her face with force each time she struggles.

CUT TO

70 INT. PARLOR, LYNDHURST TERRACE HOUSE (DAYS LATER)

WIDE: LING MEI-AH AND THREE OTHER CHINESE GIRLS

The girls are sitting silently together, but not interacting. Mrs. Laughton brings two western men into the room and over to the girls. She is talking to the men and gesturing to the girls.

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

I learn what it means the third day I was there. The English lady brought a Portuguese doctor, Dr. Alvares, to examine my health. He make me not virgin. I was twelve years old. After that day I was one of four girls in the house that the English lady, Mrs. Laughton, used to give pleasures to her clients. Except for Dr. Alvares and one American, they were all Englishmen, men in business and civil service, some were policemen. Some wished to do strange things, to watch, or be beaten, but I will not need to tell you more about that. Mrs. Laughton told us that were special girls, not like the prostitutes who went with sailors to the Luk Kwok, or worse, the girls who had to trade their services to the Chinese workers at the ships and godowns on the waterfront.

DISSOLVE TO

71 INT. 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY]

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

LING MAI-AH

They were considered the lowest. Mrs. Laughton showed us pictures of women called 'courtesans,' who were like Japanese *geisha*, not prostitutes, but gave man pleasure in many ways. But her clients wanted young and fresh girls, especially with no disease--that was the job of Dr. Alvarez. Dr. Alvarez was evil man. All the girls fear him because he must cause pain to have his pleasure. He was sadist.

Marco gives only a slight smile at her apt mispronunciation.

MARCO

Is he dead now?

LING MEI-AH

Yes, but not in my mind. When Mrs. Laughton's house was closed by the authorities I thought he was gone from my life. We would have been sold, but it happened so quickly, and it was unlawful to sell us. I escape and go to Kowloon to try to find my father, but only to find a few people from Shek Kip Mei. They said that they heard he was dead, that he had swallowed a ball of opium, but another said that he might have returned to China. One family with a small farm near Sha Tin took me in for a few months, but the father began to want me for his pleasure and the wife told me she would cut my throat in my sleep if I did not leave. I was fifteen years by then and my Shanghai beauty was beginning to show. I am ashamed to say that I stole some of her jewelry. Not worth much, but I need it. I change my name on the Star Ferry to Hong Kong side. I was frightened to go back there, but I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH (cont'd)
 thought that no one would be
 looking for Su-mei Wong.

WIDE: AIRPLANE CABIN (SHAKING)

There is a sudden turbulence. Fasten seat belt sign comes on.

PULL IN TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH (STILL SHAKING)

Ling Mei-ah grabs Marco's wrist. She closes her eyes and Marco regards her profile as the turbulence continues.

FADE OUT AND FADE IN: WIDE SHOT OF AREA IN FRONT OF SEATS OF MARCO AND LING MEI-AH (NO LONGER SHAKING)

Area is full of people waiting for access to rest rooms. An elderly Chinese man says something in Chinese to Ling Mei-ah, but she reacts coolly to him and motions to him that a rest room is free. He leaves.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

MARCO
 An old friend?

LING MEI-AH
 No, he just think he is.

Ling Mei-ah dabbs White Flower on her temples
 I don't like when man thinks he
 knows me.

MARCO
 Oh, . . . I'm sorry.

LING MEI-AH
 No, not like that. Only lower
 girls go with Chinese men. But
 maybe he see me at Luk Kwok.

MARCO
 Can I ask you more about the Luk
 Kwok?

Ling Mei-ah stares into space.

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)
 Robert live near roof. Mason
 underneath Robert. They used to
 talk sometimes from the balconies
 and borrow cigarettes and coffee
 beans.

(CONTINUED)

DISSOLVE INTO

72 INT. ROOM LUK KWOK HOTEL, WANCHAI CA 1956 [DAY]

WIDE: LARGE ROOM, ROBERT AND RICHARD

Robert is painting at easel, pretty Chinese girl is modeling for him. Richard comes through the door and the two men fall into conversation, Robert offering coffee and Richard cigarettes.

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

Robert was living there before I came in the Luk Kwok bar, and also before Mason. I talk with him only a couple of times in the bar before he asked me to come and be model. I did not speak English well, but I was beginning to look like a Shanghai girl is supposed to look. Robert was very handsome and other girls were jealous of me, especially when I began to stay with him. I did not know what it was to feel love before then, but I knew something changed in me. I feel wonderful, and also terrible fear. I did not know any happiness in my life until then and I began to wish for things that a Chinese girl like me could not have.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 EXT: ROOF OF NAM KOK HOTEL, WANCHAI [DAY] CA 1958,
FLASHBACK: TWOSW [APPROX 5-7 SECONDS]

WIDE: SCENE OF SUZIE POSING ON ROOF OF NAM KOK

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. 747 AIRLINER [MOMENTS LATER]

CLOSE UP: LING MEI-AH

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

Robert wanted to be the only man for me. He did not sell many paintings, but he did illustrations for printers in Kowloon, and also

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH (V.O.) (cont'd)
 for some magazines and also some
 landscape paintings for people who
 live on peak. I stop going to bar
 and begin to work in a shop in
 Kowloon that made clothes for women
 for Chinese weddings. The
 proprietor, Mr. Fong, even let me
 borrow some dresses so I could
 model in them for Robert.

CLOSE-UP: MARCO

MARCO (EXCITEDLY)
 Is it you, then; the girl in the
 blue cheongsam?

LING MEI-AH
 That is why Robert would not sell
 you the painting. Do you understand
 now? I was just sixteen. It was a
 very special painting because it
 was the first painting Robert made
 of me after . . . after, the first
 time . . . the *first* time.

CLOSE UP: LING MEI-AH

She smiles a shy smile. Marco returns the smile, recalling
 that was the line Suzie said in the movie.

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO (SMILING)
 You can't blame me for wanting the
 painting, can you, Mei-ah? It was
 love at first sight for me,
 too. It's obvious the artist who
 painted it must have been in love
 with his model.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Ling Mei-ah takes Marco's hand in her's.

LING MEI-AH (EMOTIONALLY)
 Robert's painting keeps the best
 memory of my life. But I will keep
 some secret about how the painting
 was made . . . in a very special
 way. [Smiling] I must visit the
 restroom now.

PULL BACK TO INCLUDE ENTIRE AISLE

(CONTINUED)

She rises, smooths out her outfit and enters restroom. The seatmate on the aisle decides to do the same, leaving behind his seat a heap of wires, headphones, and various audio and visual delivery systems. The survivors from the *Jurassic Park* sequel are making a helicopter escape from the dreaded island. Marco checks his watch; they are halfway to their destination, sits back and tries to imagine Ling Mei-ah as the girl in the painting.

DISSOLVE TO THE PAINTING; DISSOLVE OUT OF PAINTING TO CLOSE UP OF LING MEI-AH

Ling Mei-ah about to reacquire her middle seat. She has brought a coffee for Marco.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

She hands the coffee to Marco

LING MEI-AH

You need *ga fe* so I can tell more.
 [Pause] That painting became very important to Robert. It was when Mason saw it that he suggest that Robert might be the painter for the movie. At that time they were making some of the scenes in London. Robert had many paintings, but he began to do some paintings for the movie. We were very happy. Robert was getting a chance to make his name and we were together. But gods become jealous when they see people who are too happy.

CLOSE UP: LING MEI-AH

Ling Mei-ah goes silent

LING MEI-AH

Then he come back into my life.

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO

He?

LING MEI-AH

Dr. Alvarez. I did not see him since I ran away from Mrs. Laughton's. Long time. But one day he was on the same Star Ferry as me from Wanchai to Tsim Sha Tsui.

(CONTINUED)

DISSOLVE TO

75 INT. STAR FERRY 1957 [DAY]

WIDE: STAR FERRY SEATS (FACING FORWARD)

Ling Mei-ah is seated (from the back) when a large man, Alvarez, takes a seat beside. Alarmed she tries to get up, but he pulls her back down. Alvarez is speaking into Ling Mei-ah's ear.

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

He said that he had been looking for me because he always thought I was a very special girl. Now he said I was a very special young woman. I said that I do not do those things any more, but he just laugh. I told him to leave me alone, that I do not want to see him again. Then he said I had no choice because Mrs. Laughton had sold me to him. I said that I am not for sale to anybody and I would tell then police. He just laughed more and said that he . . . I feel embarrassed to say, Alvarez say that he 'keeps half the cocks in the Police Department from falling off. They are not going to assist some little whore.' He laugh.

Ling Mei-ah gets up and bolts for the exit of the Star Ferry, rushing up the exit ramp.

LING MEI AH (V.O. CONT'D.)

So when we get off the Star Ferry I go into woman's room so he cannot follow me and stay there a long time. But he found out I am staying with Robert at the Luk Kwok.

DISSOLVE TO

76 INT: 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY]

TWO-SHOT: LING MEI-AH AND MARCO

Ling Mei-ah's mouth is almost touching Marco's ear.

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH

Now I must ask you one more promise, Marco. This most important promise to never tell.

MARCO

May I choke to death on my favorite food if I ever tell.

Ling Mei-ah leans back a little.

LING MEI-AH

Dr. Alvarez thought I was just a fun-time girl for Robert, so he went to see Robert when I was at work in Kowloon. He told Robert he would buy some of his paintings, but if he did not deliver me to Dr. Alvarez in Macao he would have someone 'destroy his property.' Robert was afraid Dr. Alvarez might cut my face. But Robert said nothing to me about Alvarez. Instead he asked Dr. Alvarez to come back to get the paintings and pay him and then Robert would deliver me to Alvarez in Macao. Alvarez said he was really only interested in the painting that you wanted, Marco.

MARCO

But Robert still has the painting.

LING MEI-AH

And me, also. I did not know any of this at the time. Robert had a friend, Chen Chi-wan, from Kowloon. Chen was a scene painter for Cantonese movies, but he wanted to be a real artist. He was taking lessons from Robert. But, you know, Marco, I think that Chen was also in love with Robert. I think Chen was a homosensual man. Robert always says that I am silly about his, but woman know when a man is funny that way. I think that Chen believe if he help Robert that maybe Robert will send me away. I think he have such a dream. [Pause] Now, I never tell anyone this before, even Grace. You

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH (cont'd)
cannot tell Grace, or gods will
choke you, remember?

MARCO
Not even Grace.

DISSOLVE TO

77 INT: HOTEL ROOM LUK KWOK HOTEL [1958] LATE EVENING (VISUAL
ONLY; V.O. OF LING MEI-AH

EXTREME WIDE: ROBERT'S ROOM; ROBERT, CHEN, ALVAREZ

Robert, Chen and Alvarez in Robert's room among many
paintings. Robert and Alvarez in animated discussion.

PULL IN TO MEDIUM WIDE: CHEN, ALVAREZ

Chen moves in and delivers a vicious blow with the hammer to
the head of Alvarez, who is talking with Robert, and Alvarez
crumples to the floor

LING MAI-AH (V.O.)
Robert never told me exact details
but he said Chen hit Dr. Alvarez in
back of his head with a
hammer. Chen had killed some
Japanese soldiers when he was in
resistance.

TRACKING SHOT: ROBERT, CHEN, ALVAREZ

Chen and Robert pull the body of Alvarez through the doorsay
and up the stairway.

DISSOLVE TO

78 EXT. LUK KWOK ROOF [NIGHT] MOMENTS LATER

EXTREME WIDE SHOT: ROOFTOP AND SURROUNDING BUILDINGS, CHEN
AND ROBERT; ALVAREZ PRONE

Chen and Robert drag Alvarez's body to the edge of the
roof. Chen looking over to see what is below. They take a
bottle of liquor, pour some in his mouth and more on his
clothing. Then, together, they roll Alvarez off the roof.

LING MAI-AH (V.O.)
They put liquor inside Dr. Alvarez
and take some of his clothes off
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MAI-AH (V.O.) (cont'd)
 and throw him off the roof on other
 side of building into alley. Robert
 told me that Chen was 'very cool,'
 like he is throwing away trash.
 They think that police will think
 Alvarez was drunk and fall off
 roof. Things like that happen at
 places like the Luk Kwok. Then all
 will be *hen hao*, no more Dr.
 Alvarez.

FADE OUT

79 INT: 747 AIRLINER [SAME DAY] MOMENTS LATER

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

MARCO (EXCITEDLY)
 Where were you when all this was
 happening?

LING MAI-AH
 Robert send me to the movies that
 night. I took the little boy of
 one of the girls who was my friend,
 Christine Chow. I even remember
 the movie; it was *Road to Bali*,
 funny American film. I use learn
 American way of speaking English.

MARCO
 I think knowing this makes me an
 accessory.

LING MEI-AH
 Accessory? What is . . .

MARCO (INTERRUPTING)
 No, nothing, really. Then what
 happened?

LING MEI-AH
 When I came back that night Robert
 was fast packing some things. He
 was very nervous and upset and said
 'we are leaving tonight, Chen is
 getting a boat to take us to
 Kowloon side.'

80 INT: LUK KWOK HOTEL, ROBERT'S ROOM [CA. 1958] NIGHT

WIDE: ROBERT, SU MEI WONG, CHEN

Robert and Chen rush about collecting and packing a few paintings and other belongings. Su Mei looks confused and unsure what to do. Robert speaks and gestures to her to hurry.

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

Robert said I should just take my important things, but I did not have anything important. I notice he wrapped up the picture you like so much, and his sketch books and paints. Other paintings he left. He gave me some money to put in my panties. I asked him why we were leaving and he said he would tell me when we are on the boat. I became frightened, but I was with Robert--he was my important thing.

DISSOLVE TO

81 EXT: GLOUSTER ROAD, WANCHAI, [CA 1958] NIGHT, MINUTES LATER

FADE UP TO TRACKING SHOT: ROBERT, SU MEI AND CHEN

In the dark streets they are carrying what items they could manage.

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

When we were in the street I asked Robert why we cannot take the Star Ferry. He say, "Because we can't, Su-mei. Now please just be quiet and keep moving! This was for you, Su-mei, so please obey me!" Then he stop for a moment and looked straight into my eyes. "Alvarez was here," he said, and my heart go into my stomach. Then we sneak down to the harbor. In those days the Luk Kwok was closer to the harbor.

They turn onto the Gloucester Road praya lined with work boats and lighted by ambient glow from waterfront buildings. They move as quickly as they can at the urging of Chen. Eventually, they arrive at a docked workboat and climb down into it, Chen handing down their belongings and boarding last.

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI-AH (V.O.)

When we were in the small workboat that smelled of oil Robert told me what happened.

DISSOLVE TO:

82 EXT. ALLEY BESIDE LUK KWOK HOTEL 1957 [NIGHT]

WIDE: PEOPLE, POLICE, ALVAREZ, ROBERT AND CHEN OFF TO SIDE

Alvarez is being tended to while lying awkwardly on an awning that is on top of some cartons. Curiosity seekers are looking on and being pushed back by police. Robert and Chen are trying to get a look at Alvarez without raising any suspicion.

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

Robert and Chen went down to the alley to be with the crowd because they want not look to be guilty to do such a thing. But when they got there they could see that Alvarez was not dead. He fall on the awning of a dried seafood stall and the sacks helped to break his fall. The Luk Kwok was not high like today; only six floors. Robert said that Dr. Alvarez looked right at him and said something in Portuguese and then he lost his consciousness. We did not know then that the back of Dr. Alvarez was broken and he was never able to walk again. But he was alive and he knew many policemen. So we have to run away. It is easy to find people in Hong Kong.

DISSOLVE TO

83 EXT: OPEN AREA OF SMALL BLUNT-NOSED WORKBOAT, VICTORIAL HARBOR, [NIGHT] MINUTES LATER

MED: ROBERT, SU MEI, CHEN AND PILOT IN WORKBOAT

Robert is holding Su Mei as Chen is speaking with the workboat pilot. Boat is pitching.

(CONTINUED)

LING MAI-AH (V.O.)

The water in harbor was very rough and I become sick and my stomach came up. Robert held me so I could do it over the side of the boat. He said he was sorry he made me sick, but I told him that it is Su-Mei Wong who I leave in the harbor and from now on to call me Ling Mei-ah because we are starting a new life.

FADE OUT

84 INT: 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY]

MED WIDE: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Ling Mei-ah settles back in her seat for a moment, looking pensive and a little tired. Then she hails a flight attendant and asks in Cantonese for some hot water. Suddenly she turns toward Marco.

LING MAI-AH

Then I think, *aiiiyyah*, where can I go? I have no passport, no papers. Robert have American passport and he could go back to America. We cannot go to China. I begin to think I might lose Robert, even after he risk his life to save me from Dr. Alvarez. I begin to think that the gods did not seem to have good favor for Ling Mei-ah. Maybe they laugh by giving me some happiness and then take it away.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

The flight attendant arrives with the gwan sui and Ling Mei-ah takes out a little squeeze pack of honey. She shows Marco the packet.

LING MEI-AH (SMILING)

From McDonald's pancake breakfast.

MARCO

What did you do?

LING MAI-AH

First we went to a small island near Sai Kung and live with some refugees from China for five days.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MAI-AH (cont'd)

But Chen thought of the one place we can be safe from Dr. Alvarez and the police--the Walled City. Chen knew powerful people inside the Walled City from resistance days against the Japanese. They were mostly drug dealers and controlled gambling, and Chen said they would give Robert protection. Chen had good *guanxi*, a Filipino friend who was involved in smuggling a lot of drugs from the Walled City to the Philippines. We were there for five years and two months and six days.

MARCO

I read about that place. Didn't they tear it down a few years ago?

LING MEI AH

Yes. So now you know why Robert is not the painter of the pictures in *The World of Suzie Wong*. There are some paintings, we think, in movie, but they are in background. Robert had left a note for Mason to take as many as he wanted, but we have learned that one was on the wall in the police station for several years. They are all signed 'Arthur Lohman'. Before we entered the Walled City we changed our names once again. I became Chang Mee-ling, and Robert became Joseph Turner. He named himself after his favorite English painter.

The cabin lights dim and another in-flight movie begins, *Independence Day*.

Marco, I would like to take little *xuxi* now. This story make me want to dream.

PULL BACK TO MED. WIDE: FACING MARCO'S AISLE IN NOW DARKENED CABIN

Ling Mei-ah is sound asleep, a slight wheeze issuing from her. In the darkened cabin the colors of their seatmate's computer game give her the appearance of a Fauvist painting. Marco gets up to stretch his legs, looking at the huge space aliens vanquishing some American city on the overhead monitor.

(CONTINUED)

REVERSE ANGLE: FACING FORWARD, INCLUDING OVERHEAD MONITOR AND (BUSINESS)MAN STANDING NEXT TO MARCO, BOTH LOOKING AT SCREEN IN SILHOUETTE

BUSINESSMAN

Think that's how it's all going to come to an end?

MARCO

Well quick is sometimes less painful.

BUSINESSMAN

We humans always seem to find a way to survive. [Pause] Been up in Shenzhen for six weeks.

MARCO

Business?

BUSINESSMAN

Yes . . . and a bit more. They'll make good Christians.

MARCO

Who?

BUSINESSMAN

Those girls at my factory. My company is not just giving them economic hope, but we're also introducing them to Jesus Christ. I've been holding Bible classes for them in their dormitories. I come three time a year.

MARCO

Uh huh.

Marco looks up at the earthlings battling the space aliens

BUSINESSMAN

But I've got a big problem. .
. I've fallen in love with one of the workers. It just happened. I swear, it just happened. She's so beautiful. God, I've got a wife and two wonderful kids I'm going home to in West Lafayette and all I can think of is when I'm going to see Ming again. I have thoughts of giving it all up and going back to China to live with her. She's all

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BUSINESSMAN (cont'd)
I can think about. I don't know
what I am going to do. My soul is
in torment.

MARCO
I'm sorry, I really should take
that restroom while it's free.

Marco heads for the restroom.

FADE OUT AND FADE IN TO MED WIDE: REVERSE ANGLE

Marco returns from the restroom to his seat beside Ling
Mei-ah

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

LING MAI-AH
Are you OK, Marco?

MARCO
I am fine. But I am curious about
the Walled City. I know it was
demolished not long ago. Can you
tell me what it was like?

LING MAI-AH
It was very crowded place, even for
Chinese people. We live with a
family who make rice noodles.

DISSOLVE TO:

85 INT: FLAT IN "WALLED CITY" [DAY] CA. 1958

WIDE: ROBERT, LING MEI-AH, FAMILY

Robert showing little girl sketches at table. Ling Mei-ah
helping parents with preparation of noodles.

LING MEI AH (V.O.)
They were very good people from
near Kunming. They have a boy and
a girl, both born in the Walled
City. The girl especially love
Robert because he would draw
pictures for her. Robert teach her
English, too. She is now art
teacher in Nanjing.

CUT TO:

86 EXT: ROOFTOP, "WALLED CITY" [DAY] CA. 1958

WIDE: ROBERT, LITTLE GIRL

Robert painting a easel

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

Robert made paintings during the day up on the roof of the building, where is just about only place there is much sunlight on the Walled City. He paint only landscapes and still life paintings, no people because someone might recognize his style of painting and come and find us. He signed them Joe Turner. Chen took these paintings to places to sell and we got some money. People from England liked them, not Chinese people. Robert gave one-third of money to Chen, one-third to the family and rest to buy more supplies for painting.

FADE OUT

87 INT: 747 AIRLINER

TWO SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

LING MEI-AH

Sometimes men try to put their hands on me when I deliver noodles, but I didn't tell Robert so there will be no trouble. It was hard for Robert but he said he never regret what he did to Dr. Alvarez.[Pause] Robert have a good heart . . .

Ling Mei-ah appears to choke up.

MARCO

How were you able to leave the Walled City?

LING MAI-AH

Chen came one day and said that Dr. Alvarez was dead. He know someone in the police department who said they were not looking anymore for

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MAI-AH (cont'd)
 who pushed him off the roof. We moved to the island of Peng Chau for a while to see if all was safe to go back to Hong Kong side. By then the Suzie Wong movie was made and many western people thought Hong Kong was all like Wanchai and all Hong Kong girls were sexy and beautiful like Kwan Ka Shen was in the movie. We did not see this movie for a long time because there was no videotape. Anyway, this movie was made for American people, not Hong Kong people. Richard Mason was gone. But Robert bought his book and read it to me. It was very strange to hear about the Luk Kwok . . . I mean Nam Kok, and things about Suzie Wong and other *yum yum* girls in Wanchai. But still Robert could not use his real name. This was when he began signing his name as Robert Lomax. Chen sell them until one day he had to go to his family farm in Guandong because of his father's death. We did not see him for a long time. I think reason Chen wanted to leave us was because I was going to have a baby.

MARCO (SURPRISED)

What baby!?

Marco almost shouts, turns sideways and stares straight into her eyes.

CLOSE UP: LING MEI-AH

LING MAI-AH

Baby that Robert and I make. Robert said that we have to get married. I think that is real reason why Chen wanted to leave. But the coming of the baby made me want to leave, too.

CLOSE UP: Marco

MARCO

Leave Hong Kong? For where?

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI AH

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH

America. I asked Robert if we can maybe go to America after we got married by the civil authorities. That became a big problem for us. I found out that he could get a new passport with some identity papers sent from there. If I was his wife I would be able to go with him. But Robert did not want to go. He said there is nothing for him in America and we had arguments about it. We almost did not get married.

MARCO

But why?

LING MAI-AH

I did not want my baby to be born where there were people who knew that I was--where I have been--a . . . a Wanchai bar girl. I had a terrible fear that someone would tell my child someday that 'your mother used to be a . . . a You understand, don't you? Once you have done that you are always . . . It was long, long ago, but I will always be Even the Jesus god cannot change my fate.

MARCO (EARNESTLY)

Please know that I do not think of you that way. I have only respect for you, Mei-ah. I only think of you as Grace's Auntie. Why should you feel unworthy?

LING MAI-AH

Because I am not Grace's auntie. *I am the mother of Grace.* Grace is my baby.

MARCO

But I thought Fionna was . . .

LING MAI-AH (INTERRUPTING)

No, Fionna is Grace's auntie, her blood auntie. She is Robert's sister.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (STUNNED)

Then Robert Lomax is . . . Grace's
father?

LING MEI AH

Yes.

Stunned, Marco takes a deep breath. (Pause)

MARCO

If Grace knew that I had discovered
Robert's gallery, why did she say
nothing about it to me?
We're friends. Why didn't she say
something to me?

Marco's tone carries some of the real disappointment he is
feeling.

LING MEI AH

Please don't have a bad feeling for
my Grace, Marco. She wanted to tell
you. Grace did not want to keep the
secret from you. It was for me that
she keep the secret.

CLOSE UP: MARCO (PENSIVE)

CUT TO

CLOSE UP: FLIGHT ATTENDANT

FLIGHT ATTENDANT [TO LING MEI-AH]
Chéung fán or Western omelet?

LING MEI AH (V.O.)
Omelet, and *Hèung pín cha*, *m'goy*.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT [TO MARCO]
Rice Noodles or the omelet, sir?

MARCO (V.O.)
Chéung fán, and *Hèung pín cha*,
m'goy.

The attendant gives a little nod and a hint of a smile.

TWO-SHOT: LING MEI-AH AND MARCO

Ling Mei-ah giggles when they are served their breakfasts.

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH

I eat American food and you eat Chinese food. Robert the same way. He always want to have *dim sum* when we went to America. I like McDonald.

Marco breaks open the packet for the chopsticks.

MARCO

So he did agree to go to America?

LING MEI AH

Yes, but he only did it for me and our baby. He was not happy. We came to California, to San Mateo, when Grace was four years old. Robert agree that it would be good for Grace to go to school in America. Also, nobody knows me in San Mateo, so I did not worry about . . . you know. But Robert could not paint there. He tried, but he said that he realized that Hong Kong and Hong Kong yan are his real inspiration. His American paintings did not have the . . . how you say . . . life, like his Hong Kong paintings. This became a big problem for him because painting mean so much to him. Robert got depression. I call to Fionna. Fionna came for a while. She even convince Robert to go to Chinatown in San Francisco, but that did not help. It made Robert even more depressed. He did not eat enough and start to sleep all the time. Fionna was worried because depression was a big problem in Robert's family. Not even Chinese doctors can help.

REVERSE ANGLE: FLIGHT ATTENDANT WITH TEAPOT

FLIGHT ATTENDANT [TO LING MEI-AH]

More Hèung pín cha?"

Both Ling Mei-ah and Marco take refills.

REVERSE ANGLE: MARCO AND LING MEI AH

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH

So I say to Robert that must go back Hong Kong. I am worried that he will die if he stay in California. I say that I love him and he is only man forever for me, but I wish him to be alive. I never see a *gweilo* man cry before. Until . . .

[Pause] Robert went back to Hong Kong with some money Fionna give him to rent the gallery that became the Mee Ling Gallery. We write letter to each other two times each week and talk on phone once every month. During the week I clean houses, and am waitress at a Chinese restaurant on the weekends, where Grace do her homework and write out new menu items to practice her characters. One patron offered me much more money to model for products in a Chinese magazine, but I refuse because . . . Still I earn enough to make down payment on a small house in San Mateo.

DISSOLVE TO:

88 INT: KAI TAK AIRPORT ARRIVAL LOUNGE [DAY] CA 1968

EXTREME WIDE SHOT: CROWDED ARRIVAL AREA

Young Grace and Ling Mei-ah come through door with other arriving passengers and Grace rushes to Robert.

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

Fionna send me two round-trip air tickets to Hong Kong each year at Grace's summer vacation. It is hottest and most unpleasant time of the year in Hong Kong, but we wait all year for it, and Grace would run through the arrival lounge calling "*Ba bá! Ba bá!*" and throw herself into her father's arms. She shout "*Wo ai ni,*" in Mandarin--she don't care who hears. She is still same. I would wait behind so nobody notice me.

CUT TO

89 INT. 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY]

CLOSE UP: LING MEI AH

LING MEI AH

But when Grace becomes older she start to ask questions about when I was her age in Hong Kong. I do not like to lie to her and say I work in dress shop. I could not be honest with my own daughter, who I love so much. But when I lie to her I think I will lose her, she will leave me. I am frightened all the time because she is such a smart girl, she will find out about her mother and then she will have another reason to throw me away.

TWO SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

MARCO

You certainly no longer feel that way, Mei-ah. Grace is no longer a girl, but an intelligent and strong woman. I can't imagine anything threatening her.

LING MEI AH

Some stains cannot be wash away, Marco. You must understand the reasons for my fear. First I worry for Robert because he is so kind to me and he loves me. I worry that when people find out he is with a Wanchai girl they will not buy his paintings and so he will want to send me away. I always say to Robert that he can send me away wants to, but he always says that I am the best model and it is cheaper to keep me than to pay for me to model. We laugh together, but I am still afraid. Maybe you don't know the English like Chinese yan know them. They are very prejudice people. They make Chinese girls do bad things and then they say that they are bad girls. Some used to call me "chink," and "chink bitch" when Then Grace came and my problems becomes double . . . but different. English people do not

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH (cont'd)
 like mixed people, Eurasian people.
 But I don't care about English for
 that; I care about how Chinese
 people think. Chinese people don't
 like Eurasian people either. The
 call such people *zazhong*, which
 means like hybrid.

MARCO (GENTLY)
Hybrid.

LING MEI AH
 Yes. Hybrid. It is not so bad when
 the father is a Chinese
 man. Chinese prefer the child to
 have a Chinese name. But when the
 father is a *gweilo* they do not like
 the child at all, especially if the
 child has a *gweilo* family name. We
 named Grace after the actress Grace
 Kelly. Robert thought she was the
 most beautiful movie star. I think
 it was Audrey Hepburn, but I let
 Robert choose the name. She was
 Grace Lohman until she was ready to
 go to the university. The she said
 to me 'Ma, I have decided to change
 my name, I have filled out the
 papers. I am going to call myself
 Grace *Loh man-nui*. Loh is a Chinese
 name but I made my name from my
 father's name. I think he will
 approve because it can mean Grace,
 Lohman's daughter.' I was very
 proud of my daughter because she is
 proud of being Chinese. Robert was
 happy, too.

MARCO
 She is as clever as she is
 beautiful, that Dr. Loh.

LING MEI AH
 Yes, but still I keep the lie,
 Marco. Grace still believe that her
 mother worked in a bridal dress
 shop that her father discover her
 mother there. [Pause] *Then one day
 comes Suzie Wong in my life.*

Marco straightens in his seat.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Suzie Wong!

LING MEI AH (STARING STRAIGHT AHEAD)

I never forget that day.

DISSOLVE TO:

90 INT. KITCHEN IN HOUSE IN SAN MATEO [DAY] CA. 1982

MED. WIDE: LING MEI-AH AND GRACE

Grace comes in the door, excited and tosses her backpack on the table, and begins "speaking" to her mother.

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

When Grace was freshman at Berkeley she went to Asian Film Festival and see *The World of Suzie Wong*. It make her want to learn more. My heart almost stop when she ask me, "Ma, have you ever seen a Nam Kok Hotel in Wanchai?" . .

TWO-SHOT: LING MEI-AH AND GRACE

Grace can see that her mother becomes very upset, nervous. She takes her gently by the shoulders and tries to make eye contact.

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

I thought Grace finally meet someone who know me from those Wanchai days. I think because I always have the thought this will happen one day this day finally come. I just begin to cry, cry very hard because I think that now Grace knows and she will not love her liar mother any more. But she keep saying, 'Ma, what is wrong, what is wrong. She was scared that I was sick, that something terrible happened.

Ling Mei-ah begins sobbing and speaking. Grace is alarmed. She takes her mother in her arms.

I say to her that I am so sorry that her mother was a girl like Suzie Wong, that I was just a very young girl with no family, no education, made no good for

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH (V.O.) (cont'd)
 wife. And now I am a mother who
 lied to her daughter. I cry and
 cry, I can't stop crying. I think
 she is now going to tell me she
 will go away. I say that I will
 understand if she will go away and
 she can say that her mother is dead
 when she meets a nice man to marry
 so she can pretend she is not the
 baby of a *yum yum* girl. I will go
 back to Hong Kong so he will not
 know I am alive.

Grace gets her mother to calm down and responds.
 But Grace says to me "Ma, I love
 you, I don't care about that, I
 don't want any other mother in the
 world, just you. You are staying
 with me. I don't care about that, I
 understand." My Grace is the best
 daughter of all time, Marco. She
 always give me respect and love.

FADE OUT

91 INT. 747 AIRLINER [MORNING, JULY 4, 1997]

FADE UP TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Marco takes Ling Mei-ah's hand in his

MARCO

She is a very special daughter,
 Mei-ah. I know that. She is like
 the sister I always wished I had.

Ling Mei-ah gives Marco a little frown

LING MEI AH

You can be her brother, Marco, she
 say same thing about you. But I
 want Grace to have a husband, to
 have babies before she get too
 old. If you are her brother, you
 should help with that, for goodness
 sake. I think there have been men
 who ask Grace to marry, but it is
 because of me that she accepts no
 one. She says, 'No, Ma, it's not
 that, it's because I love my work
 too much, too busy to have a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH (cont'd)
 husband and babies.' But I think
 this is what she tells
 herself. This is why I pretend to
 be her Auntie. When you come to
 get Grace in Hong Kong I become her
 Auntie. *I am still afraid that my
 life will spoil her life,*
 Marco. And now you know, Marco,
 why I am telling this story to
 you. Because Grace said to me that
 I must tell you, that you would
 keep the secret, but that you tell
 me that I will not spoil Grace's
 life. That is why I have told you
 things I keep inside for so
 long. I want to know what you
 think, Marco.

Marco takes hold of Ling Mei-ah's hands

MARCO

I think that Grace is who she is
 because of who you are, Mei-ah, not
 in spite of what you had to do to
 survive many years ago. And also
 because of Robert, too. She knows
 that it mattered more to Robert
 what kind of a person you were, not
 what life forced on you. She is the
 combination of two fine people. She
 was able to see the love between
 you even when there were such
 difficulties in keeping it. She
 sees the sacrifices that you both
 have had to make. You shouldn't
 worry about Grace any more, Mei-ah;
 Grace will be fine because you have
 done your part well.

LING MEI AH

Thank you for saying that Marco.
 But you didn't tell me if you would
 marry Grace.

MARCO

I love Grace. But it would not work
 to marry her, because I really do
 love her like a sister. She feels
 the same kind of love for me, she
 told me.

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH

Then how can I be really sure that you do not say this just to make me think Grace's mother is not a problem?

MARCO

Because, Mei-ah, if Grace did not think of me as a brother, if I had not promised my heart to Lily, and if you were not already married to Robert, I would ask you to marry me in a minute.

Mei-ah stretches up toward Marco and gives him the softest kiss on his cheek.

MARCO (SMILING)

Does that mean you accept?

LING MEI AH

You talk silly. No talk anymore now.

Ling Mei-ah smiles, puts a couple of dabs of White Flower on her temples, and closes her eyes.

FADE OUT

92 EXT: B ROLL OF CATHAY PACIFIC 747 [MORNING] NEXT DAY

EXTREME LONG: AIRLINER

DISSOLVE TO:

93 INT. 747 AIRLINER [MOMENTS LATER]

WIDE: FORWARD FROM REAR OF ECONOMY CABIN

All passengers lurch slightly with the slowing of air speed, followed by the little "ding" and the flight attendant announcement.

FLIGHT OFFICER (V.O.)

Good morning ladies and gentleman.
We have started our approach to San Francisco International.

Window shades begin to slide up and sunlight streams into the cabin. People rub their eyes and the cabin reveals itself to look like the mess of a teenage slumber party. The

(CONTINUED)

aisle seatmate of Marco and Ling Mei-ah is asleep, headphones still clamped on, head back and mouth agape, laptop batteries spent.

When Marco looks over at Ling Mei-ah her eyes are shut, but there is the trace of a dried tear that had run down her cheek to the corner of her mouth. Ling Mei-Ah opens her eyes, but just stares ahead for a minute as though she might be viewing the last part of a dream. She sees that Marco is awake and lost in thought.

LING MEI AH

Marco, you have been such a good boy. Are you thinking about your Lily now?

MARCO (SMILING)

Not exactly. I'm thinking how your life must have resulted in a fictional story that might come to bear on me and Lily. Yet there was still much that I do not know. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

94 EXT: CONNAUGHT ROAD [DAY] CA. 1959

CLOSING SCENE FROM TWOSW

Robert and Suzie walking hand in hand as credits come up.

MARCO (V.O.)

Could the relationship between Arthur Lohman and Ling Mei-ah, as he knew them, been the reason that Mason decided to create the hope that the love between Robert and Suzie just might last?

FADE OUT

95 INT. 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY]

FADE UP TO TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

MARCO

No one can ever be certain. But you, Ling Mei-ah, have more claim to being the real Suzie Wong than anybody, to being a Wanchai bar girl who refused to give up on a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (cont'd)
 dream of real love. Heck, a
 professor and a librarian ought to
 be able to make it.

LING MEI AH (VULNERABLE)
 Marco, will you make me one more
 promise? Will you come and see me.
 Can you come if I need you?

MARCO
 Of course, Mei-ah, anytime,
 anytime.

There is a long silence.

CLOSE UP: LING MEI-AH

LING MEI AH
 Marco, . . . *I think that Robert
 is dying.*

The plane shudders a little just at that moment and Marco
 feels a bit queasy.

CLOSE UP: MARCO

MARCO (STAMMERING)
 What? . . . How? . . . What's
 wrong?

CLOSE UP: LING MEI AH

LING MEI AH
 That is why you could not find him
 when the gallery was closed, Marco.
 I saw you one time when you came
 there. I was watching you from the
 curtains upstairs.

TWO-SHOT: LING MEI AH AND MARCO
 Robert began to have some problems
 with his memory about three years
 ago. First we thought he was
 getting Alzheimer's. [She
 pronounced zh in Alzheimer's the
 way it would be pronounced in
 Mandarin.] But the doctor discover
 that he was having some little
 strokes, not Alzheimer's. But
 still we become scared. That is
 why Grace apply for the Fulbright
 Fellowship, so we can be in Hong

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LING MEI AH (cont'd)

Kong and see what can be done. Then, while we were there he had a bigger stroke and he is in Queen Mary Hospital now.

MARCO

But you are coming back to California now. Is he recovering?

LING MEI AH

Yes, a little. His talk is still funny, and one arm does not work good, but not the one for painting. I thank gods for that. Grace is still with him and she knows how to talk to Western doctors better than me. I don't want to leave but we need the money from the exhibition of Robert's paintings. Grace must stay because of her fellowship, so Robert says I must come to San Francisco to bring paintings and be at the opening. Then I will go back Hong Kong. I am scared Robert might die, Marco, I even pray every day to the Jesus god, and to Kwan Yin.

Marco is about to take her in his arms, but two flight attendants were just belting themselves into the jump seats directly across from them.

Reverse angle: two flight attendants being seated

REVERSE ANGELE: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Marco digs into in his carry on.

MARCO

Here are two of my visiting cards, Mei-ah. You call me when you need anything. If you need help with the exhibition, too. And I will be there at the opening.

Marco hands her the cards in the formal Asian fashion, with both hands, name facing her. She smiles when she takes them, but her eyes are watery.

Don't worry, Mei-ah. People have full recovery from strokes these days. It just takes some time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARCO (cont'd)

There are new medicines that can help prevent recurrent strokes. And Grace is there. She is so smart and will see that her father gets the best care. I am sure of it.

Ling Mei ah takes Marco's hands in hers.

LING MEI AH (SOTTO VOCE)

You are a good boy to say that, Marco. One good thing I learn from when I had to do bad things. I learn how to tell the truth from the lie. Now I will tell you one more thing because this plane wants to land and rest after fly so long. I buy a place in the cemetery for Robert and me. It is a place, in Siu Sai Wan, with good *feng shui*; we can watch the sea together. I did not even tell Grace yet, but this time I will go back to Hong Kong to be with Robert forever. If he dies first I will go to cemetery to visit him until I stay there, too. I tell you this because now my Grace is a strong woman who never had to do bad things to live, like her mother. She can take care of herself, maybe get a good husband, like Robert. And now she has a brother, and I am not so afraid anymore.

Ling Mei-ah pats Marco's hand, sit back in her seat and dabs her eyes with a tissue. The flight attendants stare in wonder.

DISSOLVE TO:

96 EXT: B ROLL OF CATHAY PACIFIC 747

EXTREME LONG: PLANE DECENDING OVER CITY

DISSOLVE TO

97 INT. 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY]

CLOSE UP: MARCO

Marco's eyes are closed as he drifts into a memory of a previous landing at SFO

CUT TO

98 INT. JET WAY, SFO, 1969 [DAY]

WIDE: MARCO (IN MILITARY UNIFORM) AND TWO MARINES (IN UNIFORM) AND OTHER PASSENGERS.

Marco and two Marines he has met on the flight are exiting an airliner after their tour in Vietnam. They are smiling as they pass through the jetway and enter a crowded and noisy boarding lounge. There are signs with names on them, welcome signs. There are also some anti-war protesters on one side, yelling and taunting. Marco and the Marines rush to get through the throng.

WIDE: PROTESTERS

Protesters yelling epithets and taunts. Some holding peace signs, some throwing wads of paper.

PROTESTERS

Napalmed any villages lately! How many kills did you get, soldier? Keeping America safe from those commies? Murderers!

WIDE SHOT: FOLLOWING MARCO AND MARINES

MARCO

Nice reception committee.

MARINE

Fuck these assholes. Let's get through this before I get pissed off.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND YOUNG MAN

A tall, skinny, with long haired young man steps brazenly steps in front of Marco, blocking him.

YOUNG MAN

You ought be ashamed of yourself. What did the Vietnamese ever do to you?

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Find another way to impress your girlfriend, sonny; I'm tired.

Young man spits on Marco's name patch. Marco takes a step back and then delivers a vicious *muy thai* kick to the young man's liver. The young man emits a loud groan and crumples to floor appearing to lose consciousness. The girl who was beside the young man screams, calls Marco a "bastard" and kneels beside the young man. Other protesters are angry and yelling and Marco and the Marines. One of the Marines grabs Marco's arm, pulling him along.

MARINE

We better haul ass, *bac-si*, or we're gonna be doing some brig time.

OTHER MARINE

Man, you really sat that motherfucker down, doc. Nice kick.

Marco holds up and looks down at the young man. The girl glares up at him. But the other protesters have quieted down.

GIRL

You fucking war-mongering . . .

MARCO

Sorry! Forgot I had my boots on. Maybe I busted a rib or two. [to the Marines] Hold on a second, guys . . .

Marco reaches into his medical bag that was his "carry on," pulls out an ampoule of amyl nitrate, snaps it, and hands it to the girl beside the young man.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Wave this under his nose.

The girl accepts the ampoule, but hesitates.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Go ahead, wave it under his nose. He'll come around.

MARINE

We gotta go doc. We gotta go.

Marines are pulling at Marco. Marco looks back. The girl has the ampoule under the young man's nose. Marco yells back to her.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

Not too much, girlie, . . . that
stuff gives some guys a helluva
hard-on . . .

Marco and the Marines disappear into the airport crowd.

DISSOLVE TO

99 INT. 747 AIRLINER [IMMEDIATELY

CLOSE UP: MARCO (OPENING EYES)

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Good Morning Ladies and Gentleman,
this is your captain speaking.
Myself, Second Officer Martin, and
our flight crew want to thank your
for flying with us. We hope that we
made it pleasant enough for you to
chose to travel with us again.
Remember that it was our airline
that gave you not one, but two July
4ths.

MARCO (V.O. MUMBLED)

Wonder if your horoscope accounted
for the Interntional Date Line?

LING MEI AH

What did you say?

MARCO

Oh, I was just asking if I can hold
your hand for the landing.

FADE OUT

100 INT: MARCO'S HOME [DAY] A FEW DAYS LATER

MEDIUM CLOSE UP: MARCO

Marco is in is home sifting through a pile of mail. He
catches sight of a blue envelope with a childish small
drawing of a tiger in the corner, and the Hong Kong stamps
opposite. It is from Millie. He opens it. In careful,
printed letters she has written:

MILLIE (V.O.)

Dear Marco, I miss you very much.
Please come back to Hong Kong very
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MILLIE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 soon. I need you to teach me how to
 write better English. Mommy says
 she misses you very much, too. She
 wears her lily all the time, and
 won't let me play with it. I study
 very hard at school so I can come
 to a university in San Francisco.
 Then I can see you every day. Mommy
 could come, too. Would you like
 that? Please write me a letter soon
 and say yes. Love, Millie

Marco smiles and moves over to his computer to check his
 email. He scrolls to an email from Grace:

CLOSE UP: COMPUTER (MARCO'S FACE REFELCTED IN SCREEN)

GRACE (TEXT)
 Hi Polo, Just hung up from a phone
 call with Ma. We didn't want you to
 get bored on your long flight home,
 so we decided to have her tell you
 a little story. Sorry I could not
 be as forthcoming as I would have
 liked to be, but now I think you
 will understand. Your favorite
 painter is doing a little better
 and offers the same apology. Please
 don't be upset with us; when it
 comes to families we're not exactly
 the Cleavers. Look in on your new
 'Auntie" will ya?" Hope to see you
 soon. Thanks. Con Amore, Gracie.

Marco leans back in his office chair, a satisfied look on
 his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

101 INT. SFO ARRIVAL TERMINAL [DAY] A FEW DAYS EARLIER

WIDE TRACKING: INTERIOR OF TERMINAL, MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Marco and Ling Mei-ah pull their luggage along. Among the
 greeters is a Chinese man holding a sign with her name in
 Chinese characters.

LING MEI AH
 Here is man from gallery, Marco, I
 must go with him to customs for
 Robert's paintings. You must come
 to, Marco.

(CONTINUED)

MARCO

OK.

CUT TO

102 SFO CUSTOMS AREA [MOMENTS LATER]

WIDE: MAN FROM GALLERY, MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Man from gallery is loading boxed paintings onto cart. Ling Mei-ah selects one of the paintings that is wrapped in cardboard, and sits with Marco on a nearby bench.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Mei-ah hands Marco the cardboard package secured with twine.

LING MEI-AH

You open now. OK?

MARCO

This is for me?

Ling Mei-ah nods, with a slight smile. Marco slowly unwraps the package, pulling away the bubble wrap and exposes the first glimpse at a corner of picture. He sucks in his breath.

CLOSE UP: MARCO AND PICTURE

MARCO

It can't be!

LING MEI AH (V.O.)

Open more.

Marco obeys and sees the now familiar silver and powder blue cheongsam and the design on the sinuous curves from leg to hips, to waist, the same background, same dress, same pose. Then exclaims . . .

MARCO

It's *Lily*! How . . . when?
[Pause] I don't know what to say.

PULL BACK TO TWO SHOT: MARCO AND LING MEI-AH

Ling Mei-ah hands an envelope to Marco

LING MEI AH

Here, read letter.

Marco opens the letter.

(CONTINUED)

FADE OUT

103 INT: MARCO'S HOME [DAY] A FEW DAYS LATER

CLOSE UP: MARCO

Holding note. Walks over to the picture on his wall.

TWO-SHOT: MARCO AND PICTURE

CLOSE UP: NOTE

ROBERT [TEXT]

"Marco, I could give you everything you wanted, except my girl, but I think the stand-in will please you very much. Actually, it was Lily's idea. I don't know whether you have answers to all your questions. Sometimes there are not enough facts to get at all the truth. I guess that's where imagination comes in and life seems to imitate art. Remember, the painting is not for sale. Best Regards, Robert"

PULL IN TO CLOSE UP OF PAINTING AND HOLD

FADE OUT, MUSIC IN AND ROLL CREDITS

END