

**disOriented**  
**(excerpt)**

by: Kyoung H. Park

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*disOriented* premiered in February 2011 at the Peter Jay Sharp Theater in New York City. It was produced by Theater C (Carlos Armesto, Artistic Director). It was written by Kyoung H. Park and directed by Carlos Armesto. The choreography was by Elisabetta Spuria, the set design was by Adam Koch, the lighting design was by Jake DeGroot, the sound design was by David Margolin Lawson, the costume design was by Carla Bellisio, the fight choreography was by Kurt Uy, the properties design was by Jamie Bressler; the dramaturg was Jesse Longman and the production stage manager was Chapel Folger.

*disOriented* was written for the Royal Court Theatre's Young Writer's Programme in London during the Fall of 2007. A public reading of the play, directed by Carlos Armesto, was presented by the Ma-Yi Theatre Company's 2008 LABFest at the Dorothy Strelsin Theatre in April 2008. *disOriented* was workshopped by Diverse City Theater Company, directed by Carlos Armesto, and presented at Shetler Studios Theater 54 in February 2009. *disOriented* was Semi-Finalist for the Cherry Lane Theater's 2010 Mentor Project and produced with support of a Special Projects grant from the Princess Grace Foundation.

“The reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems.”

--Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*

“The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative.”

--Edward Said, *Orientalism*

"Disorient: transitive verb. 1 a: to cause to lose bearings: displace from normal position or relationship b: to cause to lose the sense of time, place or identity..."

--*Webster's Dictionary*

## CHARACTERS

JU YEON	43, Korean woman.
DAE YOUNG	45, Korean man, Ju Yeon's husband.
YOUNG JUN	18, Ju Yeon and Dae Young's first son.
JONG WOO	14, Ju Yeon and Dae Young's second son.
DONG HEE	39, Korean man. Ju Yeon's brother.
OUIHALMONI	75, Korean woman. Ju Yeon's mother.
OUIHARABOJI	79, Korean man. Ju Yeon's father.
JIN HEE	20, Korean woman.

## SETTING

The main action takes place in New York City and Seoul.

In New York: The setting is the Lee's residence; they live on the third floor of a three-story building in Flushing, Queens.

The building's second floor is the Lee's Korean restaurant and the first floor is their grocery store.

In Seoul: The setting is Ouihalmoni and Ouiharaboji's humble, basement, studio apartment located on the fringe of the city.

a non-naturalistic set is suggested

## TIME

Now, Before, and the Past

not in that particular order

## NOTES

/ indicates point of overlap in overlapping dialogue

## CONFUCIAN PRINCIPLES OF DIALOGUE

It's best to sustain social harmony by not speaking (of the problems at hand).

Speak only when absolutely necessary; when asked to, speak earnestly;  
and always speak right.



*She flips the fans open and closed; the fans snap as she does so.*

*Snap. Snap.*

*Ju Yeon continues the sacrifice, cleansing the air.*

*Jin Hee twirls, fanning the smoke away from her.*

*As Jin Hee SNAPS her fans closed: Ju Yeon DISAPPEARS.*

*Jin Hee smiles and continues to dance.*

*She spins around the stage; her hanbok flows like water.*

*She waves her arms like a gentle breeze.*

*Her body's a river.*

*She places her fans together, open in mid-air, and gently shakes them—*

*they are a flower.*

*She breaks the flower apart and continues to dance.*

*As she snaps her fans open:*

*Lights on: Ouihalmoni and Ouiharaboji's small, run-down, studio apartment in Seoul.*

*Their furniture and possessions are crammed in the corners of a dusty room.*

*OUIHALMONI and OUIHARABOJI sleep on the floor.*

*Jin Hee continues to dance; the music grows in intensity.*

*The sounds of an airplane taking off.*

*As she snaps her fans closed:*

*Lights on: Inside an airplane—Korean Air flight 82 from New York City to Seoul.*

*Ju Yeon sits in the plane, holding an URN in her hands.*

*YOUNG JUN sits next to her.*

*Jin Hee snaps her fans open, but they're not heard.*

*The sounds of the plane become deafening.*

*Jin Hee disappears.)*

YOUNG JUN: Bibimbap...  
...  
...  
...  
When they serve dinner, ask for the bibimbap.  
Then try to get some rest...  
It'll help with the jet-lag.

*(Young Jun produces a small plastic container with kimchi from his back-pack.)*

YOUNG JUN: Dad packed us some kimchi.  
He makes good kimchi.

*(Ju Yeon nods.)*

OUIHALMONI: When are they coming?  
OUIHARABOJI: They land tomorrow.  
OUIHALMONI: Young Jun's coming with her?  
OUIHARABOJI: Yes, they'll be here together.  
OUIHALMONI: I thought I'd die before seeing him.  
OUIHARABOJI: You're not going to die.  
OUIHALMONI: I'm a burden on everyone.  
OUIHARABOJI: Would you shut up and go to bed?

*(Ouihalmoni produces a cigarette and lights a lighter.)*

OUIHARABOJI: Don't smoke!  
The smoke is stifling!  
OUIHALMONI: Good.  
This will kill me faster.

*(Ouihalmoni looks at a cigarette, and puts it down.)*

YOUNG JUN: Do you miss Seoul?

JU YEON: Sometimes.

YOUNG JUN: Why did you and dad leave?

JU YEON: That's another story. Not for now.

YOUNG JUN: You never tell me anything about Korea.

JU YEON: It's a sad story. It's too embarrassing to tell.  
...  
...  
I'll tell you when you're older.

YOUNG JUN: You always say that.

JU YEON: Young Jun, let's not fight.

OUIHALMONI: (*eagerly.*) Maybe their flight's early!

OUIHARABOJI: Don't be a child.

OUIHALMONI: Why don't you find out?

OUIHARABOJI: It's 2 AM. People are asleep—

OUIHALMONI: Just call the hotel and ask.

OUIHARABOJI: Do you miss her that much?

OUIHALMONI: *That much?*  
She's our daughter.

OUIHARABOJI: (*rolling over.*) And what good was she for?

(*Pause.*)

YOUNG JUN: Why won't you tell me something? Anything.

JU YEON: Young Jun—

YOUNG JUN: *Please.*

JU YEON: What do you want to know?

YOUNG JUN: I want to know why you left.

JU YEON: I had to...  
I was married to your father.

YOUNG JUN: Then why did *dad* leave?  
...  
*Omma.*

JU YEON: (*stern.*) Ask your father why he left.

(*Ouiharaboji sits up.*)

OUIHARABOJI: Now, I can't sleep.

OUIHALMONI: Isn't this exciting?

OUIHARABOJI: I can't sleep because of *you*!

OUIHALMONI: When they come see us:  
I'm going to wear that hair-pin  
Ju Yeon sent me for my birthday.

OUIHARABOJI: She should have sent us money.

OUIHALMONI: She knows you take it away from me.

OUIHARABOJI: Your money is my money.

OUIHALMONI: No, that was mine!  
I was saving it!  
...to give it to Young Jun!

OUIHARABOJI: Young Jun? He doesn't even live here.

OUIHALMONI: That's why I was *saving* it, for when he came.

OUIHARABOJI: *If* he came.

OUIHALMONI: Well, he's coming now, isn't he?  
...  
I *know* you stole it.  
I'm old but not stupid.

(*Ouiharaboji smokes.*)

YOUNG JUN: Why do you keep things secret?

JU YEON: Some things are too painful to remember.  
Some things hurt too much, even to say.

YOUNG JUN: Omma:  
How am I supposed to know who I am,  
if you won't tell me where I come from?  
All I hear are little bits of stories:  
That there was war,  
That there was hunger,  
That our families suffered...  
That everything was so sad  
you cannot even say it.  
All I am are these little fragments  
of things I hear,  
of things I see.

JU YEON: Do you want to know who you are?  
You are a good son.  
And you should grow to be a good man:  
a good husband to your wife.  
a good father to your children.  
That's all you need to know *to live*.  
All the hardships and pain from the past:  
you need to forget them  
and *move on*.

YOUNG JUN: But omma—  
Men don't always have to—

JU YEON: Don't ask for more.  
Just *accept*.

*(Young Jun reluctantly sits back.)*

OUIHARABOJI: I'm tired.  
I'm going to sleep.

*(Ouiharaboji puts his cigarette out as Ouihalmoni smokes.)*

OUIHARABOJI: *(lying down.)* It's late!  
Get your rest!

JU YEON: I'll tell you one thing.  
I'm glad I only have sons.  
Imagine if I had a daughter...  
Women have nothing but responsibilities.

We serve:  
families as daughters,  
husbands as wives,  
sons as mothers—

YOUNG JUN: You don't have to live that way, omma.

JU YEON: What happens when you break the rules, Young Jun?  
...  
You're punished.  
You die.  
Alone.  
*(referring to the urn.)* Like him.

YOUNG JUN: You think that's why Uncle Dong is dead?

OUIHALMONI: We have to clean the house tomorrow.

JU YEON: Selfishness. Irresponsibility.  
That's what kills, Young Jun.

OUIHALMONI: We need to put things in order.

JU YEON: Life has its rules.  
Death has its reasons.

OUIHALMONI: *(sighing.)* Aiguuu....  
...  
This place...it's a disaster.

*(Ouihalmoni puts out her cigarette.)*

*Lights fade.)*

## SCENE 2

*(3 months earlier.*

*Inside the Lee's apartment: The living/dining room.*

*DAE YOUNG enters, followed by DONG HEE.*

*Dong Hee stumbles in, carrying two suitcases.)*

DAE YOUNG: Watch your step...  
*(calling.)* Young Jun, Jong Woo!

*(As Dae Young and Dong Hee take off their shoes:*

*Young Jun and JONG WOO enter.)*

JONG WOO/  
YOUNG JUN: *(bowing.)* Annyong-haseyo.

DONG HEE: Yae-dira!

*(Jong Woo places two pairs of slippers in front of them to wear.)*

DAE YOUNG: *(to Young Jun.)* Take the bags to Jong Woo's room.

YOUNG JUN: Uncle Dong can stay with me.

DAE YOUNG: No... You need to study and pass your finals.

YOUNG JUN: *(hugging Dong Hee.)* My room's bigger.

DAE YOUNG: I said no.

JONG WOO: Dad...

DAE YOUNG: *(to Jong Woo.)* There's a suitcase in the trunk of the car.  
Go get it.

DONG HEE: Jong Woo—do you know who I am?

JONG WOO: No.

DAE YOUNG: *(smacking Jong Woo's head.)* Ya!

JONG WOO: Welcome to America.

*(Jong Woo exits in a huff.*

*Young Jun carries the bags to Jong Woo's room and exits.*

*(Dong Hee looks around.)*

DONG HEE: This is a n-n-nice building.

DAE YOUNG: I bought it ten years ago from the Park's.  
They went bankrupt during the IMF crisis and  
had to leave the country.

DONG HEE: Thanks for t-t-taking me in.

DAE YOUNG: Thank your sister...  
She runs the store on the first floor.  
And now that *you're* here:  
we can run the restaurant on the *second* floor.  
I used to rent it to the Chang's,  
but they ran their business like children.  
...  
Soju?

DONG HEE: Ne.

*(Dae Young produces a bottle of soju and two soju shot glasses.*

*They sit at a table.*

*(Dae Young pours Dong Hee a drink; Dong Hee holds his glass with both hands.)*

DAE YOUNG: I don't want to run a cheap restaurant like everyone else.  
We have to make a name for ourselves.  
Right, Dong Hee?

DONG HEE: How's Nuna?  
I wonder if she's changed.

*(Dong Hee takes the bottle from Dae Young and serves him his shot with both hands.*

*(Dae Young only needs to use one hand to both serve and receive his drinks.)*

DAE YOUNG: She's getting old.  
She lives in this little world...  
Sometimes it's hard to understand her—

DONG HEE:            Maybe she's homesick.  
                          ...  
                          It would have been nice...  
                          if you had let her v-v-visit us...

DAE YOUNG:        Now, you listen to me:  
                          your sister is my wife—  
                          my wife, Dong Hee—  
                          is that understood?  
                          What I decide to do with my family  
                          is none of your business.

DONG HEE:        Yes, that's very clear to me—

DAE YOUNG:        Good!  
                          I'm glad things are clear!

DONG HEE:        Nuna tells me business isn't going so well.

DAE YOUNG:        Konbe!

*(Dae Young raises his glass. Dong Hee hesitantly cheers.*

*As they take a shot:*

*the lights fade on the Lee's apartment.*

*and*

*Lights on: Jin Hee*

*standing in between three traditional, circular, Korean drums,  
hanging on square frames.*

*The three drums form a triangle around her.*

*Jin Hee begins a Samgo-mu, or traditional Korean drum dance.*

*She slowly raises her hands and beats the drums.*

*She crosses her arms and continues the beating.*

*She beats the wooden frames.*

*She bangs the drumsticks together.*

*She spins around.*

*She hits the drums to her left. To her right. Behind her.*

*She faces backwards.*

*She beats the circular frame of a drum,  
and her body follows suit,  
going round and round in circles.*

*As she SPINS:*

*Lights on: Ouihalmoni and Ouiharaboji's basement apartment.  
Twenty years ago.*

*Jin Hee disappears.*

*Ouihalmoni, much younger, sits on the floor, fanning herself. Until noted,  
she remains seated in her place.*

*Ju Yeon enters with a small suitcase.)*

OUIHALMONI: That's all you're taking?

JU YEON: What else have I got?

OUIHALMONI: I told you not to marry that soldier!

JU YEON: I fell in love.

OUIHALMONI: In love with what?  
That he played the guitar?  
That he sang to you in English?  
That's not enough for him to be your husband.

JU YEON: I need to start my family—

OUIHALMONI: But look at what he did to you:  
he married you then ran away!

JU YEON: You do what you have to—  
*to live.*

OUIHALMONI: You call his, a proper life?

JU YEON: We'll come back if things get better.

OUIHALMONI: Don't make promises you won't keep.  
Once you leave, he'll never  
let you come back here—

*(Ju Yeon moves to exit.*

*Ouihalmoni drags herself to Ju Yeon and holds tight to her legs.)*

OUIHALMONI: No.  
It's not safe out there!

JU YEON: Omma...!  
...don't make this so hard...

*(Ju Yeon frees her legs from Ouihalmoni's grip.)*

OUIHALMONI: I would crawl and beg, but  
I can't get any lower than this!

*(Ju Yeon moves to exit.)*

OUIHALMONI: I lost my legs to save you!  
When that car came your way,  
I stood in front of it.  
I gave up on doctors  
so I could feed you and your brother.  
I worked dragging myself on a cart,  
I begged when I had no job.  
After all I've done for you:  
is this what I get in return?

JU YEON: Say good-bye to Dong Hee for me.

OUIHALMONI: Ju Yeon.  
...  
Ju Yeon!

*(As Ju Yeon exits Ouihalmoni and Ouiharaboji's apartment:*

*The lights fade in Ouihalmoni and Ouiharaboji's apartment and  
the lights rise in the Lee's apartment: The living/dining room.)*

DAE YOUNG: *(pouring Dong Hee a shot.)* I run a tight ship in my house,  
but I'll help you.  
What's your plan?

DONG HEE: *(pouring Dae Young a shot.)* P-p-plan?

DAE YOUNG: Goals.  
Vision.  
You must have a vision.

DONG HEE: N-n-not really.

DAE YOUNG: You can't live without goals, Dong Hee.  
You need objectives in life.  
When I came here:  
I had \$200 dollars in my pocket.  
I built this family from scratch.  
What are *you* going to do with your life?

*(Dong Hee takes a shot.)*

DAE YOUNG: I'll tell you what you need to do:  
You need to get married.  
Buy a home.  
Do you go to church?

DONG HEE: I don't like to be p-p-preached to.

DAE YOUNG: You could meet a good, Korean, woman in church.  
But even if you married now, you'll be:  
sixty when your kids go to college.  
seventy by the time they get married.  
And you want to see your grandchildren, don't you?  
That's what's most important, Dong Hee—  
*family.*

DONG HEE: Drink your shot, Mae-Hyung.

DAE YOUNG: I'm only saying this because  
I'm worried about you.  
Very worried about you, Dong Hee.

DONG HEE: Here:  
*(offering soju.)* baduseyo.

*(Dae Young takes his shot and Dong Hee refills his glass.)*

JU YEON: *(entering.)* Drinking already?

DONG HEE: Nuna, oremanida!

*(Dong Hee embraces Ju Yeon. She awkwardly hugs him back.)*

DONG HEE: The kids are so b-b-big.  
Jong Woo's all grown up!

DAE YOUNG: That brat? All he does is cause trouble.

JU YEON: Yo-bo.

DAE YOUNG: I'll be in the kitchen...

*(Dae Young exits to the kitchen.)*

*(Jong Woo enters carrying a large suitcase.)*

JONG WOO: Jesus—what's in here? Rocks?

DONG HEE: Let me help you.

JONG WOO: I got it. I'm not a kid.

*(Young Jun enters.)*

YOUNG JUN: D'you want some help?

JONG WOO: Fuck off!

JU YEON: Jong Woo—!

...

Don't speak in front of your uncle that way.

JONG WOO: I told you I don't want to share my room with him.  
This fucking sucks!

*(Jong Woo throws the suitcase to the floor and exits to his room.)*

YOUNG JUN: *(to Ju Yeon.)* I'll talk to him.

*(Young Jun exits with the large suitcase to Jong Woo's room.)*

*Ju Yeon smiles at Dong Hee.*

*(Dong Hee sits and pours himself a shot.)*

DONG HEE: I can't b-b-believe I'm in New York.

JU YEON: You're glad?

DONG HEE: Why wouldn't I be?

JU YEON: *(sitting.)* This isn't a vacation, Dong Hee.

You're here to work.

DONG HEE: Spare me the l-l-lecture.  
I didn't come here to be ordered.

*(Dong Hee takes a shot.)*

JU YEON: Do you know how hard it was for me  
to convince my husband  
to let you live with us?  
You should have stayed home,  
with omma and appa—

DONG HEE: You call that a h-h-home?

JU YEON: You're supposed to take care of them.

DONG HEE: I can't do it on my own.

JU YEON: If you don't, then who will?

DONG HEE: Why are they my r-r-responsibility?

JU YEON: *(standing.)* What other responsibilities do you have?  
I'm married.  
I have a family.  
You're the *only* one who can take care of them.

DONG HEE: You could do more.

JU YEON: I live on the other side of the world.  
There are no holidays from the store.

DONG HEE: There's other ways to help, Nuna.

JU YEON: Your brother-in-law won't let me.  
*Men* take care of their parents.  
Parents are *men's* responsibilities, he says.

DONG HEE: So all the burden falls on *me*?

JU YEON: *Burden?*  
Do you know how many times  
I wish I was there  
to take care of omma?

DONG HEE: Well, you haven't.

JU YEON: It's not my choice.

DONG HEE: So what?  
While you get to live your life,  
am I supposed to stay back and s-s-shut up?

JU YEON: I know it's difficult—

DONG HEE: Omma's been sick.

JU YEON: She's always sick.

DONG HEE: I'm serious—

JU YEON: Dong Hee—

DONG HEE: She died.

JU YEON: ...

DONG HEE: For t-t-two minutes... She was dead.

JU YEON: Dead?  
What do you mean *dead*?

DONG HEE: When the doctors called, my heart / sunk...

JU YEON: What happened?

DONG HEE: Omma never leaves the house. She's afraid to go out.  
But these days:  
Dad's been stealing her money and gambling it at parks.  
She went out, t-t-to go look for him. But she didn't get far...  
One of the neighbors found her, l-l-lying on the streets.  
She had broken a rib.  
P-P-Pissed on herself.  
She was half-conscious, just lying t-t-there.  
When I went to the hospital, she l-l-looked at me.  
She didn't even recognize me.  
It's your son, I said. D-D-Dong Hee.  
And she said:  
Let me die.  
Don't waste your time with me.  
I've lived my life.

I looked at her and  
I could see my life going past me:  
delivering noodles on a motorcycle,  
my clothes reeking of fried fish and tofu—

JU YEON:           What did she have?  
                          What did the doctors say?

DONG HEE:           They didn't know...  
                          They'd never seen anything like that b-b-before...  
                          They ran tests and exams, as many as she'd let them take...  
                          But in the end...  
                                  She died...  
                                  ...  
                                  Then, came back to life...

JU YEON:           How can this be?  
                          ...  
                          Is she in pain?

DONG HEE:           She says she's fine.

JU YEON:           Did you put her in a hospital?

DONG HEE:           She'd rather be h-h-home.  
                          ...  
                          You should go see her.

JU YEON:           When?  
                          How?  
                          I can't leave my family.

DONG HEE:           She really wants to see you and the k-k-kids.  
                          She really wants to see you before she...

*(Pause.*

*Ju Yeon sits next to him.)*

DONG HEE:           Kokchong ma. Don't w-w-worry...  
                          She could get better.

JU YEON:           You don't know that.

DONG HEE:           She loves the p-p-pictures you send her.  
                          She always talks about them.

JU YEON: I've been meaning to go.  
But with the kids,  
and the store,  
there's just no time.

DONG HEE: I understand...  
You're better off here, anyway.

JU YEON: Why didn't you tell me?

DONG HEE: The w-w-worst was over.  
I didn't want to worry you.  
...  
Here, have a drink.

JU YEON: *(declines the drink.)*

DONG HEE: *(pouring himself a shot.)* When omma died, I realized  
I needed something different:  
a c-c-change in my life.

JU YEON: *(scoffs.)*  
You're still a child.  
Life is just this:  
People and things in a time and a space.  
What else do you want?

DONG HEE: I don't know!  
But Nuna:  
Don't I get a chance, at least, to go l-l-look for it?

JU YEON: *(standing.)* I should help in the kitchen.

DONG HEE: I just want a chance to throw myself out there!  
H-h-hurl into the void.  
You got to do it,  
why can't I?

JU YEON: ...  
...how was your flight?

DONG HEE: Good...  
...  
Mom says to c-c-call.

*(Lights fade.)*

### SCENE 3

*(1 month after Scene 2.)*

*Inside the Lee's apartment: The living/dining room.*

*Ju Yeon sets the table: spoons, chopsticks, rice bowls, Korean side dishes, and water cups for five.*

*Dae Young places a small, table-top grill on the table and plugs it in. He has LA kalbi (raw, marinated beef ribs) in a large bowl besides him.)*

DAE YOUNG: East Village? He's going to live in the East Village?

JU YEON: He says it's close to school.

DAE YOUNG: That neighborhood's full of punks.

JU YEON: He's got friends there.

DAE YOUNG: He should stay home.

JU YEON: And commute from *Flushing*?

DAE YOUNG: Or find a place on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street.  
It's where the Koreans live.

*(Young Jun enters with a large suitcase and places it next to the front door.)*

DAE YOUNG: LA Kalbi...  
Your favorite!

*(Young Jun STARES at his father confrontationally.)*

*He exits.)*

JU YEON: The restaurant's killing me.

DAE YOUNG: Then stop doing your brother's job.

JU YEON: He can't handle it; he's never worked like this—

DAE YOUNG: He's got to learn to be self-sufficient.

JU YEON: We should rent it out again.

DAE YOUNG: No, we have to do this for the kids...  
The moment they don't have something, they'll hate me.

JU YEON: Hate you?

DAE YOUNG: They hate me already.

JU YEON: They're just figuring out who they are.

*(Dae Young places a piece of meat on the table-top grill. It cooks and sizzles.)*

DAE YOUNG: They wouldn't act like this if they were in Korea.  
We should've gone back in '97 when the market crashed.  
The Kim's moved all of their money over there  
and now they're rich!

JU YEON: It's never too late.

DAE YOUNG: What?

JU YEON: I mean... we're going back sometime, aren't we?

DAE YOUNG: The kids won't ever live there.

JU YEON: They can visit.

DAE YOUNG: It's not cheap.

JU YEON: We'll find a way.

DAE YOUNG: No: if I want to die here, you'll die here with me.  
...  
Yo-bo, look at the Park's—they went back home broke.  
Is that what you want?  
To go back there and live in shame?  
Look at the Chang's—their whole family's a mess!  
We have a good life here.

JU YEON: But what about our parents, yo-bo?

*(Lights on: the Lee's apartment: Jong Woo's room.*

*Jong Woo wears a simulator helmet and holds a wireless, toy gun in one hand.*

*He is fighting in a virtual war.)*



DAE YOUNG: Look at your uncle.  
He can't keep a job 'cause he has no skills.

JONG WOO: *(into the headset.)* Assassin, throw in your grenade!

*(Young Jun sits at the table.)*

JU YEON: Dong Hee! Jong Woo!

*(Dong Hee enters and sits at the table.)*

DONG HEE: Nemse john/ne!

JONG WOO: *(into the headset.)* SHOOT HIM!

DONG HEE: It's a g-g-good day for Young Jun.

DAE YOUNG: *(to Dong Hee.)* He's got two awards from the President.  
He could have gone anywhere he wants!

JONG WOO: *(into the headset.)* Don't let him get away!

DAE YOUNG: Who's heard of Cooper Union?

JONG WOO: *(into the headset.)* Grifter, I need backup!

YOUNG JUN: *(standing.)* I'll go get him.

DAE YOUNG: Sit down! I'm talking to you!

JU YEON: Let's eat before the food gets cold.

*(Young Jun sits down again. They eat a little, except Dae Young.*

*Dae Young serves cooked kalbi and places more ribs on the table-top grill.*

*Pause.)*

DONG HEE: You can do what you want.

*(Dae Young glares at Dong Hee.)*

JONG WOO: *(into the headset.)* Damn it Grif!

DAE YOUNG: Don't tell my kid what to do.

JONG WOO:           *(into the headset.)* Follow my orders!

DAE YOUNG:         *(to Jong Woo.)* IMMA! PALLI-WA!

*(Jong Woo reluctantly takes off his simulator cap.)*

JONG WOO:           *(mumbling.)* Son-of-a...  
I'll be back in 20.

*(As Jong Woo enters the living/dining room:*

*The lights fade in Jong Woo's room.)*

DAE YOUNG:         Why is it so complicated to have the family together?  
Is that too much to ask?  
Your mom and I could be out,  
                          singing at karaoke bars,  
                          but we come back home to be with you.  
We work for you.  
I cook for you.  
I make better kimchi than your mother. Taste this.  
Taste it!

*(Dae Young places kimchi on Jong Woo's plate as he sits at the table.*

*Jong Woo doesn't eat.)*

DAE YOUNG:         Jong Woo:  
                          growing up, my family had nothing.  
                          Dong Hee: you were there.  
                          Tell them what it was like!

DONG HEE:           *(eating kimchi.)* This is very good kimchi, Mae-hyung.

JU YEON:            Chap-so, yo-bo...

DAE YOUNG:         If you made these kids understand,  
I wouldn't have to talk to them like this!  
                          Your mom—she works at the cash register  
                          and the only thing she sees is money.  
                          She doesn't realize how much *work*  
                          goes behind the business.

JU YEON:            Of course I do!

*(Dae Young forcefully puts his chopsticks down.)*

DAE YOUNG: I'm not hungry.  
Dong Hee, eat my rice.

*(Dae Young tosses his rice bowl to Dong Hee.)*

DONG HEE: Cho be-bulunde...

DAE YOUNG: I saw you eating those hotdogs again.  
Why do you waste your money like that?  
You need to save.

DONG HEE: They're good.

DAE YOUNG: Every day, you're out there eating them.

DONG HEE: They don't have those in K-K-Korea.

JU YEON: They're junk.  
You don't know where that junk food comes from.

JONG WOO: He can eat what he wants.

*(All eyes on Jong Woo.)*

DAE YOUNG: What did you say?

YOUNG JUN: Just stay quiet. It's better.

JU YEON: Here, let's eat these... These are done.

*(Ju Yeon places cooked kalbi on Young Jun and Jong Woo's plates.)*

*Except for Jong Woo, they eat some more in silence.*

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JONG WOO: I want to go to California.

DAE YOUNG: *What?*

JONG WOO: My team made it to the finals in Palo Alto!

JU YEON: What about school?

JONG WOO: It's a *national* tournament.

DAE YOUNG: No.

JONG WOO: Why not? The prize's two grand.

DAE YOUNG: We can't send you to California to play games.

JONG WOO: It's not a game—it's a competitive sport.  
I'm the number one scout on  
the East Coast.  
In a split second I can shoot terrorists—  
bam!—  
right on the forehead.

JU YEON: Let us think about it.

DAE YOUNG: *(to Ju Yeon.)* No.  
No, Jong Woo. You stay home and study.  
You'd better get a scholarship like your brother, you hear me?  
I'm not giving you a penny for college.

JONG WOO: Appa, you don't understand!  
My team has killed every terrorist cell  
in the tri-state area.  
I'm "The G.O.A.T.:" the greatest of all time.  
Everyone worships me!

JU YEON: More rice Young Jun?  
...  
...  
Jong Woo... eat something.

DAE YOUNG: Full-scholarship Jong Woo, you hear me?  
Just like your brother:  
go to school and  
make the white man pay.

JONG WOO: What the hell is wrong with you?

*(Everyone stops eating as Dae Young gives a death look at Jong Woo.)*

JONG WOO: You have problems, Dad.

DAE YOUNG: I'll tell you what my problem is:  
My children don't know who they are!  
Your mind is stuck in video-games, and  
your brother's mind is stuck in paintings.  
This home, this family,  
this is what's real.  
From now on, and forever:  
you will always be this.  
Always.

JU YEON: Water?

*(Ju Yeon offers a glass of water to Dae Young.*

*Dae Young stares at Ju Yeon, and takes the glass of water. He drinks it.*

*Pause.*

*Except for Jong Woo, everyone continues to eat in silence.*

...  
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...)

DAE YOUNG: Today is a great day for our family.  
Young Jun's the first one of us to go to college.  
Not a good college—

JU YEON: Yo- / bo.

DAE YOUNG: But college, nonetheless.

JU YEON: Chukha-hae, Young Jun-a.

DAE YOUNG: *(to Young Jun.)* Did you pack everything up?

*(Young Jun nods.*

*Dae Young takes out an envelope and places it on the table in front of Young Jun.)*

DAE YOUNG: Here...  
You study hard in the city.

*(Dae Young pushes the envelope towards Young Jun.*

*Young Jun looks down.)*

JU YEON: Young Jun.

JONG WOO: Take the money—don't be silly.

DAE YOUNG: Now listen to me.  
*(to Young Jun.)* You want to go to art school, you're going to art school.  
*(to Dong Hee.)* You want to eat those hotdogs, you eat those hotdogs.  
*(to Jong Woo.)* But you want to go to Palo Alto—  
*(to Ju Yeon.)* And you want to go to Korea—  
What about this family?

JU YEON: Yo-bo—

DAE YOUNG: I'm tired of this.  
Where's the gratitude?  
Where's the respect?

JU YEON: Yo-bo—

DAE YOUNG: Don't interrupt me!  
Young Jun, the restaurant's not doing well—

JU YEON: *(interrupting.)* I told you we shouldn't run it!

*(Dae Young violently slams his hands on the dinner table.*

*Everyone stops eating.)*

JU YEON: Look at us, fighting over money.  
In Korea, my mother's dying!

*(Dae Young slaps Ju Yeon.)*

YOUNG JUN  
DAD!

JONG WOO  
Son of a bitch—

*(Jong Woo runs towards Dae Young.*

*Young Jun and Dong Hee stop Jong Woo.)*

DAE YOUNG: What are you doing?

JONG WOO: Don't hit her, Dad!

*(Jong Woo tries to hit Dae Young, Young Jun stops him.)*

JONG WOO  
Let go of me!

YOUNG JUN  
Don't do this.

DONG HEE  
Jong Woo...

DAE YOUNG: Who do you think you are?

*(Jong Woo sets himself free.)*

JONG WOO: I hate this family!  
Stupid retarded Koreans!  
I hate you!

DAE YOUNG: Ya, imma!  
You talk to us with *respect*!  
...  
Sit down and eat your dinner.

JONG WOO: Kimchi gives me diarrhea.

JU YEON: Jong Woo—!

JONG WOO: It's true!  
If I can't eat it this crap,  
how the hell are you going to sell it  
in a restaurant?  
Idiots!  
All of you are idiots!

*(Jong Woo runs to his room.)*

*Pause.)*

DAE YOUNG: *(to Ju Yeon.)* Look at your kids.  
Look at how they treat me!  
Is this the best you can do?

JU YEON: ...

DAE YOUNG: Without me, you'd be nothing.  
All of you: nothing!

*(Dae Young exits.*

*Pause.)*

YOUNG JUN: Are you...?

JU YEON: All you had to do was to say thank you.  
Kugo do mot-hae?

DONG HEE: Nuna—

JU YEON: I'm fine!

*(As Young Jun exits towards Jong Woo's room:*

*Lights on: Jong Woo's room.*

*Jong Woo puts on his simulator cap.*

*Young Jun enters into Jong Woo's room.)*

JONG WOO: *(into the headset.)* Come and get it, sons-of-bitches!

YOUNG JUN: You shouldn't talk back to dad!  
You know you shouldn't fight / him!

JONG WOO: *(into the headset.)* KILL, KILL, KILL!

*(Ju Yeon turns off the table-top grill.*

*She places the cooked meat aside.)*

JU YEON: He's not like this, usually.  
He's a good husband, Dong Hee.

*(Dong Hee helps Ju Yeon clear the table.)*

YOUNG JUN: You know Dad's right.  
We've been given opportunities they didn't have.  
Respect is the least you can give to them.

JONG WOO: I'm not going to college.

YOUNG JUN: What?

JONG WOO: I wanna' be a pro-gamer!

I'm gonna invest whatever I make playing this and  
after high school,  
I'm outta here!

YOUNG JUN: Jong Woo—

JONG WOO: Just leave already!

YOUNG JUN: It's not like I'm leaving for good.

JONG WOO: I wouldn't blame you if you did.

JU YEON: *(to Dong Hee.)* Check on the kids. I'll do the rest.

JONG WOO: Before you leave,  
you might as well come out to them.  
It's already showing.

YOUNG JUN: What?

*(Dong Hee enters Jong Woo's room.*

*Ju Yeon resumes clearing the table.)*

DONG HEE: *(to Young Jun.)* You shouldn't have done that.

YOUNG JUN: Stay out of it, Uncle Dong.

*(Young Jun exits to the living/dining room.*

*He helps clear the table in silence.)*

JONG WOO: He's a douche! He's just like dad.

DONG HEE: Your Dad's not a bad person.

JONG WOO: He can't do shit like that. It's not right!

DONG HEE: Try to understand.  
What happens between your parents:  
it's not about you.

JONG WOO: But it *involves* us...

DONG HEE: If it upsets you, just f-f-forget it.

JONG WOO: Forget it?!

*(Jong Woo takes off his simulator helmet.)*

JONG WOO: Uncle Dong:  
I wanna' vomit every time  
we're about to have dinner.  
This house:  
it's a fucking land-mine...

DONG HEE: When I was your age,  
your parents and I, we used to  
*b-b-beg* for food from the Americans.  
Now look at us!

JONG WOO: If everything's so great,  
what are you doing eating all those  
hot-dogs?

*(Pause.)*

DONG HEE: Cha:  
*(picking up the simulator helmet.)* Teach me how to play this.

JONG WOO: You want to play?

DONG HEE: Yeah, let's have fun.

JONG WOO: Do you find our lives particularly fun?  
I think there's a lot of bullshit  
going on around here and  
I don't like living with bullshit.

DONG HEE: *(fumbling with the head gear.)*  
Jong Woo, relax.  
Take it easy, enjoy life.

JONG WOO: Stop—you're going to break it.  
Here, let me show you...

*(Jong Woo turns on the simulator as Dong Hee puts on the helmet. They play in silence the lights fade in Jong Woo's room.)*

*The table is completely cleared, except for the money.*

*Ju Yeon picks up the money from the table and hands it to Young Jun.)*

JU YEON: Here...

YOUNG JUN: I don't want it.

JU YEON: Take it.  
To not take it—that's disrespect.  
...  
(reprimanding.) Young Jun.

YOUNG JUN: What did I do?

JU YEON: Your brother's not the only one being disrespectful.  
Your silence, it's as bad as Jong Woo's screaming.  
All your father does is to work for us, and  
your Uncle doesn't help!  
Your father's out there, all on his own and  
after all that stress and work,  
the restaurant barely breaks even.  
This money, he saved it from the little he makes  
to give it to you, because  
this isn't just money, Young Jun.  
This is his love.  
This is the only way he knows  
how to express himself.  
This is how he's telling you  
what he feels.  
...  
...  
Here...  
I have something for you ...

*(Ju Yeon produces a wooden box.)*

JU YEON: It's a case, for your paintbrushes.

*(Ju Yeon puts the envelope inside the box and offers it to Young Jun.)*

YOUNG JUN: Omma, there's something I need to tell you.  
I just... don't know how to say it.  
Sometimes, I feel words betray me,  
that people only hear  
what they want to hear.  
But I want you to know that  
everything's going to be OK.  
I've thought about this for a really long time,  
and omma—

JU YEON:           Fine! Fine!  
                      Don't take the money!  
                      Go!  
                      ...  
                      ...palli.  
                      You're running late.

*(Young Jun leaves the box on the table and exits. The door slams.*

*Lights fade.)*

**THIS PLAY HAS BEEN PRODUCED.**

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO READ THE REST, PLEASE EMAIL ME AT  
[kyoungpark@gmail.com](mailto:kyoungpark@gmail.com).**

**THANKS!**