

MAHAL KITA

A PLAY BY QUINN REYNOLDS

DEDICATED TO BILL, MERCEDES, AND ANGUS REYNOLDS

THE STAGE:

There are two sections to the stage. The top section is Lola's room. A dilapidated apartment connected to a residential home. In this room is a window, a wheelchair, pictures of family, a large four poster bed with archaic linens, and a television. Creeping down from this room are vines and plants that consume the bottom section of the stage. This part of the stage was once a home. There's a desk on one side and a table on the other with some chairs where they need to be.

SACKS:

Certain characters will wear sacks over their heads during the play. These should be made of white sheets of canvas or linen. They should have eye holes or translucent segments so that actors can see through them. The Sack worn by BUBBLES Has a huge smile and dog ears painted on the front with a yellow sun on the back. The Sack Worn by THAT MAN should have a handsome and heroic face with a US flag on the back. The sack worn by THAT WOMAN should have a sneering and sexual face with a Japanese red sun on the back. The sack worn intermittently by STRANGER is blank.

ISSHIN-RYU KARATE AND AIKIDO

These are two martial forms of Japanese origin. The choreographer of this play should draw from these when structuring dances and fights.

A NOTE ON DIALOGUE

There will be instances of both *Blue Lines* and **Red Lines**. Both types of lines should be pre recorded and broadcast over a PA system during the play. Actors will then lip-sync along with them. *Blue Lines should be stylized to sound as if they're from an old musical or TV show from the 60s.* **Red lines are cutting and visceral audio clips. They can cut off or interrupt blue lines or even be played simultaneously.**

A NOTE ON ACTORS

Lola, Mahalia, Lex, and Happy should be played by Filipino actors.

CHARACTERS

LOLA

An 84-year-old Woman. She is from the Philippines and speaks with an accent made worse by her lack of teeth. She has not walked in years. She stays in bed or uses a wheelchair. She never leaves her room. Her mind is gone. She loves her family and her life.

MAHALIA

A young Filipino woman. Long wavy black hair. Her beauty is incomparable. She sings, dances and moves with grace. She is stronger than any man and smart as a whip. Her will is iron.

LEX/STRANGER

A 50-year-old man. Half Filipino, half other. Sturdy constitution. Speaks concisely.

SUSAN

A 47-year-old woman. Very white. Looks half her age. She is never the one to sower the mood. She keeps strength behind a smile.

BUBBLES / HAPPY [LEX, YOUNG]

A Shih-Poo puppy played by a half asian boy. / Lola's son when he was young.

THAT MAN [HEKTOR]

A soldier. He's seen the world and isn't satisfied. He has a sack over his head.

THAT WOMAN / HELEN

An evil Japanese woman with a sack over her head. / Lex's half sister. Bold and curious.

ACT I

When I was small, my father would tell me stories of his life. Tales of surviving against all odds. Seeing wondrous sights and meeting remarkable people. And he'd tell me the stories his mom told him. Stories of the world, and the war, and the Philippines. These stories, more than anything, reassured me that life was a journey worth going on. I heard them again and again until I could recite them verbatim. They were only stories though.

Scene 1

Lex is alone. He's lost in a memory.

Mahalia and Happy are spending a day in the garden. Mahalia takes some seeds from a bag and sprinkles them onto the earth. She takes Happy's hands and together they sow the seeds into the ground.

Away from everyone, That Man sits at the desk with his back to the world.

MAHALIA

Mahal Kita. Ma - Hal - Ki - Ta. Mahal Kita. Ok?

HAPPY

Mahal Ki-ta.

MAHLIA

Very good. That's excellent!

HAPPY

Mahal Kita...

MAHALIA

Now, Do you know what that means? That means. I Love You. And I do. I Love You more than anything in the world. You are my only Son, Alexander, and my one love. You know this.

She embraces her son. She holds him tightly.

Lola enters in a wheelchair. She is unconscious. Susan pushes her forward.

SUSAN

Lex?

It's hard for Lex to come back to the present.

LEX

Yeah?

SUSAN

We should get her up before she wakes. You know how she gets.

LEX

Right. Yes.

Lex just stands there expectantly.

LEX

Well...

SUSAN

Honey, you're gonna have to get more used to this.

LEX

I know. You're right, but for me it's... It's. You're the professional.

SUSAN

Fine. Ok. Well, it'll be easier if we take her up in the chair. You take the handles, I'll manage her in the front. Ok? Ok.

Lex goes to Lola in the chair. He's not quite sure how to do this. He curls his fingers around the handles slowly.

Susan goes to the front of the chair. They bring her to the stairs and begin the journey up to her room.

HAPPY

Mahal Kita... Will you teach me more words?

MAHALIA

No. When you are older, I will teach you, about my home and my life, and by then you will know how lucky you are to have grown up this way. Right now, we are Americans. That's the luckiest thing you can be, you know.

HAPPY

Ok.

Upstairs, Lex and Susan put Lola in bed.
They tuck her sheets in and make sure she's
comfortable.

HAPPY

Mom?

MAHALIA

Yes my son?

HAPPY

What happened to dad? Where is he?

Helen enters carrying a cardboard box full
of old papers and pictures.

HELEN

Dad?

Hello??

Ground control to Major Hektor. I need to know if this stuff is yours or moms.

THAT MAN

...

HELEN

Right.

Helen goes through the box's contents.

MAHALIA

Your father is... He's not here. You don't need to think about him. I am
everything you need.

Helen removes an old photo from the box.
She stares at it.

HELEN

“Mahalia and Alexander?”

Oh my god.

It’s them isn’t it?

Lola is now resting in bed. Susan makes sure everything is in order before exiting.

SUSAN

Ok then... Lex, why don’t you put something on for when she wakes up?

Lex picks up the TV remote and turns it on. *The King and I* is playing on TCM. The song “Getting to know you” is just about to start.

HELEN

Who are they. Who are they?

Helen quickly becomes frustrated, then leaves.

That Man puts on a sack. Then Stands. He goes toward Mahalia and Happy. Happy starts to go to him, but Mahalia holds him back. She approaches him. Lex watches from above.

The music begins. Mahalia and That Man dance. It’s a charged sort of waltz with pacific and hispanic flares. However, it quickly evolves into a close quarters dance/fight. Punches blocks and grabs flow seamlessly into the dance.

Happy comes between them, interrupting their battle. His father scoops him up and places him by his side. He shows him how

to punch and kick. That man turns him back to his mother.

Mahalia scoops up her son and takes him back to be with her. She tries dancing with him, but he seems unfamiliar with what he should do.

That Man goes to help but Mahalia Snaps and pushes him away. He falls to the floor. The music skips like a record and begins to distort.

Mahalia is embarrassed by what she's done. She tries to take Happy away with her but he pulls his arm back.

Lex comes down stairs. He looks at his younger self. At the same time, they put on their masks.

Happy transforms into the small dog, Bubbles. Lex becomes a Stranger and exits.

Lola wakes up. Mahalia exits.

Bubbles remains on stage, alone.

Scene 2

The song from the previous scene ends and the movie continues on, now at a painfully high volume. Lola continues singing the broken loop. It's cacophonous.

LOLA

Geting to Knoowww. Getting to Knooww you . Getting to knowallabout you. Getting. I Like. Getting to. LIKE you. JUST MY cup of Teaaa... OHa. Yaaa a daaa....

Downstairs, Susan enters. Bubbles, who's been sitting on the floor waiting for her, bounds over to her and hugs her legs.

SUSAN

Heyyy, boy! Ok. Ok. That's enough.

She pries him off of her legs. He sits by her side.

LOLA

La da ba yah! Ah. AAAAAAH. AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH.
AAAAAAA!

Lola's singing devolves into screaming, but not in pain. Just screaming because she can. Susan hears this and goes into response mode. She grabs a first aid kit from a cabinet.

She rushes upstairs.

SUSAN

LOLA! LOLA?

Lola smiles with 7 teeth.

LOLA

Oh, Hello.

SUSAN

IS EVERYTHING OKAY? (nothing) LOLA? CAN YOU TURN DOWN THE VOLUME? (Nothing) WHERE IS THE REMOTE??

LOLA

I godit.

She turns over her sheets looking for the remote. After a while, she finds it. She presses every button until the TV turns off.

LOLA

Hello, Susan. You look wonderful!

SUSAN

Well, thanks, Lola.

LOLA

Do you want something? I have clementine. Somewhere.

SUSAN

I mean, Um. Weren't you just screaming?

LOLA

Oh, nooo. I was SINGING. I love to sing.

SUSAN

(Giggling)

Ohhhh, you were singing!

Lola Points at Bubbles, who's smelling the floor.

LOLA

Who is that?

SUSAN

Oh! Well, you know. Because all the kids are moved out and so. We just thought, Lex and I, that we would like to have a dog around.

She picks Bubbles up by the shoulders and presents him to Lola

SUSAN

This is Bubbles. Say Hi!

LOLA

Oh Wowwww!

Susan puts him back down.

SUSAN

It's helped. A bit at least. Cause we used-- Well, I'm used to being so- Anyway. Are you sure you're alright? The doctor said that for the rest of the day you might-

LOLA

I'd like to be in my chair now.

SUSAN

Oh. Yes. Ok.

Susan moves the wheelchair to Lola's bed. She helps her into it. Lola cooperates, but not well, and winces and shouts frequently.

LOLA

I shout. When I sing - You know... AY... Because - AH - The PASSION. You know-- OOh - I SHOUT To Stay strong. ~~- You Know. Because I am like this now. I know I am alive. I exercise my arms too.

Now in the chair, Lola lifts up a soft arm and curls her bicep.

SUSAN

Oh, now that's very good! I bet you could lift me up if you tried.

Lola wheels herself to the window.

LOLA

No. no nooo... Where are my tomatoes? Did the groundhog get at them again?

SUSAN

Oh. Well... It's fall now. Maybe they'll come next spring.

LOLA

I don't know where they've gone to... I don't know where anything is anymore. I don't know where I am! (Cackles) Where is my son. Where is my Happy boy?

SUSAN

-I - Um. You know how he is. He's very busy. I'm sure he'll visit when he gets back.

LOLA

Alright then. Does he know that I'll be dead soon? I'm dying you know.

This touches a nerve for Susan. Though she's heard it before, she forces herself back into a state of positivity.

SUSAN

Oh! Now. Don't say that! You're so strong remember?

LOLA

Yes, but soon I will die. That's how it goes! (Cackles) I thought maybe I might see him last night. Oh well, I guess.
I think I'll have my birthday today.

SUSAN

What? Today?

LOLA

Yes. Today is good. That doctor. He said I will live a while longer. I don't know about that. I'm healthy now. So it is a good time for a birthday.

SUSAN

Well, Happy Birthday! How about I go get a cake?

LOLA

Yes that sounds good.

And My son will be here?

SUSAN

Of course!

Okay. I'm going to go now. Do you have everything you need?

LOLA

Yes. You can go now.

Susan leaves, she goes down the stairs and into the kitchen. She breathes at nothing for a moment. She sits down.

Lola wheels to the door and closes it.

BUBBLES

Oh. Um. Actually, could you open that? I think I'm supposed to follow her.

Lola is confused, but only for a moment.

LOLA

Who is that?

BUBBLES

Um. Me. I think.

LOLA

And who are you?

BUBBLES

Oh. That's a tough one...

LOLA

Oh. I see you now.

Lola changes, reinvigorated.

LOLA

I am glad you are here. We can spend time together now. Right? It is my birthday after all.

She grabs the remote as she points at the TV.
She's trying to turn up the volume but can't
make it work.

LOLA

Do you like movies? I love Julie Andrews. This is my favorite. The King and I.
We can watch together ok? ... I can't get it.

BUBBLES

So what's your deal lady?

LOLA

My. deal?

BUBBLES

Yeah, are you just really tired or what?

LOLA

I'm old. You see. I'm OLD!

BUBBLES

OOhhh. Me too. I'm pretty old.

LOLA

I am 84 years old. Eighty Four. That's how old I am. How old are you?

BUBBLES

84.

LOLA

Oh Wowww... Then you are old enough now, I guess.
Do you still want to know?

BUBBLES

Yes! I don't know anything!

On the stage below, It is 1957. Mahalia enters carrying a basket of fruit.

Bubbles sits down in front of Lola.

LOLA

Then I will tell you.
I was going to University in Manilla then. I studied medicine. Nursing. But I worked hard too. I always worked hard.

Susan buys some fruit from Mahalia before heading off stage.

That Man enters. Wearing his sack.

LOLA

He was a soldier when we met. An officer in the Marine Corps of the United States of American Military. He was, you know. So very handsome back then.

LOLA

And I was beautiful then too. Can you believe it! And I was so so young.

THAT MAN walks up to MAHALIA.

THAT MAN

Excuse me Ma'am.

MAHALIA Looks at him. He begins to speak like an American in another country. Slowly and Loudly.

THAT MAN

HELLO. I AM AN A-MER-I-CAN SOLDIER. COULD I HAVE SOME FRUIT?

He points. To the fruit. She gives him a Mango. He pockets it.

THAT MAN

*THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL YOU KNOW.*

MAHALIA

I know. But thank you. Your english is coming along great, by the way. I bet that soon it will be as good as mine.

THAT MAN

Oh. I'm sorry. I thought that, I just...

MAHALIA

Assumed I couldn't speak english, that I hadn't gone to college?

THAT MAN

I'm sorry, I was being stupid.

MAHALIA

It's okay. If I saw myself on the street, I'd assume I was just another poor farm girl who's never seen anything beyond my island.

THAT MAN

Well, now I know that's not true at all.

MAHALIA

*It is, though.
But I'll forgive you.*

So tell me, Why are so many Americans here in Manilla all the sudden?

THAT MAN

Well, there's another war coming, haven't you heard?

MAHALIA

There's always a war.

THAT MAN

It's not a life for a woman.

MAHALIA

Says who?

THAT MAN

Well, come on, you don't want that.

MAHALIA

Maybe I do. Maybe I don't.

THAT MAN

Then leave.

MAHALIA

Maybe I will. How about I come with you?

THAT MAN

I'm a soldier.

MAHALIA

*And I can fight.
What? I can handle a communist or two.*

THAT MAN

We're not fighting the reds.

MAHALIA

Well, I'm sure they can't be much worse.

THAT MAN

There's trouble brewing in Japan. A ninja army. A new Moon Empress. Think you can handle it?

MAHLIA

Piece of cake.

THAT MAN

Hardly.

MAHALIA

Try me. Let's fight. You and I. Let's go, Mister Marine.

THAT MAN

Oh come on, you can't be--

She throws a punch. It connects. He comes to his senses. They fight. Pretty soon, however, it turns into a dance. It ends with Mahalia in a dip.

Scene 3

Lex walks out to greet his class. He's dressed in his Karate Gi. Behind Lex is a large mirror. Lex's reflection is replaced by That Man.

He takes a breath.

LEX

KIOTSUKE!

His feet snap to attention.

LEX

REI!

He bows.

LEX

At ease. Good afternoon everybody.

Take up your seisan stance.

(He shifts into seisan)

Now, do this with me. Semi circle step and punch. Make sure to Kiai.

He semicircle steps and launches a twisting straight punch. It is immensely powerful.

He stays like a statue, in punching position.

LEX

(Kiai)

Now. Can anyone tell me, where on your body does the punch begin?

...

The answer is nowhere.

The punch begins before your body. Before you even begin to move, you must feel the energy behind you, driving you forward.

Now. Where does the punch end?

...

It doesn't.

You should allow the energy of your movement to extend out far beyond you. You can't remain trapped in where your body is now. Take everything that's behind you, funnel that energy through your body, and fire it like a lance towards your goal.

We're going to drill basic forms in just a moment. When we do, keep your eyes on the mirror. Take note of the space behind you.

That shouldn't be too hard. But then, look past yourself. Through the mirror and beyond. This is the most vital step for mastering both your movements and yourself.

Ok.

HAJIME!

Begin.

Lex turns to face his reflection. He drills the basic striking forms. He and That Man move as one.

THAT MAN

**I'm glad to see the dojo is still open.
50 years, and you're still here. My school. It's still here.**

LEX

I did it for you.

THAT MAN

**You didn't have to.
You could have done anything else. And you chose this.**

LEX

It's who I am. It's my heritage.

THAT MAN

You're a Filipino man teaching Japanese Karate to White teenagers.

LEX

It's your legacy. Without this. There wouldn't be...
Aren't you proud of me?

THAT MAN

Of course I am.

LEX

...

I wish you could be here to say that.

THAT MAN

I do too.

LEX

Then why did you leave?

...

THAT MAN

I had my reasons.

LEX

When mom used to talk about you. It seemed like you were both so...
But you were gone. But she still told stories like you weren't. Like you didn't-
Aren't you proud of me?

THAT MAN

Of course I am.

LEX

Then why, dad?

...

Why.

Why? WHY.

Lex Kiáis like a wounded animal. His fist collides with That Man. Glass shatters. That man persists, like a specter. Lex clutches his hands.

LEX

I'm... I'm sorry... Everyone. It's.... This is my fault. Class is dismissed.

Scene 4

Bubbles/Happy sits in front of Lola. He's moved the sack so that it now rests as a hat on his head.

That Man and Mahalia are on the stage below.

BUBBLES/HAPPY

What happened next?

LOLA

We were married. It happened quickly. Everyone got married quickly then.

Mahalia and That Man Get Married.

BUBBLES/HAPPY

What's that?

LOLA

Well, that's when you make a promise to God. And you promise him that it's forever. You know. That you will stay together.

BUBBLES/HAPPY

And did you?

LOLA

...

After that we traveled the world.

They travel the world together.

LOLA

Always together, me and That Man I married. My Husband and I. We lived in Okinawa.

Jazz plays. Mahalia and That Man are at an upscale party.

BUBBLES

What was it like?

Susan comes through with some mango martinis. They each take one.

She proceeds to the stairwell.

LOLA

We had a nice life there. But it was dangerous too. Living with a soldier was a new adventure for me. The Japanese army was all around us. And that Woman. But Hektor and I, we learned to fight like they did. Still. It was not the... environment for a family.

THAT MAN

Where should we go first?

MAHALIA

I want to go... Everywhere!

THAT MAN

That'll take a while.// I think we should head back to the U.S.//

MAHALIA

//And so what if it does? //I want to see the movie stars in Hollywood. Do you think they'd put my face on the big screen?

THAT MAN

You'd be a star.

MAHALIA

Or maybe we could be gangsters in Chicago. (Points a finger gun at him) Put'em up!

THAT MAN

If you want it, I know we can do it.

MAHALIA

Or we could travel the desert in New Mexico. I've never seen a desert.

THAT MAN

What about New York?

MAHALIA

Now there's an idea.

Mahalia downs her drink and tosses it over the end of the stage. Music gets louder.

THAT MAN

They're playing our song.

MAHALIA

Then we should dance.

That Man downs his drink and tosses it as well. They waltz all over the ship's deck. That Woman and Stranger dance on to the stage.

THAT MAN

Don't look now, but we have company.

MAHALIA

She must have followed us.

THAT MAN

On three?

MAHALIA

Just like back in Moscow.

They switch partners. Mahalia Dances with Stranger. That Man dances with That Man.

They all exchange looks.
 They begin to battle. They punch kick and
 toss each other across the stage in a violent
 dance. It ends with Stranger on the ground.
 And That Woman being held in a dip by
 That Man.

Black. Bubbles and Lola are still upstairs.

HAPPY

What happened next?

Lola is far far away.

BUBBLES

Lola?

LOLA

...

We Lived Happily ever after.
 Then you were born.
 And now we are here.

Susan knocks on the door politely. She
 opens it just a crack.

SUSAN

Hey Lola! I brought you some juice.

She goes to Lola and helps her drink it.

LOLA

Thank you, my princess. It is delicious.

SUSAN

You're welcome! So. What have you two been up to?

LOLA

You know. We've been talking.

Bubbles wags his tail.

SUSAN

(She Giggles)

Oh really?

LOLA

Yes. And now he knows my story. I am glad I could tell him.

...

I've lived a good life. Do you think so?

SUSAN

I'm sure of it.

LOLA

Then I guess it must be true.

Scene 5

Happy sits at a table, bandaging his hand.
He is alone.

Helen paces around her living room. She's a
storm of excited emotions. She's holding her
phone like it's going to kill her if she lets go.

HELEN

Okay.
OKAY. Alright.
I'm gonna. Ok. Here we go.
...
And.
Ok.
AND GO.

She starts typing a message.

HELEN

Hello.

The message sends.
Happy receives it. He looks at his phone,
curious, he responds.

LEX

Hello?

HELEN

Hi! This might be a really strange question, but hear me out.
Is your father Captain Hektor Dorian Klein?

Lex receives this message like a sudden
waterfall just opened up above him.

LEX

Yes.

HELEN

Are you 100% sure?

LEX

I'm certain.
What is this about?

HELEN

Well if that's the case then I'd like to introduce myself. I'm your half sister, Helen Akari Klein. Surprise!
Sorry. That's probably in bad taste. What I'm trying to tell you is that Hektor is my father also.

Lex grips his phone unable to respond.

HELEN

I know this is probably a lot for you to take in. It's a lot for me to.
Shit!
This is so crazy. It's absolutely insane. But it's true. And I needed to tell you.

Lex takes a moment, then responds. He's reinvigorated.

LEX

How did you find me?

HELEN

All I had was a name. I found it while I was moving him into the home. It was in some old stuff and there were notes and pictures with letters of you and your mom. So I've been searching facebook and contacting people. You are the right guy, right?

LEX

Yeah. It's me.
This is a lot to take in. He got my letters? He kept them?

HELEN

Yeah. He did.

After all these years I finally found you. I knew it too. I always knew you were out there. And now here you are. It's amazing!

LEX

You knew?

HELEN

I didn't "know." yknow? Like I sort of knew because of fights with my mom and things I heard. Snooping through stuff. But I didn't have any proof.

LEX

So here we are.
How's my Dad?
Our* Dad?

HELEN

Yeah he's both our Dads.
He's fine.

I wanna know about you though. What kinda guy is my newest brother?

Lex takes a minute to formulate his response.

LEX

My full name is Alexander Luntian Klein. I'm 50 years old and I've lived in Buffalo New York my whole life. I teach Isshin-Ryu Karate at the Transit Shopping Center and I written a few books on Martial Arts. I have three kids, they're all in their 20's now. I have a wonderful wife, she's a nurse. My mother lives in the apartment above our house. I haven't seen our dad in more than 45 years, but other than that, I think I've been very lucky.

HELEN

Well, I'm really glad to hear that. 50 huh? I guess that makes you my little brother?

This statement throw Lex for a loop.

LEX

Wait. How old are you?

HELEN

54. But let's try not to bring that up so often.

LEX

So you were first?

HELEN

I guess so, yeah.

But that's all in the past. I wanna get to know you. I mean, I never expected to find more family so late in life. I know that it's weird and confusing, but I want to make the best out of this, I really do.

Happy puts his phone down. Helen exits.

Happy walks over to a window and looks out at the garden.

Lola Wheels her chair over to the window and looks out at the garden.

LOLA

Oh where oh where did my garden go.

I know.

It's out there somewhere. I know.

Mahalia and Happy go out to the garden to enjoy the day. Happy is tired.

LOLA

I just can't see.

It's too far.

It must be.

Mahalia and Happy plant flowers.

HAPPY

Do we have to do gardening today?

MAHALIA

Of course! We need to make sure the yard is lovely for when your father gets back.

HAPPY

Okay.

LEX

You knew where he was all along, didn't you ma?

MAHALIA

While we're on our own, I'll need to work more, so I won't be able to spend time here in the garden. You need to learn how. That way our home here can always be beautiful. Can you promise me that?

HAPPY

I promise.

LOLA

My son is gone again.
I can't see my lovely garden.
Maybe he's gone there
When I see it, maybe then.
I saw him today. But now I don't know where
Or when, I'll see him again.
Maybe when I see my garden. Maybe Then.

LEX

Why did you keep him from me mom?

That Man enters, but not quite as himself.
Mahalia becomes a sort of marionette of
herself as the memory distorts.

THAT MAN

Hey There Neighbor

Mahalia.

MAHALIA

Hello Mr. Fredricks!

Leave, Hektor.

LEX

Why did you lie?

THAT MAN

I'm just dropping by to check on your lovely garden.

I'm here to see my son.

MAHALIA

It's a work in progress

You might be his father, but he is MY son.

HAPPY

Mama, who is that?

MAHALIA

N O B o D y d E A rrrrrrrrr

LEX

You kept him from me.

THAT MAN

Well, I don't want to intrude.

Please Mahalia. The boy should at least know his father.

MAHALIA

Come by any time. The garden is for everyone.

Leave, Hektor. You're not wanted here.

Mahalia Takes Happy by the hand. They
leave together.

LOLA

I pray for you everyday my wonderful son. I love you, Happy.

Lex stares at his father.

He goes back to his phone. He picks it up
and begins to type again.

LEX

Helen, I need you to tell me everything.

Scene 6

Lex, sits at the table with a coffee. He's texting non stop.

Susan enters with a fruit tart. Bubbles follows behind her.

SUSAN

So I went to the dessert place over on, Transit, cause, just to see what it would be like over there, and you know what? This same fruit tart, Twenty Three Dollars! Can you believe that?

LEX

Hmm.

SUSAN

So I thought, "Well, we'll just see about that." and so I went to Wegmans and lo and behold, nearly identical fruit tart, sixteen seventy! Pretty good, I'd say.

She puts it down on the table. LEX doesn't look up.

LEX

Looks great.

Susan goes over and fetches some candles. She brings them to the cake. She puts a candles in, it falls over.

SUSAN

It's so tricky trying to get candles to stand up in a fruit tart.

LEX

I don't see what the issue is, people have been putting candles in fruit tarts for hundreds of years.

The sarcasm flies 500 feet above her head.

SUSAN

No, they haven't. I wasn't wrong to get a fruit tart right??

LEX

No, I was just// making a--

SUSAN

Because I know that when we actually do have cake, she can't finish it, and she loves fruit and I thought it should at least be like that because you know how she needs her vitamins.

LEX

Susan, I have no idea what you're talking about.

SUSAN

Oh! That's right! You're mom has decided that she's having her birthday today. Surprise.

LEX

What.

SUSAN takes out some more
candles.

SUSAN

I know. But what can you do? How many candles you think? We can't fit 84.

LEX

Back up. She's having it today? When was this decided?

SUSAN

This morning. And I think after what happened yesterday. I mean. It makes sense. We usually celebrate it around now anyway and it's not like she has an actual day... And this cake looks so nice. Tart- I mean.

(She looks at the tart)

I'm gonna go with 10. That's a nice amount. Happy 10th birthday Lola!

SUSAN takes a moment to giggle at how silly she just was. She puts in the rest of the candles. She goes to the cupboard and gathers some paper plates and a knife.

SUSAN

So, are we ready?

LEX

Give me a minute.

SUSAN

It'll be there when you get back...

LEX

It's not like she's going anywhere either.

SUSAN

I don't see what the big fuss is. It'll only be a minute.

LEX

Yeah, I know. It's just. Fine. Yeah. Birthday Time.

Susan lets Bubbles out of the house.

SUSAN

Alright then. Out you go bud. Don't want you getting sick on cake now.

They go upstairs. Before they reach the top, Lex puts on his sack, becoming a Stranger. They start singing "Happy Birthday" as they enter Lola's room.

LOLA

Oh Woowww.

STRANGER

COULD YOU TURN THE TV DOWN MA?

She fiddles with the remote for a while. She presses every button before her finger lands on mute.

STRANGER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

She doesn't register.

STRANGER

It's your birthday ma.

LOLA

Oh, that is terrific!
Who are you?

STRANGER

It's your son. LEX. YOUR SON.

LOLA

Ohh. I don't know you. You're so fat!! and my son is so small. (She cackles)
I should know. Where has he gone?

Susan climbs up onto the bed with the Tart/Cake. She brings it to Lola.

SUSAN

Time to blow out the candles!

Lola breathes. Susan blows out the candles. She scoots to the edge of the bed and gets ready to cut the cake.

SUSAN

So Lola, how does it feel being another year older?

LOLA

Oh. It's alright. It's my birthday now I guess. I am 84 years old today. I never expected that. (She cackles)

SUSAN

There's only 10 candles on the cake though. So I think it's actually your 10th birthday.

LOLA

No... But I feel so young. I always remember my birthday because first is my son, then my grandson, then me and then next is Jesus! I'm going to meet him soon you know. Our birthdays are so close together also. We have something nice to chat about. (Cackles)

STRANGER

Yep. That's how it goes.

SUSAN passes out plates with birthday tart on them.

LOLA

I almost didn't make it to my birthday you know. Last night, I try to kill myself. Before you found me. I thought. Okay. I could stop now. I don't see my son anymore. My grandchildren have gone. So I hold my breath for a very long time and I thought maybe. And then I thought I was finally dead but now I'm here and it's my birthday!(Cackles) I saw my Happy boy earlier. How wonderful.

Susan is a statue. Stranger fidgets.

LOLA

Now I am 84. It's been a great life. I feel blessed by God everyday. But It's so quiet. Being so old.

She stares at her birthday tart. Unsure what to do.

SUSAN keels over with laughter.

SUSAN

OH MY GOD! I FORGOT THE FORKS! How are you supposed to eat without forks?

She picks up the tart with her hands and pretends to eat it while laughing at how silly she's being.

SUSAN

I'll be right back with those!

Susan leaves. Stranger stands around with his cake, awkwardly. He goes to the door, then stops.

STRANGER

Lola?

LOLA

Hello? Who is that?

STRANGER

I know about Hektor. And you. I know now.

LOLA

Oh my lovely husband. He's off somewhere. He's in the marine corps you know.

STRANGER

No, mom. Listen. He's in California.

LOLA

No. I don't think so.

STRANGER

I have a sister, ma. Did you know that? Her name is Helen. She lives out there too. She's a web designer, mom.

LOLA

No, Hektor, she's gone. We only have happy. We have one son.

STRANGER

Mom... Christ. Please! Stop pretending. I know. And I know you knew about them too. You had to.

STRANGER

So mom. Please. Just tell me. Tell me why. I need to know what happened. I need-

LOLA

OKAY. Well, I'm done with my birthday. You can go now.

STRANGER

Mom. Please.

Susan comes back in with forks.

SUSAN

I have forks! That's much better, right?

She passes out forks to everyone.

SUSAN

Eat up Lola! It's your cake!

Lola takes a bite.

LOLA

It's the most delicious thing in the world. Thank you Susan. I love you.

LOLA turns back on the loud and incessant
Republican info stream.

Stranger looks at his tart,

He throws it at the wall.

He leaves.

END ACT I

ACT II

When I was 16, I stayed with my mother's parents for a week. My grandfather bought me a chicken club sandwich at a diner. He told me that it was his brother's favorite and also that his brother was dead. This is the only time I ever heard about this relative of mine, and I don't think I'll ever find out much more about him. I'm sorry I didn't know you, Bryan.

Scene 1

Lola sits up in bed. Half in the moment, half somewhere else. The tart sits uneaten in front of her. Susan finishes cleaning up the tart. She grumbles to herself.

She throws the paper towels away, then wipes her brow.

SUSAN

Okay Lola.
Just let me know if you need anything else.

Alright. Goodbye. Happy Birthday.

Susan heads down stairs, in a huff.

Downstairs, Lex sits alone, Somewhere else,
That Man sits with his sack on, waiting.

Susan stands in front of Lex seething with
frustrated rage.

LEX

Yeah?

It takes everything Susan has to keep her
from exploding.

SUSAN

Really. Really? I wanna know just what the hell has gotten into you.

LEX

I'm sorry, okay?

SUSAN

You're sorry... You should be more than sorry! What the fuck were you thinking. Jesus Lex. I don't know what the hell you though happened last night but she almost died. Christ! You know how fragile she is.

LEX

I know.

SUSAN

This isn't a picnic for me either y'know? I never asked to be the one taking care of her. She's not my mother, she's yours. You're never here, and every time you have to do one thing for her, you just shut down.

LEX

You ever think about me? You can't imagine how it feels. Every second with her hurts. Every time I look at her. Every time I see her. Small and weak and confused. Every time I look at her eyes and there's just nothing there. There's nothing there. And she looks at me and there's nothing there.

SUSAN

But she's still here lex. You still have her// but if you keep pushing--

HAPPY

//No. I don't have her and stop saying that because you don't know what you're talking about. You didn't grow up with her. You had a father, brothers and sisters. She's all I ever had and she doesn't fucking know me and I don't know her. She was all I had and she's gone. Her still being here just makes it worse.

SUSAN

Then Christ, what the fuck do you want Lex?

LEX

...

SUSAN

We could put her in a home// If that would make it//

LEX

//No //NO. I can't do that. She wouldn't... She can't live in a home.

SUSAN

Ok. Fine.

Susan leaves.

Alone in the darkness, Lola begins to sing.

LOLA

Sana'y di nagmaliw ang dati kong araw

Nang munti pang bata sa piling ni nanay

Nais kong maulit ang awit ni inang mahal

Awit ng pag-ibig habang ako'y nasa duyan

Lex sits alone on the stage below. He joins the song, singing very softly at first.

Mahalia and Happy Enter. They acknowledge each other, then begin to dance and play.

LOLA&LEX

Sana'y di nagmaliw ang dati kong araw

Nang munti pang bata sa piling ni nanay

Nais kong maulit ang awit ni inang mahal

Awit ng pag-ibig habang ako'y nasa duyan

Mahalia Twirls Lex around, and on finishing the turn, places a sack over his head.

Lex Turns into a Stranger, and is excluded from the dance.

STRANGER

Sa aking pagtulog na labis ang himbing
 Ang bantay ko'y tala, ang tanod ko'y bituin
 Sa piling ni nanay, langit ay buhay
 Puso kong may dusa sabik sa ugoy ng duyan
 Sana'y di nagmaliw ang dati kong araw
 Nang munti pang bata sa piling ni nanay
 Nais kong maulit ang awit ni inang mahal
 Awit ng pag-ibig habang ako'y nasa duyan

The Stranger gives up. Mahalia and Happy
Dance away.

Sa aking pagtulog na labis ang himbing
 Ang bantay ko'y tala, ang tanod ko'y bituin
 Sa piling ni nanay, langit ay buhay
 Puso kong may dusa sabik sa ugoy ng duyan
 Nais kong matulog sa dating duyan ko, inay
 Oh! Inay

The Stranger is left alone with That Man

The Stranger goes to him, removing his
own sack. Becoming Lex again

He stands expectantly, waiting for that man
to reciprocate.

Nothing. Lex Leaves.

Helen Enters holding a letter. She yanks the sack off That Mans head.

Helen She goes to the desk and rereads the letters she's been pouring over. She's half crying, half laughing. She's bubbling over with a stew of feelings she left on the stove and forgot about.

HELEN

Fuck.

Just. Fuck!

Christ Dad.

Just when I think I'm ready to walk on on my own I step on more fucking tacks you left in my way.

She walks to the other side of the house and starts making herself one mean drink.

THAT MAN

What do you want me to say to you Helen? It was a long time ago.

She tastes her drink and spits out a laugh.

HELEN

Yeah. Why be angry about it now when it was so long ago!

What's the point.

She pours makes her drink stronger.

HELEN

I was over it this morning.

For once, I felt like I really was.

"Buh BYE Pops. I hope Shady Pines can deal with your shit cause I'm fucking done."

I was over it. I was so close to just leaving.

THAT MAN

You still can. I'm fine here. I'm all moved in. I've got a dozen or so books, a case of ensure, and all the amenities a bitter old cripple could need. You drinking my liquor and berating me isn't enhancing my nursing home experience all that much.

HELEN

Right. I forgot this was about you.

She walks over to the desk and snatches up some letters. She reads aloud.

HELEN

"Dear Dad, I hope you're having a Merry Christmas where you are. Is it snowy there? It's very snowy here. Mom says that they don't get much snow in vietnam..." Is that where he thinks you are right now?

THAT MAN

I served my time. Don't you fucking forget that.

HELEN

Right. So I guess you'll be back shortly then.

Nothing.

THAT MAN

Can I have the letter// back?

HELEN

Where are they?

Nothing.

HELEN

Well?

THAT MAN

I thought that was a rhetorical question.

HELEN

Well it fucking isn't.

THAT MAN

Christ Helen, it's been half a fucking century how am I supposed to know?

Helen drinks.

She just keeps going until the glass is empty.

HELEN

I was over it this morning.

I am telling you I was over it.

Then I just had to find this didn't I?

And you know what? I'm glad I did.

I'm glad I have something now.

Cause for my whole life I never had anything to hit you back with.

I didn't have one thing to defend myself with from your abusive bullshit.

But now I have this.

And with every word I read I thought, "He can't get away with it."

THAT MAN

What are you gonna do huh? You want me dead? Just wait.

Helen pours another drink.

HELEN

So why us?

THAT MAN

What?

HELEN

WHY US?

THAT MAN

What are you trying to say?

HELEN

Why stay with us and not them? What makes me so lucky to have you? What was the deciding fucking factor on who to leave behind.

Helen drinks.

HELEN

I'm waiting.

She waits.

THAT MAN

She cut her hair too short.

Helen says nothing at first. She's almost too disgusted to feel anything. But then she does. She laughs. She Laughs and Laughs in a sickening way as she walks to her father and throws her drink at him.

THAT MAN

FUCKING HELL.

I don't know, OKAY! I did what I did and it was a long time ago.

I just made a choice.

Shouldn't you be happy? I chose you.

I didn't have to do that. I could have left you behind. I could have left both of you behind, I could have done whatever I wanted but I chose you.

Helen says nothing. But then chuckles slightly.

HELEN

You're right.

I am Happy.

I'm happy he never got to see what a worthless shitsack you really are.

But I guess he has to find out sooner or later. I told him where you were.

You know what he said?

"How do I get there?"

Scene 2

Susan enters with a bunch of store bought flowers wrapped in green plastic. Chrysanthemums and pansies. As she enters, Bubbles runs up to her and latches on with a big hug. He kisses her waist.

SUSAN

Hey! hey! Okay...

She pushes him off her. And sets the flowers down on the kitchen table.

SUSAN

It's good to see you too, buddy.

She goes to a cabinet and removes a nice vase. She fills it up with water from the refrigerator.

She unwraps the flowers and puts them in the vase. She looks at them skeptically.

SUSAN

I got it.

She walks off. Bubbles watches her impatiently.

She comes back in with a small handful of dirt. It's rold and lumpy.

She breaks it up over the flowers so they look like they've been outside. Sorta.

She takes the flowers to the stairs. Bubbles follows. She pushes him back.

SUSAN

Come on. If I let you come up, your just gonna dig through her trash and make a mess.

Susan goes upstairs, leaving Bubbles behind.

Upstairs, Lola is intently watching a John Wayne cowboy movie. It's awful stuff, really.

Susan comes up the stairs.

SUSAN

Hey Lola!

LOLA

Oh. Hello! It has been a while since I have seen you. Princess. My princess.

SUSAN

I came to check on you this morning. Remember?

LOLA

Maybe. I don't think so.

Susan puts the flowers down for a moments while she lets some light in from the window.

LOLA

Where is the Little Baby?

Susan is perplexed for a moment, but then it clicks

SUSAN

Oh! Bubbles? He's down stairs. I need to clean some things up in here and. Well, You know how dogs can be right?

LOLA

I guess so. I wish I could see him.

SUSAN

Really taken a liking to him, huh?

LOLA

Oh yes.

SUSAN

Well, Maybe I'll bring him up after I'm done. But first...

She shows off the flowers.

SUSAN

I got these for you. They're from the garden. Look! Chrysanthemums, Pansies. Aren't they pretty?

LOLA

I don't remember planting those.

SUSAN

Well... Well, yaknow, anything can happen in a garden. It's alive, right? Probably the last ones that'll bloom before winter. I'll put them over here for you.

She puts the flowers on a bedside table where Lola can look at them.

LOLA

Wow! They are beautiful. Thank you.

SUSAN

So. How are you today Lola?

LOLA

Oh you know. I'm alright I guess. I have my movie. I think a lot about life lately. I will be dead soon you know. That's how it goes.

SUSAN

Oh, now don't say that!

LOLA

It's alright. I lived a good life. I made it all the way here. But I'm old now. You don't need me here. And I don't see my son. Or my garden Either.

SUSAN

I'm sure it will come back in the spring.

LOLA

Yes. I hope so.

Susan starts straightening things up around
Lola's room.

Downstairs, Happy is with That Man.

Lex is packing up a suitcase.

That Man gives happy a military hat.

THAT MAN

How's that fit, son?

The hat falls down over his eyes.

HAPPY

It's Great!

THAT MAN

**You'll grow into it.
Lift that hat up and get a peak at this.
This is some genuine Ka-Ra-Te.
Learned this while we were in Japan.
I call this one, the Tornado Kick.**

That Man Performs a tornado kick. Happy
watches in Awe.

THAT MAN

How about that huh?

HAPPY

I wanna try I wanna try!

Happy attempts the move. He jump spins and falls right onto the floor.

THAT MAN

Watch the furniture, kid.

He picks happy back up and puts on his hat.

THAT MAN

Why don't you take those moves outside champ?

HAPPY

Right!

Happy Runs off. Lex Looks on at the distorted Memory. Mahalia enters.

LEX

Why didn't you come back Dad? What kept you away?

Lex watches his imagine scene as it plays out.

MAHALIA

You need to leave.

THAT MAN

But, Mahalia...

MAHALIA

NO! I will not have your corruption under my roof. Your unfaithfulness, your violence.

THAT MAN

But Mahalia, I know that he needs me!

MAHALIA

I'm the only one he needs. I will erase you from our lives. He will never know you. You will be a ghost in this house.

THAT MAN

I won't let that Happen.

They battle. It's ferocious and dynamic. Like waves from opposite directions crashing against each other. It's far beyond the scope of reality.

When it's over, Mahalia stands victorious.

MAHALIA

LEAVE. And never return.

Lex Leaves. Satisfied with the conclusion.

Upstairs, Lola is lost in thought.

LOLA

My princess?

SUSAN

Yes?

LOLA

Do you ever cry?

Susan stops tidying up. She takes a moment, then sits down on the bed with Lola.

SUSAN

Yes. Sometimes I do. More often I find myself crying. And I really don't know why.

LOLA

That's what happens when you get older. For me at least. That's what I think.

Below, Mahalia and That Man remain.

LOLA

Because when you get older, You know. You understand. Because the time it takes. To process. It's not like it is when you're young.

That Woman enters to comfort That Man

Mahalia watches, alone.

SUSAN

Yeah. I suppose. I try not to. But I guess I don't really have anything to prove to anyone anymore.

LOLA

It's good for you. To cry. When you cry, You, Release. You see.
I cry a lot.
I cry when I am alone.
It used to be my job to cry. Did I tell you that?

SUSAN

I don't think you have.

LOLA

When I was young, they would pay me to cry. At funerals for the. You know. The wealthy people. They would want ah. The extra... The mourners. Funeral people. They would pay us for to cry. It didn't matter how old. So I would go and I would Cry.

WAAAA

WAAAA

I would cry the loudest so I was making sure to get paid.

Lola laughs

LOLA

But I never cried for real. I was too young then.
I think Maybe. If I have that job now I could be a millionaire.

Susan Looks at Lola, Unsure what to say.

Her phone rings.

SUSAN

Hello? Lex? What? WHAT! You went where? What are you talking about?

LOLA

Is that him?

SUSAN

Lex I don't understand. Who is Helen?

LOLA

Is that my son?

SUSAN

No, I'm not going to calm down.

LOLA

Please, I need to talk to him!

Susan gets up and leaves.

LOLA

I want to talk to my son. I want to talk to MY SON!
PLEASE.

Susan is gone.

Lola pulls the sheets off of her bed.
She tries to raise up her torso. She reaches
out for her wheelchair.

She reaches out, straining.
She's almost got her chair.
She falls. She hits the floor Hard. She yelps
out in pain.

Bubbles runs into the room.

BUBBLES

Lola!

LOLA

Help me!
HELP ME!
AAAAH

BUBBLES

Umm. Ahh. I . I don't know what to do! I don't Know what to do!

Lola writhes in pain.

BUBBLEs

I don't know whats happening! I AH. AHHH. AH!

Bubbles freaks out. He leaves Lola Alone.

LOLA

PLEASE! Come back to me! My son! MY SON!

She Cries. She is alone.

Scene 3

That Man sits in a chair, waiting.
Helen and Lex/Happy enter.

HELEN

He's in there if... 'I mean. If you're ready to talk to him. There's more to see in the city and...

LEX/HAPPY

No. It's okay. This is why I'm here after all.

HELEN

Right.
Well, He's right in there.

Lex/Happy takes a deep breath.

HELEN

Do you mind if I come in with you?

LEX/HAPPY

I don't.

HELEN

Ok.

They walk towards That Man.
Each step takes as long as it can.
Every moment fills to bursting with
uncertainty.

Eventually they arrive.

LEX/HAPPY

Hello.

Dad.

Nothing.

LEX/HAPPY

It's me.
 Lex.
 It's your son, Lex. It's me.
 You had me. With Mahalia.
 You left us in Buffalo, You...
 I'm here. I'm here now.
 Dad.
 DAD?

Helen looks on, grimacing.

LEX/HAPPY

Dad can you talk to me.
 Hektor?
 Please.
 Please talk to me.
 Talk to me I'm begging you
 Hektor, dad, fuck, please talk to me. I've come so far please.
 Talk to me.
 Dad.
 I need to know. I need you to explain why.
 WHY.
 Christ. Dad.
 I've never understood anything about you or me or mom or...
 I've lived half my goddamn life and I haven't understood a fucking minute of it.
 Dad.
 You need to tell me why.
 Please!
 Hektor!
 DAD!

Lex/Happy Rips the sack off his head
 revealing exactly who he is.
 He's just some person. Sad and mundane.

It's not enough.

It can't possibly be enough.

Lex/Happy pulls at his face, trying to uncover a better one beneath. It's useless.

There's nothing more to see, but that can't be it. That can't be.

Helen looks on at what she's done, the justice she's served, and smiles wickedly.

HELEN

This is what you wanted, isn't it????

Lex/Happy goes crazy. He tears everything apart.

He's on a rampage.

Everyone collapses. Blackout.

Above, Lola is Lying on the floor.

LOLA

I don't know what year I was born.
I don't know the day. Days weren't too important.
That's not the kind of life I had.
But I remember one day.
April 9. 1942.

Everyone below rises, wearing sacks.
Mahalia enters.

LOLA

I remember that day because that is when they came.
That is when they came and took everyone away.

That Woman assumes the role of a Japanese
commander. Others become POWs with
bags on their heads.

LOLA

My brother.
My father.
My friends.
They were taken away.
Everyone.

Mahalia cups some water from a stream. She
brings it to the POWs, but That Woman
smacks her to the ground

LOLA

I tried
I tried to keep them
But
They all went away.
They were all gone.
And I was alone.
And I said to myself that I would hold on to what I had left
I would hold my world so tight and never let it go.
And nothing would change how I didn't want it to.
And I would never be alone again
But now I am here
And I am alone.
I don't know what day it is.
I only remember that one day.
And how everyone went away.

Scene 4

Susan is sitting at a table, worrying over her hands.

Stranger bursts in.

SUSAN

Lex!

She runs to him.

SUSAN

Oh my god where have you been?

Jesus I was worried out of my mind that-

As if not even registering her, he makes a Bee-line for the stairs to Lola's room

He enters

She looks up at him confused.

STRANGER

Mom?

She turns her head away from him.

STRANGER

Mom. I'm back. I... I'm here.

I went to see him.

I went to see him mom but I'm back.

I don't know why I went there because I went and saw him and...

God. I'm so lost mom.

I thought. I don't know what I thought.

I'm sorry mom. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry I left.

I'm sorry I haven't been here for you.

I'm sorry the garden in the yard is dead. I don't know how to take care of it.

I never learned.

All of Lola's next lines are coherent, though they are mumbled and spoken in Tagalog

LOLA

Kung gusto mo malaman kung ano ang nangyari, sige. Sasabihin ko sa'yo. Bata pa ako noon. Nag-aaral. Siya naman ay ka-edaran ko rin. Nasa army.

STRANGER

Mom, I can't// Understand what you're saying.

LOLA

//Nagmahalan kami. Nagpakasal matapos ang maikling panahon, tulad rin ng iba dati. Dahil Amerikano siya at nasa military, lumayag kami. Ayun ata ang kailangan noon. Kami'y nag ibang bansa. Pumunta kami sa Okinawa.

STRANGER

I never learned tagalog mom.

LOLA

Sa kabila ng lahat, napakasaya namin noon. Kahit na sinunog ng mga Hapon ang aming mga baranggay at pumatay ng mga tao. Napakaraming namatay. Ganoon naman talaga ang gera. Nandoon siya at nandoon ako. Ako'y masaya ngunit di ko 'to masasabi para sa kaniya.

STRANGER

I never learned mom.

LOLA

Mayroon siyang asawa roon. Sabi niya, mag-hihiwalay sila. Nagsama kami patungo sa Amerika. Doon ka ipinanganak. Iho ko. 1964. Matapos noon, umalis na siya. Nagkita ulit kami noong apat na taon ka na. Noo'y nag-iisa lang ako. Tingin ko naman, may kinakasama na siya. Pagbalik niya, ibang-iba na siya. Sinabihan ko siyang umalis at umalis naman siya.

STRANGER

Mom.

LOLA

Akala ko, sapat na ako. Napasaya ka ba niya, happy? Noong nakita mo siya? Nagkamali ba ako? Hindi maari. Ngunit siguro nga. Ginawa ko naman ang tingin kong nararapat. Ginawa ko ang ginawa ko. Masaya ka naman, 'di ba anak?

STRANGER

I'm sorry mom.

He waits for her.

Scene 5

A stranger is in the Garden. His hands in
the earth. Mahalia is with him

The long winter takes hold. Winds howl and
whip against the house.

Snow falls. Lola stays in bed, unmoving, on
the cusp of death. The light of the television
glows against her sickly face.

Time moves around our world. We're
frozen.

At long last, it starts to thaw.

Lex is nowhere.

Susan enters Lola's room.

SUSAN

Hey Lola.

Lola turns her head. Her mouth hangs open.

SUSAN

How are you doing?

Ok.

Susan begins to straighten things up.
She fixes the bed, cleans up some trash.
She checks on the flowers, they're wilted.

SUSAN

Doctor howard says your blood pressure has been very consistent lately.

That's something, right?

You'll be back to yourself in no time.

She takes the flowers.

She sits down and watches Lola's TV for a minute.

She sees Stranger out the window.

SUSAN

I've been thinking about what you said. About crying.

I don't know if I can really agree. You know. On the part where - because you understand things more.

I don't know about that.

But maybe that's just me.

She gets up. She goes to the door.

SUSAN

Ok. Well I'll be back later.

She leaves.

Happy slowly enters Lola's room.

Lola and Stranger speak simultaneously.

Lola to happy and Stranger to Mahalia. Lola says these lines in Tagalog

LOLA/STRANGER

I'd give anything to see you if only one more time.

The way you were and are to me.

The person that I need.

That's who I wish that you could be.

I wish time was like a strip of film

That I could look at frame by frame.

I'd make a cut of parts I love

And watch them all again.

And no matter how many years go by

It would always stay the same.

I wish it stayed the same.
 I'd give anything to see you if only one more time.
 And hold you once again.

Happy looks at Lola
 Mahalia looks at Stranger
 They exit.

Susan goes to Stranger

SUSAN

The lord of the rings marathon is on AMC right now.

I just thought maybe you'd want to come in.
 I could make popcorn.

Lex.

Please don't do this to me. I'm trying. I've been trying.
 Just so... So hard. To keep everything together.
 I don't want to be alone anymore
 You're not alone either.
 I'm still here.
 We're still here, Lex.
 And I love you. I do. I mean that from the bottom of my heart.
 But I need you to be here.
 Lola needs you to be here.
 Please.
 Be here.
 No matter what comes next or how things change I'll be here. And if you're here
 too, I'll love you.

Susan sits by his side.
 Slowly at first, then together, they remove
 the bag from his head.

LEX

I love you too Susan.
 I'm here.

They embrace, becoming more whole.

They get up.

Lex begins to garden.

Susan lends a hand. Inch by inch, they sow life and love back into the home.

When they are finished, Lex and Susan lock hands.

When he's ready, Lex goes upstairs.

He opens the door to Lola's room and steps in. His footsteps echo through years.

He goes to her and sits down on the bed beside her.

Her mouth hangs open like a cavern. Her eyes are glossy.

Lex moves closer to her.

He puts a hand on her, reaching out.

LEX

Mahalia Manalac
Lola
Mom.
I love you.
I do.
Mahal Kita Mama.
Mahal Kita.

Light returns to Lola's face. She looks up at Lex, seeing him for the first time in years.

LOLA

Mahal kita, my son.
My happy boy has come home to me.
And I feel love inside me.
Mahal Kita.

Lex stands. He takes his mother by the hand.

With new found strength, lola begins to rise.
She gets up onto small withered feet that
haven't held her weight in a decade.
It's ok. She's light as a feather.

Together, they walk downstairs and go to the
garden.

They look around at everything. The
overgrowth and undergrowth.
The change and time and weathering.
They hold each other, and begin to dance.

Bubbles comes home. He's been out in the
rain. Susan picks him up and joins the
dance.

From out of space and time, Mahalia and
That man enter.

In this moment, they are all one and the
same.

Scene 6

Lex stands center stage. He wears his Karate Gi. He stands with feet shoulder width apart. His hands are in fists and rest by his 5th-degree black belt, signifying his rank as a Master.

He breathes in and out

LEX

KIOTSUKE!

His feet Snap to Attention.

REI!

He Bows. Takes a moment.

Yasume. At ease class. How's everyone today?

He assumes a casual, but combat ready demeanor.

LEX

I'd like to spend the beginning of our class focussing on Sanchin Kata. Everyone, please show me your Sanchin stance.

He shifts his feet to Sanchin.

LEX

Very good, everyone. Legs squared. Feet at forty five degree angles. Now, Semi-circle step.

His right foot glides forward in a semicircle motion.

LEX

Now lock in.
Excellent.

He breathes.

LEX

In our style, power comes from stance. Your stance is your root to the earth. These roots extend beyond your feet. They are simultaneously the roots of your being. Where you come from. What keeps you here.

Lex resumes a casual posture.

LEX

So let's take a look at Sanchin Kata. From the original Japanese, Sanchin is usually interpreted as the Three Battles. The battles to unify Mind, Body, and Spirit. Consider this Kata less as a mastery of form, but more of a meditation on presence and martial intention.

The Sound of rushing water.

LEX

The old masters used to practice this Kata under the pressure of waterfalls. When you practices, you must imagine such pressures on your own body. As you pass through the motions, meditate on the pressures within you.

Mahalia appears to the right of Lex. That Man appears to his left.

LEX

KATA.
SANCHIN.

He bows and begins Sanchin Kata. His form is flawless. His breathing is powerful

He talks through the kata, slowly and methodically.

As he proceeds, Mahalia and That Man begin to test Lex's physical form. He continues unphased.

LEX

We'll begin on the surface level ~
 My body ~
 My right side is dominant ~
 I throw my punches from my right ~
 I depend on it ~
 So much so that it's weakening ~
 I have a torn ligament in my shoulder ~
 A planters wart on my foot ~
 Now to my left ~
 I was born prematurely ~
 My left side is much weaker than it should be ~
 My left eye is blind ~
 I account for these weaknesses ~
 I balance my energies.

He breathes.

LEX

Back to my right side ~
 My Mother ~
 Born in the Philippines ~
 Moved to America ~
 She raised me here ~
 She grew old with me ~
 My left side ~
 My father ~
 An American Marine ~
 The founder of this school ~
 He left me when I was very young ~
 I unite these forces to give me strength ~
 They drive me forward.

Lex finishes the kata. He bows. He's sweating. He takes a moment before coming back to himself.

LEX

Ok everybody. Now, of course I don't expect you to go that deep. But Please try to meditate as you do the kata. Don't take this lightly, it can seriously help your practice. I'll be coming around to put pressure on you. Ok?

KIOTSUKE!

REI!

KATA, SANCHIN!

BEGIN.

He looks at his mother and father.

He bows.