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A Whispered Yes

written by

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SCENE 1: INT. RESTAURANT IN SHANGHAI – NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

The camera pans from the exterior to the sign of a luxurious restaurant. Elegant Chinese characters glow in warm red, and muted voices filter through the doors. The entrance opens, and the camera glides inside to reveal a blend of traditional Chinese style and modern elegance. Warm lighting highlights the golden decorations and dark wood paneling.

SCENE 2: INT. RESTAURANT IN SHANGHAI – PRIVATE ROOM – NIGHT

WIDE SHOT:

An elegant room with mahogany paneling, golden dragon patterns, and a round wooden table. Fine porcelain, hand-painted plates, and artfully arranged dishes decorate the table. The atmosphere is subdued; only the quiet clinking of glasses and soft voices can be heard.

MEDIUM SHOT:

Five Chinese business partners sit at the table, elegantly dressed in suits. They laugh politely at a remark. At the head of the table sits ARROW (early 40s, greying beard), wearing a tailored dark suit, a colorful shirt, and Italian shoes. His posture is upright and confident, but his gaze repeatedly drifts to the half-open door.

ARROW (V.O.)

*(calm, reflective)*

I didn't know it then, but that evening I was about to encounter something unique.

CLOSE-UP:

Arrow leans forward slightly, his attention fixed on the half-open door.

BUSINESS PARTNER 1

*(in Chinese, politely)*

Arrow, is everything alright?

ARROW

*(in English, slightly distracted)*

Yes, but what's happening out there?

BUSINESS PARTNER 3

*(in English, smiling)*

The guests are choosing ingredients for the hot pot. It's tradition.

ARROW

*(interested)*

Fascinating. I'll take a look.

MEDIUM SHOT:

Arrow rises gracefully from the table. The camera follows his calm, measured movements as he walks through the door.

SCENE 3: INT. RESTAURANT IN SHANGHAI – GENERAL AREA – NIGHT

WIDE SHOT:

A lively scene. Guests crowd around a long spice counter filled with red chilies, green onions, garlic, and oils. Warm, golden lighting creates an intimate atmosphere.

MEDIUM SHOT:

Arrow moves through the crowd, his elegant appearance standing out. His gaze is observant yet calm.

CLOSE-UP:

As Arrow reaches for a bowl of red chilies, a gentle hand brushes his.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN:

YUN (mid-20s, 1.68m tall, wearing a traditional-modern dress with subtle patterns) looks up. Her long black hair falls softly over her shoulders, and a blush spreads across her cheeks.

SCENE 8: EXT. XIANGTIANDI JAZZ BAR – NIGHT

WIDE SHOT:

A taxi pulls up in front of the bar. The camera pans to YUN and her friends as they step out. The elegant bar entrance is illuminated by warm light. Pedestrians stroll past, and the street buzzes with life.

MEDIUM SHOT:

Yun pauses briefly, her eyes fixed on the glowing sign. She takes a deep breath as her friends encourage her.

FRIEND 1  
*(gently, in Chinese)*  
You've got this.

FRIEND 2  
*(winking, in Chinese)*  
And we're here to make sure you don't run away.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN:

Her face shows a mix of nervousness and quiet determination. A hesitant but warm smile crosses her lips as she takes the first step toward the bar.

ARROW (V.O.)  
*(calm, reflective)*  
Sometimes, you have to take risks and embrace the unknown.

The camera follows Yun and her friends as they enter the bar. Their silhouettes are briefly illuminated by the warm light before the door closes.

SCENE 9: INT. XIANGTIANDI JAZZ BAR – NIGHT

WIDE SHOT:

The bar door opens as Yun and her two friends step inside. Soft jazz music blends with the muted hum of conversation. The bar is stylishly furnished with polished wooden tables and artistic lighting casting a warm glow. A long counter lines the right side, where bartenders serve cocktails and champagne. To the left, a slightly elevated DJ booth plays smooth modern jazz.

MEDIUM SHOT:

Yun and her friends pause to take in the atmosphere. Their gazes sweep the room until Yun spots Arrow.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN:

Her eyes lock on Arrow, who is standing at a bar table with his business partners. Her nervousness is visible, but she takes a deep breath and turns to her friends.

YUN  
*(gently, in Chinese)*  
Let's go.

WIDE SHOT:

The camera shifts to Arrow, standing at a bar table near the counter. His five business partners hold glasses of champagne.

CLOSE-UP ON ARROW:

Arrow's gaze is fixed on the entrance. He maintains a calm demeanor, but his eyes reveal a subtle tension. As he sees Yun, a satisfied smile spreads across his face.

BUSINESS PARTNER 1  
*(in Chinese, politely)*  
Mr. Arrow, is she coming?

ARROW  
*(in English, quietly, with a light smile)*  
Yes, I knew she would.

MEDIUM SHOT:

Yun approaches with her friends. The business partners exchange knowing glances and politely step aside, raising their glasses to make room.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN:

The camera focuses on Yun as she approaches Arrow, her nervousness evident. Her friends linger a step behind her.

YUN  
*(gently, in Chinese)*  
Let us go.

WIDE SHOT:

The camera changes perspective to show ARROW standing at a bar table near the bar. His five business partners stand beside him, holding glasses of sparkling champagne.

CLOSE-UP ON ARROW:

His eyes are fixed on the entrance. His posture remains calm, but his gaze shows quiet tension. When he sees YUN, a satisfied smile appears.

BUSINESS PARTNER 1  
(in Chinese, politely)  
Mr. Arrow, has she arrived?

ARROW  
(in English, quietly, with a light smile)  
Yes, I knew she would come.

MEDIUM SHOT:  
YUN slowly approaches with her friends. The business partners exchange glances before raising their glasses politely and stepping aside to make room.

CLOSE-UP:  
The camera follows YUN as she approaches ARROW, her nervousness showing. Her friends remain a step behind.

ARROW  
(calm, friendly)  
It's a pleasure that you came.

YUN  
(shyly, almost whispering)  
Thanks for the invitation.

SCENE 14: EXT. JADE BUDDHA TEMPLE - DAY

WIDE SHOT:  
The temple stands in quiet splendor. Its golden roofs glimmer in the sunlight. A long stone staircase leads to the main pagoda, flanked by guardian statues. Tourists and believers move slowly through the entrance area. Prayer ribbons sway gently in the breeze, while the occasional sound of a bell adds to the peaceful atmosphere.

MEDIUM SHOT:  
ARROW and YUN stand in front of the temple entrance. YUN points to the red prayer ribbons hanging from a nearby tree, fluttering lightly in the wind.

CLOSE-UP ON ARROW:  
His gaze shifts from YUN to the ribbons and then to the golden statues inside the temple.

YUN  
(smiling)  
Have you ever prayed for something?

ARROW  
(pensive)  
I'm not sure. Maybe I've forgotten how.

YUN  
(softly)  
Then it's time to remember.

WIDE SHOT:  
The camera follows ARROW and YUN as they enter the temple. The air is filled with the soft sound of bells and muffled voices.

MEDIUM SHOT:  
YUN leads ARROW to a Buddha statue and demonstrates how to light an incense stick. She hands one to him and waits patiently as he hesitates.

CLOSE-UP ON ARROW:  
His expression reflects a mix of skepticism and quiet curiosity as he lights the incense in front of the statue.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN'S HANDS:  
She carefully places the incense in its holder.

ARROW (V.O.)  
(quietly)  
In that moment, I didn't realize how small gestures could bring about the greatest changes.

WIDE SHOT:  
The camera shows ARROW and YUN leaving the temple together. The golden roofs shine brightly in the sunlight as they descend the stairs side by side.

SCENE 15: FADE IN  
A busier afternoon in Shanghai. ARROW and YUN are shown entering a traditional teahouse surrounded by bamboo and waterfalls.

SCENE 16: EXT. TRADITIONAL TEAHOUSE - AFTERNOON

ESTABLISHING SHOT:  
The teahouse is hidden away in a quiet side street, surrounded by bamboo plants and softly splashing waterfalls. Red lanterns sway gently above the entrance.

MEDIUM SHOT:  
ARROW and YUN approach the teahouse. An older man in traditional clothing greets them with a warm smile and a light bow.

SCENE 17: INT. TRADITIONAL TEAHOUSE – AFTERNOON

WIDE SHOT:

The space is small and cozy, lined with dark wood. Shelves filled with glass jars of tea leaves line the walls. Soft light floods the room, enhancing the warm tones of the interior.

MEDIUM SHOT:

ARROW and YUN sit at a small wooden table with intricately carved legs. In front of them sits a ceramic teapot, delicate steam rising from its spout.

CLOSE-UP ON THE TEAPOT:

The rising steam creates an intimate and peaceful atmosphere.

DIALOGUE:

YUN

*(gently, as she raises the teapot)*

Tea is more than a drink. It is a moment of peace.

ARROW

*(thoughtfully, with a faint smile)*

I suppose peace is something I still need to learn.

CLOSE-UP ON HANDS:

YUN pours tea into two small cups with calm, precise movements. The sound of the liquid splashing into the ceramic amplifies the stillness of the room.

MEDIUM SHOT:

The TEA MASTER, an older man with a serene presence, approaches and sets a smaller teapot carefully on the table.

TEA MASTER

*(in Chinese, courteously)*

A gift for your journey.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN:

She smiles as she translates.

YUN

He says tea helps the soul travel gracefully.

ARROW

*(slightly embarrassed, but grateful)*

Then I'll gladly accept the gift.



WIDE SHOT:

The camera shows ARROW and YUN engrossed in their conversation. The TEA MASTER quietly retreats as the two radiate a relaxed calm.

TRANSITION:

FADE OUT:

The scene transitions from the tranquil sounds of the teahouse to the bustling streets of Shanghai, where ARROW and YUN continue to explore the city.

SCENE 18: EXT. SIDE STREET - EVENING

WIDE SHOT:

The camera follows ARROW and YUN as they walk through a narrow alley lined with red lanterns. The lively atmosphere is filled with the scent of spices, the sound of laughter, and the clinking of dishes.

SCENE 19: INT. SMALL RESTAURANT - EVENING

WIDE SHOT:

The rustic restaurant is bustling with activity. Wooden tables and chairs are placed close together as guests enjoy their meals in a relaxed atmosphere. A small aquarium with fish sits in one corner next to a table stocked with bottles of sauces and spices.

MEDIUM SHOT:

ARROW and YUN sit at a small table decorated with traditional dishes. YUN picks up a pair of chopsticks and begins showing ARROW how to hold them correctly.

YUN

(smiling as she guides ARROW's hand)

No, not like that. Your fingers need to hold them differently. Here, let me help you.

ARROW

(playfully, with a sly grin)

I feel like you're setting me up to fail.

YUN

(winking)

Maybe.

CLOSE-UP ON ARROW:

He laughs quietly and focuses again, trying to pick up a piece of vegetable with the chopsticks.

MEDIUM SHOT:

Both laugh when ARROW finally succeeds.

YUN

(amused)

See? I knew you could do it.

ARROW

(smiling)

Sometimes, it just takes the right teacher.

WIDE SHOT:

The camera captures ARROW and YUN laughing and enjoying their food together. The warm and inviting atmosphere fills the restaurant.

SCENE 20: FADE IN

The camera shows the Shanghai night skyline as ARROW and YUN stroll along the Bund.

SCENE 21: EXT. THE BUND - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

The camera showcases the Pudong skyline at night. The futuristic buildings reflect in the calm waters of the Huangpu River as illuminated boats pass by. The promenade is lively but not overcrowded, with people strolling and street performers playing traditional music.

TRACKING SHOT:

The camera follows ARROW and YUN walking side by side along the promenade. YUN wears a light scarf that billows in the wind while ARROW keeps his hands relaxed in his coat pockets.

ARROW

(gratefully, while gazing at the skyline)

I have to admit, this isn't the Shanghai I expected.

YUN

(proudly, with a gentle smile)

This is my Shanghai. You have to notice the little things, not just the tall towers.

CLOSE-UP ON ARROW:

He stops walking and turns slightly toward YUN. His expression reflects genuine interest and quiet admiration.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN:

She notices his gaze. A moment of silence passes as they look at each other.

ARROW

(calm, meaningful)

It's the little things that truly matter.

YUN

(gently, with a hint of shyness)

Yes, they are.

SCENE 38: EXT. BARCELONA – PLAÇA REIAL – EVENING

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

The camera pans over the picturesque Plaça Reial, a vibrant square lined with tall palm trees, bustling cafés, and ornate lanterns. The golden hues of dusk bathe the square in warm light. A street musician sits in a corner, strumming a melancholic melody on his Spanish guitar.

MEDIUM SHOT:

ARROW and YUN stroll through the lively crowd. YUN wears a flowing summer dress that catches the evening breeze. ARROW walks beside her, one hand casually in his pocket. They pause as the street musician's melody captures their attention.

CLOSE-UP ON YUN:

Her gaze softens, and a quiet smile forms on her lips as she listens to the music. She turns to ARROW, extending her hand.

YUN

(*smiling, gently*)

Come, dance with me.

MEDIUM SHOT:

ARROW looks at her, surprised. He hesitates, then shakes his head with a playful grin.

ARROW  
*(amused)*  
Me? Here? In front of everyone?

YUN  
*(laughing, playful)*  
Yes, right here. Let them watch. This is our moment.

CLOSE-UP ON ARROW:  
He studies her for a moment, a smile tugging at his lips. Finally, he places his hand in hers.

WIDE SHOT:  
They begin to dance—awkwardly at first, then finding a rhythm in time with the music. The crowd around them steps back, forming a loose circle and watching with kind smiles.

TRACKING SHOT:  
The camera moves in a slow orbit around ARROW and YUN as they sway to the melody. YUN playfully leads, her movements light and fluid, while ARROW follows, finding his footing.

CLOSE-UP ON THEIR HANDS:  
YUN pulls ARROW closer, their fingers briefly intertwining before releasing.

MEDIUM SHOT:  
A young girl in the crowd claps enthusiastically. YUN catches her gaze and smiles warmly. ARROW chuckles, his initial hesitance replaced by genuine enjoyment.

CLOSE-UP ON THE STREET MUSICIAN:  
The musician lifts his head, a faint smile on his face as he observes the scene without missing a beat.

ARROW (V.O.)  
*(calm, reflective)*  
In that moment, it wasn't about perfection. It was about being present—trusting her and embracing the moment.

WIDE SHOT:  
From a distance, ARROW and YUN dance beneath the palm trees, bathed in warm light and enveloped by the sounds of the guitar.

TRANSITION:  
*FADE OUT:*  
The camera slowly pulls back, the music fading as the lights of Plaça Reial blur into the background.

SCENE 41: INT. LIVING ROOM – CHRISTMAS – EVENING

WIDE SHOT:

The living room is the epitome of festivity. A Christmas tree with real candles stands proudly at the center, surrounded by carefully wrapped gifts. In the background, a fireplace crackles warmly, adding to the inviting atmosphere. The family gathers around the tree: Arrow's parents sit relaxed in armchairs, his sister and her husband laugh at a joke from his brother, who is seated next to his wife. Arrow's two daughters move between the adults, and Qian stands with wide eyes, admiring the tree.

MEDIUM SHOT: ARROW AND YUN

Arrow and Yun sit next to each other on the couch. Yun looks slightly reserved, but Arrow gives her an encouraging smile. Their hands rest close to each other but do not touch.

FATHER

(warmly)

Well, Yun, that is an impressive tree, isn't it? Real candles. None of those plastic LED lights like the modern ones.

YUN

(smiling)

It's beautiful. In China, we also have Christmas trees, but they're usually smaller... and with electric lights.

MOTHER

(heartfelt)

And how do you celebrate Christmas in China, Yun? Is it as big as here?

YUN

(smiling, slightly unsure)

Not quite as big. In China, Christmas isn't as traditional as here. But in Shanghai, people love the atmosphere and decorations. It's... different.

BROTHER

(grinning)

But you don't have a tree like this, right? It's almost taller than the skyscrapers in Shanghai!

BROTHER-IN-LAW

(chiming in)

Wait, I heard there are skyscrapers in Shanghai with Christmas trees on their facades. That counts, doesn't it?

YUN

(laughing)

That's true. But here... it's more real. More family, less show.

SISTER

(curious)

And Qian, what do you like most about Christmas?

QIAN

(shy, quiet)

The lights... and the candles.

BIG DAUGHTER

(enthusiastic)

Do you want to see the tree up close? Come, I'll show you the ornaments!

WIDE SHOT:

Arrow's eldest daughter takes Qian's hand and leads her to the tree.

CLOSE-UP: QIAN

Her eyes sparkle as she admires the ornaments. She carefully touches one and looks at Arrow's eldest daughter.

QIAN

Are they real? They're so beautiful!

BIG DAUGHTER

Yes, and they've been in the family forever. But be careful—they're fragile.

WIDE SHOT: THE ADULTS

The camera pans to the adults, who chat and laugh.

BROTHER

Well, Arrow, how do you manage it all? Shanghai, Zurich, kids here, kids there. Isn't it exhausting?

ARROW

(smiling)

It's a challenge. But it's worth it.

BROTHER-IN-LAW

(grinning)

So you brought them straight from the Shanghai skyline to our little village? Impressive!

YUN

(smiling)

It's beautiful here. And I feel very welcome.

MOTHER

(heartfelt)

You're always welcome with us, Yun. And Qian, too.

QIAN

(to Arrow's eldest daughter)

Why real candles?

BIG DAUGHTER

It's tradition. But don't worry—we're careful. It makes the tree special.

MOTHER

(to Yun)

We've had this tradition for generations. It's a special moment when we light the candles.

CLOSE-UP: YUN

Yun smiles and nods gratefully. She looks at Arrow, her eyes full of emotion.

YUN

(quietly, to Arrow)

Your family... they're so warm-hearted. I feel like I belong here.

ARROW

(gently)

You do. And so does Qian.

WIDE SHOT:

The family continues laughing and chatting. Qian now sits on the carpet with Arrow's eldest daughter, playing with a small Christmas figure. Arrow's younger daughter brings drinks from the kitchen and joins the adults to listen to the conversation.

ARROW (V.O.)

On this evening, I realized that Yun and Qian didn't just fit into my life—they became part of my world. And in their eyes, I saw that they wanted to accept it.

CLOSE-UP: ARROW AND YUN

Their hands gently touch, a quiet sign of closeness and trust.

ARROW (V.O.)

That evening, the decision became clear. Our worlds would become one.

WIDE SHOT:

The camera slowly pulls back. The family sits together at the table, conversations flow, and the warm glow of the Christmas tree fills the room. A feeling of unity and peace is in the air.

TRANSITION: FADE OUT

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