

WHEN YOSHIMI GETS MARRIED

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450 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

NATSU AI, A Japanese MIT student in her twenties

YOSHIMI IGUCHI, NATSU's high-school classmate, graduated from junior
college, teaches at a kindergarten, has never been abroad

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The entire action of this one act play takes place in NATSU's bedroom in Kyoto City in Japan while NATSU is back from school for winter vacation in January, 1991.

Scene: Late evening.

Scene

NATSU AI's bedroom at home in Japan on an evening in late Jan.. At right are a desk and a chair. On the right wall behind the chair is a window covered by bright yellow curtains. At the right upstage is a bookcase. On the center rear wall are some posters from MIT. One of them reads, "Better Dead Than Crimson." At the downstage is a whole length mirror. By the left wall there is a bed with a bright-yellow bed spread that matches the curtain. A door at the left downstage leads to hallway. There are two bright green cushions on the floor by the bed to sit on. The room is well-lit.

(YOSHIMI is in NATSU's room alone looking around, waiting for NATSU.)

NATSU:

Are you in there?

YOSHIMI:

Yeah, your mother let me in.

(NATSU comes into the room with a full grocery bag hanging from her arm, carrying a tray on which there are a can of American "Diet Coke", a can of Japanese "Coke Light", and two cups of sea-weed tea. As YOSHIMI sees NATSU carrying all the things, she offers help.)

NATSU:

Don't bother. I'm okay.

(She puts the tray on the floor.)

I'm so glad you came. I wasn't sure if I could see you this time.

(NATSU opens her arms widely, expecting to get a hug from YOSHIMI. YOSHIMI slightly bows.)

Nice to see you again!

YOSHIMI:

(YOSHIMI looks puzzled. She doesn't respond.)

huh?

NATSU:

(NATSU is still standing straight with her arms wide open.)

A hug!!

YOSHIMI:

Oh...

(YOSHIMI gives a hug uncomfortably with a little laughter.)

I still can't get used to this. Do people there really do this?

NATSU:

Good friends do. Isn't it better than bowing?
Once again!

(NATSU hugs YOSHIMI again.)

YOSHIMI:

(YOSHIMI accepts the hug again.)

Yeah, ... I suppose.

(pause)

I'm really glad that I was able to come back to Kyoto before you left.
I wish you weren't going back to MIT tomorrow though.

NATSU:

We can see each other during your spring break IN BOSTON, you know!?
(with a big smile)

I can't believe that you are finally coming to visit me there.

YOSHIMI:

(YOSHIMI doesn't want to talk about the trip now. She changes the subject quickly. She looks at the diet coke.)

WOOW! Is this the American version of "coke light"?

NATSU:

This is THE original. It's not "Coke Light", but "Diet Coke".

(NATSU points out the things she has brought.)

So, here are some things you can try. American Diet Coke and Japanese "Coke Light"...

(She opens the grocery bag and takes out some packages of snacks)

Japanese popcorn and American cheddar cheese popcorn, American M & M's, Japanese ones, and American potato chips and Japanese ones. And, of course, seaweed tea. This goes well with potato chips, not with the Japanese ones, but with the American ones. And, I have some more snacks in this...

(She empties the bag by turning it up-side down. All the snacks pile up on the floor.)

YOSHIMI:

Oh, my...

(laughing)

You brought back so much again!

(She sorts through the snacks and looks for something.)

I guess you didn't get that one this time.

NATSU:

Which one?

YOSHIMI:

I don't remember how you call it. The one I thought was a dirty wire from a gas station or something. You remember that black one? The very, very black one. It was also like coal tar that you find around the tires of a truck, ...

NATSU:

Around the tires of a truck?

YOSHIMI:

Oh, that smelled! I shouldn't have tasted it. Oh, that taste!

(She quickly drinks the tea to get rid of the "taste" she imagines.)

NATSU:

Are you talking about licorice ropes?

YOSHIMI:

That's it! Licorice! OH, THAT TASTE!

(She takes a sip of tea again.)

And the red one, too.

NATSU:

These, right?

(She shows the candies.)

YOSHIMI:

Gee! You brought them again?

(She takes them from NATSU and holds them up towards the ceiling)

These look like a bunch of Christmas candles. And they taste like them, too.

NATSU:

I didn't know you ate Christmas candles.

YOSHIMI:

Well, you know what I meant.

(She hands out the candies to NATSU.)

I'm not going to eat it. I'm not!

NATSU:

(Laughing)

You don't have to eat it.

(She quickly takes away the candies from YOSHIMI.)

I wasn't going to give them to you anyway. They're all mine!

(She kisses the candies.)

I love them!

(NATSU starts eating them.)

YOSHIMI:

Your tongue really got pickled after going to the US. You remember, we used to go to Sushi bars together. We 'd even go to Osaka just to eat Sushi.

NATSU:

The bar by Osaka Airport.

YOSHIMI:

You loved the tuna. You'd get intoxicated by their raw fresh chunks of tuna melting in your mouth. You liked the softest, whitest pieces of squid, too.

NATSU:

That sushi bar served really good sushi.

YOSHIMI:

But now what do you say? You say you can't eat raw fish? Your body doesn't accept it? It's B.S.! It's totally B.S.!

NATSU:

B.S.? Where did you learn that expression?

YOSHIMI:

You taught me last year.

NATSU:

Oh, yeah? What do B & S stand for?

YOSHIMI:

(Hesitates a little.)

Well... *(pause)* ...I don't remember, but... But, least, I know what you say is B.S.!

NATSU:

(Laughs a little.)

Well, it's not B. S. It's true. I just can't eat raw fish anymore. My stomach gets sick whenever I eat it, even if I might enjoy eating it. It's not because I've lived in the U.S.; it's because...

YOSHIMI:

Because your brain got pickled.

NATSU:

Yoshimi, is that something you would say to your best friend?

YOSHIMI:

Best friend? Ha, you never wrote me. I wrote to you three times!

NATSU:

You wrote me? You just sent me some lists of things you wanted me to bring back! And so I did. I brought you back American Diet Coke, American potato chips, American popcorn! I also bought you some bagels from Star Market and Stop & Shop's plastic grocery bags.

(She goes behind her bed and gets another bag full of things.)

Also, the biggest bra sold at the Harvard Co-op. And, Playgirl magazines, too, even though it was so embarrassing to get them myself. I bought them because they were all on your list! And now, you say this to me?

I'm going to tell Takaya what a friend you are to me! Then he won't marry you anymore!

YOSHIMI:

(YOSHIMI doesn't want to talk about TAKAYA and thus changes the topic right away. NATSU doesn't notice it. YOSHIMI picks the bra up.)

WOOOOW!!! ...This is ...huge!

(YOSHIMI wears the bra on her clothes and looks for things to fill both sides of it. YOSHIMI sees the plastic grocery bags and T-shirts and decides to put them between the bra and her chest. YOSHIMI looks very serious.)

NATSU:

(laughingly)

What are you doing?

YOSHIMI:

(seriously)

Hold on.

(YOSHIMI goes to the mirror and sharpens both sides of the bra as she watches herself in the mirror.)

Here we go.

NATSU:

You look wonderful.

YOSHIMI:

This is ... really huge!

Can you get this size at any store there?

NATSU:

I don't know. But you can get it at Harvard.

YOSHIMI:

Can you get it at MIT as well?

NATSU:

I guess so.

YOSHIMI:

But you wouldn't be able to get ones with micro chips at Harvard, would you?

NATSU:

What would micro chips be doing in bras ?

YOSHIMI:

Well, it would be fun.

(pause)

Yeah,

(laughing)

...there would be caps on the tops of both sides, and when touched, they open. Underneath, there would be two happy faces. Then when touched also, the faces would start singing.

NATSU:

(seriously)

Touched by who?

YOSHIMI:

By me, of course....

(a little angrily)

Of course by myself!

(understands NATSU's insinuation)

NATSU:

(seriously)

So... you look at yourself in the mirror and sing with the two happy faces on your bra?

YOSHIMI:

Well... it might help me if I'm lonely or something.
Actually, ...

(She thinks for a while as she looks at the ceiling.)

Yeah, it might make it fun to be lonely, sometimes!

NATSU:

Fun to be lonely?

YOSHIMI:

Well, you know, bras like that might make a big hit, especially with lonely older women.

NATSU:

Suuuuuure.

YOSHIMI:

(YOSHIMI holds the bra up and looks over again.)

This is... really huge. This would have to be custom-made here.

(YOSHIMI plays with it for a while.)

So, why did you get it?

NATSU:

(angrily)

This was on your list!

YOSHIMI:

Did I really put it on my list?

NATSU:

You even wrote that I had to bring all the things on the list or you wouldn't come to Boston. So I spent days to collect everything on the list BECAUSE I wanted you to visit me in Boston.

... You know what? I've already made plans for us during the spring break. We're going all over New England.

(NATSU goes to her desk to get a map of New England and opens the map.)

So, this is New England. See, here is Boston. MIT is here, and see this tiny red point? Right there.

(NATSU points out where the red point is with a tip of a pen.)

-- Right. That's where I live!

(NATSU looks at her bookcase and points it out.)

We'll of course visit Ohio, too. My friend Marty's home is in Ohio.

YOSHIMI:

You know, it's hard to keep track of all the boys you've had a crush on. But I do remember Martin.

NATSU:

Marty.

YOSHIMI:

Marty, okay. Wait, so who was Martin?

NATSU:

Are you talking about Martin Luther King, Jr.?

YOSHIMI:

Didn't you have a crush on him once ?

NATSU:

Yeah, but he's dead.

YOSHIMI:

You always have a crush on whoever you can't get anyway.

NATSU:

I have dated people, you know that.

YOSHIMI:

Yeah, but none of them lasted more than a month.

NATSU:

THREE months! So what ?
None of them was the right one, that's all.
I'm just waiting.

YOSHIMI:

...waiting for your prince?

NATSU:

He will come, and he's going to say, "You're the one I've been looking for since before I was even born!"
Then he and I will fall in love so passionately.

YOSHIMI:

Then one day, 'he' will bring you a bright yellow rose with baby's breaths and some green around it, right?

NATSU:

The color of Paradise.

YOSHIMI:

...and ask, "Will you marry me?"

NATSU:

Not quit. He will bring me the rose, but he won't say that. I AM the one to ask that.

YOSHIMI:

You? You want to ask a man to marry?

NATSU:

Yes! ...Of course, he'll have to say yes.
But there is no way that 'he' will deny my proposal because 'he' and I will be
crazy about each other anyway, ... like you and Takaya!
... You know what, Yoshimi? Takaya and you are my kind of ideal couple.
The way you met, -- oh that story of the snowing day!
The way he became your only one, and you, his only one, -- oh that story of
the romantic moment! ... and the way you two have always been since!
I remember everything you told me. -- Oh it's all just sooo sweet and

YOSHIMI:

*(YOSHIMI wants to change the subject. She doesn't want to talk
about Takaya, but NATSU doesn't notice it.)*

And, you got the magazine !?

(She takes the playgirl magazine from NATSU and opens.)

Wooooooo!!!!

*(She closed the magazine quickly, and looks at NATSU. She slowly
opens again a little as she pulls the bed spread and goes under
it to hide herself completely.)*

Wahooooooooo!

NATSU:

What are you doing, YOSHIMI?

(NATSU goes under the bed spread as well.)

Don't have fun by yourself!

*(They move around inside . They are laughing and teasing each
other. Then they both put their heads outside. YOSHIMI takes the
magazine from under the cover and they start looking at the
magazine together. But they can't really look at it because they
are no longer under the spread. They are too embarrassed to
stare at even one page.)*

YOSHIMI:

I can't believe you can buy this at any bookstore in the US. Do many women
there read, I mean, look at these?

NATSU:

I don't know.

YOSHIMI:

You know, those American women! Those we see in ads, on TV, in movies! They're
so tall, slim, and sexy. I mean they're so beautiful. They look sophisticated,
too. But at home, they look at those magazines!

NATSU:

That's not right. There are many different people there; tall ones, small
ones, pretty ones, and ugly ones. Also, nice ones, bad ones, too, just like
there are many different kinds of people here. And of course, most of them
don't enjoy these magazines.

YOSHIMI:

Well, at least, these magazines exist! And you buy them, too?

NATSU:

What?

YOSHIMI:

Do you buy this every month?

NATSU:

Yoshimi! I never buy things like this there.

YOSHIMI:

So, why did you buy this one?

NATSU:

It was on your list! I bought this ONLY FOR YOU.

YOSHIMI:

On my list? I don't remember that.

NATSU:

What?

YOSHIMI:

I'm just joking.

(Laughs)

I just didn't think you'd really get them.

NATSU:

YOSHIMI!

(angrily)

You must pay for this and that!

(She points out the bra and the magazine.)

I don't want people to think that I give a friend things like bras and playgirl magazines. The rest of the stuff is my gift to you.

YOSHIMI:

(Laughing)

I was just joking.

Thank you for bringing all the stuff for me.

YOSHIMI:

Now I feel as if I know everything about American culture.

NATSU:

R-i-g-h-t.

(pause)

Oh, ...by the way, ...have you heard of this joke?

Which one?

YOSHIMI:

NATSU:
My roommate made this joke while a bunch of us were watching TV at my MIT dormitory. It might be a little dirty though.

YOSHIMI:
That's okay. Just say it.

NATSU:
Okay. What's the difference between beer-nuts and dear-nuts?

YOSHIMI:
I don't know.

NATSU:
Well, do you want to know? As I said, it might be a little dirty though.

YOSHIMI:
Just say it.

NATSU:
Well, beer-nuts are \$2.99 a pound and dear-nuts are under a buck.

YOSHIMI:
I didn't get it.

NATSU:
(Starts laughing)
It's a joke, a funny American joke.

YOSHIMI:
Explain it!

NATSU:
You know, when my roommate said this joke, everyone in the lounge laughed. They laughed so hard.

YOSHIMI:
So, explain the joke!

NATSU:
Well,
...I just thought I would say it to make you laugh.

YOSHIMI:
I just didn't get it. EXPLAIN THE JOKE!

NATSU:
Actually...,
(pause) embarrassed,
I didn't get it, either.

YOSHIMI:

What? And you didn't ask your friends to explain it?

NATSU:

No. Because they were laughing so hard. So I laughed with them.

YOSHIMI:

Oh well. Let's analyze it. What do beer-nuts and dear-nuts mean ?

NATSU:

Beer-nuts are candy-covered peanuts. They're pretty popular there. Dear-nuts are..., I don't know.

YOSHIMI:

Is it d-e-a-r nuts or d-e-e-r nuts?

NATSU:

Hum, I never asked about that. Hummm...

(pause)

I guess it's "d-e-a-r nuts" because "d-e-e-r nuts" doesn't make sense.

YOSHIMI:

Okay. So, it means... precious nuts, in a way, right?

NATSU:

Kind of.

YOSHIMI:

What does a buck mean?

NATSU:

That means a dollar.

YOSHIMI:

Okay. In other words, candy-covered peanuts cost 2.99 a pound and precious nuts cost less than a dollar.

NATSU:

In other words, cheap ones cost more than precious ones...

YOSHIMI:

...just because the cheap ones have sweet candy around them.

NATSU

...I got it! It's just saying that we, people, are apt to judge things by how they look or how they taste. Not what's actually in them.

YOSHIMI:

That's it!!

...but why is it funny?

NATSU:

Maybe it's sarcasm.

YOSHIMI:

Didn't you also say it's supposed to be a dirty joke?

NATSU:

I just said it because the woman who said the joke said it was a dirty one.

YOSHIMI:

She said that?

NATSU:

And some who laughed seemed embarrassed.

YOSHIMI:

Ha, maybe they weren't understanding the joke also.

NATSU:

That's it!

Oh, you have to try American peanut-butter, too!

(While NATSU goes to her desk to get peanut-butter, sugar, and a knife, YOSHIMI stands up and walks towards the wall to look at the posters.)

This goes very well with sugar.

*(NATSU gets into mixing peanut-butter and sugar with the knife.)
[YOSHIMI isn't really looking at the posters. She's trying to find the best way to tell NATSU the news. YOSHIMI knows that NATSU wouldn't be happy, but NATSU's the one YOSHIMI most wants to get support from.]*

YOSHIMI:

(suddenly/ excitedly)

You know what? I have GOOD news to tell!

NATSU:

What is it? Tell me!

YOSHIMI:

Will you be happy for me?

NATSU:

Of course!

YOSHIMI:

I am...

NATSU:

You are...., what?

I'M GETTING MARRIED !!

YOSHIMI:

WOW!! That's WONDERFUL !! Congratulations!

YOSHIMI:

Thanks!

NATSU:

(laughingly,)

You've finally decided to end your life!

YOSHIMI:

What?

NATSU:

(NATSU is joking, but is pretending to be serious.)

A year ago, you were talking about marriage as hell. And you talked about remaining single to be free! Now, you've changed your mind!

YOSHIMI:

I'll still be free, I think. He's very open.

NATSU:

(sarcastically)

Oh, heee iiiis ?

YOSHIMI:

Well, he said that it's okay for me to keep my job after marriage.

NATSU:

Wow, he said that? He's VERY OPEN, isn't he? He gave you permission!

YOSHIMI:

(seriously)

It's not that he gave me permission. I accepted the proposal provided that I could keep working.

NATSU:

(Laughing very hard)

Yoshimi, I'm just joking. It's a joke! Joke, joke, joke!

Of course I know he's open. Of course I think it's great that you're finally getting married. Congratulations! I'm very happy for you both !

Tonight we should have a BIG celebration!

How about party on the top of Mt. Hiei? We're going to bring some food and drinks, and we're going to celebrate under the stars! There, we can make plans for the trip, too!

(NATSU looks at the ceiling for a while with a smile on her face.

Then she looks at YOSHIMI.)

When is the wedding by the way?

YOSHIMI:

In April.

NATSU:

In April?

Wait a second! What's going to happen to the trip then? The trip will turn out to be a honeymoon! -- Oh well. That's okay. I don't mind him joining us as long as you two behave well around me.

(pause)

Actually, it would be more fun if he came, and it would be wonderful if I met my prince by then!

YOSHIMI:

Ye.....yeah...

NATSU:

Oh, shoot! My camera is broken. I should call Takaya to bring his.

YOSHIMI:

DON'T CALL HIM!!

NATSU:

Why?

(pause)

He should be here for the celebration.

YOSHIMI:

Please don't call him.

NATSU:

What are you talking about, Yoshimi? We're going to have a big celebration tonight!

YOSHIMI:

Natsu, I'm NOT getting married to Takaya.

NATSU:

(Shocked)

Wh... WHAT?

YOSHIMI:

I'm getting married to someone else.

NATSU:

(laughs)

You must be joking!

YOSHIMI:

(Quietly)

I'm serious.

NATSU:

(pause)
...not ... Takaya?
...Who ...is he ..then?

YOSHIMI:

He's a son of my parent's friends.

NATSU:

Do I know him?

YOSHIMI:

I don't think so. I Just met him two months ago on the first of October.

NATSU:

You JUST met him? YOSHIMI, is this..... an arranged...

YOSHIMI:

Right. My parents arranged the meeting for me.

NATSU:

Ooooooooooooo Noooooooooooo...
(pause)

Are... you... going to have an arranged... marriage?

YOSHIMI:

I guess so.

NATSU:

Yoshimi...

(Shocked, she couldn't say anything for a while.)

But, Yoshimi, you always said you would hate to have an arranged marriage. No passion, no love, nothing! And now you say you're having an arranged marriage?

YOSHIMI:

I wasn't going to. But my parents were getting worried about me and thought that I should start meeting people. So they arranged the meeting, and I thought I would just go to see how it would be like. So I did. And so it happened, and it seems to be going on.

NATSU:

But what about Takaya? Didn't your parents know about him?

YOSHIMI:

No. They never met him.

NATSU:

Why didn't you tell them?

YOSHIMI:
Actually they never knew that I was seeing anybody.
Besides, I couldn't tell them I was seeing someone younger.

NATSU:
He isn't four or five years younger; he is only one year younger.

YOSHIMI:
You know what I mean.

NATSU:
(Pause)
...How well do you know this person? I mean, how many times did you see him
before you decided to marry him?

YOSHIMI:
Two times.

NATSU:
ONLY TWICE?

YOSHIMI:
Once at the meeting. Then a week later when we went out. Then a week later,
Mr. Minami came to my house with his parents and asked my parents permission
to marry me.

NATSU:
...What did your parents say?

YOSHIMI:
Dad said, "Please take care of my daughter." Mom didn't say anything. Then,
we all bowed.

NATSU:
Did you... NOT say anything?

YOSHIMI:
I didn't know what to say. I didn't quite understand what was really going on,
actually.

NATSU:
But, Yoshimi, do you think you know this person well enough to marry?

YOSHIMI:
I think we'll be good together.

NATSU:
What about Takaya?

YOSHIMI:
A month ago when I saw him, he said that he wanted to marry me.

NATSU:
HE SAID THAT? ... and YOU'RE NOT MARRYING HIM?

YOSHIMI:
It was too late, you know. It was after I had officially accepted the proposal of the other person.

NATSU:
...You don't love Takaya anymore?

YOSHIMI:
Of course I do.

NATSU:
You still DO?

YOSHIMI:
How do you think I can forget him?

NATSU:
Cancel the wedding!! You don't know what you're doing!! You're gonna regret it if you don't cancel it now!!!

YOSHIMI:
I can't do that.

NATSU:
It wasn't too late, and it's not too late! You haven't married Mr. Minami yet. It will be too late if you marry Mr. Minami. Cancel the wedding!

YOSHIMI:
It WAS too late, I told you that.

NATSU:
Did Takaya know that you had already accepted it?

YOSHIMI:
He didn't. Now he knows though. We had a very difficult break up. I'm still a lot upset about it, but... It was too late.

NATSU:
When was the deadline then?
It's not Takaya's fault. You should have told him earlier.

YOSHIMI:

(Very sadly)

I did.

NATSU:

You did?

YOSHIMI:

Yes, I did. I told him that my parents had arranged a meeting with someone else.

NATSU:

And what did he say?

YOSHIMI:

(Very sadly)

He didn't say anything.

(She gets very emotional and starts crying.)

HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO STOP ME!

Can you believe this? We've dated for over five years! He KNEW that my parents were pressuring me to marry someone; he KNEW I could have been forced to marry someone else if he hadn't asked me.

(Quietly)

...but he chose not to say anything.

NATSU:

Why didn't you wait?

YOSHIMI:

I couldn't. I think I had waited long enough to assume that he didn't want to marry me. So I had to make decisions myself.

(pause)

It was too late. It really was. He missed the moment when it was most needed for him to say that.

NATSU:

He..missed...the...moment...

YOSHIMI:

Right.

(For a while they don't say anything.)

What about the trip then?

NATSU:

I can't go.

YOSHIMI:

You CAN'T?

NATSU:

Mr. Minami has to work. We're thinking of going somewhere close for a few days on a honeymoon.

YOSHIMI:

Mr. Miami doesn't have to come. You were going to come alone anyway.

NATSU:

I can't leave my husband alone at home, especially right after wedding. You know that.

YOSHIMI:

Yoshimi, Mr. Minami isn't a baby! He can take care of himself!

NATSU:

I can't do that.

YOSHIMI:

Yoshimi, do you realize what you're saying? Do you realize what you're doing?
(NATSU goes to her bookcase and brings all the stuff she had collected for the trip: several maps, coupons for hotels, for car rentals, and for restaurants, and a notebook.)
You said you wanted to visit Boston, New York, Florida, Niagara Water Falls, Disney Land, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, San Francisco... *It was our dream*

NATSU:

I'm sorry, Natsu. I'm really sorry, but I must cancel the trip.

YOSHIMI:

You can come before the wedding.

NATSU:

Natsu, I'm already engaged. How can I go to America now? What do you think his parents would think of me if I did? What a woman, they would say, and they would cancel the engagement.

YOSHIMI:

That would be great! Let them cancel it!

NATSU:

I can't do that.

YOSHIMI:

NATSU:

Yoshimi... you've changed. No dream, no love, nothing in your heart!

YOSHIMI:

I do have a dream. I do have love, too.

NATSU:

For Mr. Miami?

YOSHIMI:

For Takaya.

NATSU:

Don't say that.

(Pause)

DON'T EVER SAY THAT if you aren't going to marry Takaya!

(pause)

You know what, Mr. Minimi might be a liar. You know how men usually are, I mean, men whom you meet through arranged meetings! They say whatever convenient to get you. Then after marriage, they turn to the most conservative, feudalistic, egoistic sexists!

YOSHIMI:

That's not right. You can meet nice people because your parents arrange meetings! Besides, Mr. Miami is a very open-minded person.

NATSU:

He could be one of those who don't mind having affairs with other women after marriage!

YOSHIMI:

Don't say that! You don't know him!

NATSU:

You're making the wrong choice! You'd be miserable if you didn't cancel it now!

YOSHIMI:

My mother is getting excited and preparing for the wedding. She's buying all the stuff, making orders, telling everybody. My father is happy, too. He's talking about my marriage to everyone he meets! I can't remember my parents ever being so very happy.

NATSU:

It's you who has to become happy. It's your life! You weren't born to make sacrifices for your parents or anyone else.

YOSHIMI:

...Mr. Minami is a young manager of a software company. He has already established himself. He even owns a house. You know, his life is already settled. But Takaya's isn't. He just graduated from college. He must find a decent job in order to support me, but he says that he wants to go to a graduate school. He can't be ready to marry me for, I don't know, four years, at least?

NATSU:

Four year is nothing, compare to your life time. What if Takaya comes to you after he's established? Would you get divorced? If so, your parents will feel much worse. If not, you will feel miserable. Either case, no one is going to be happy. You know, four year is nothing. You can wait. Besides, you have a job. You can support yourself!

YOSHIMI:

That's not the point! What if, during the years I wait, Takaya meets someone else? What if he decides not to marry me in the end? I would be over thirty then and can't find anyone else to marry. Should I be one of those "leftovers"? No, I don't want to be, and I can't afford to be.

NATSU:

It's better not to marry at all than to lie to someone and marry him. You're lying to Mr. Minami, Takaya, your parents, and most of all yourself! Be honest with your feelings! Otherwise, you'd end up hurting everybody!

YOSHIMI:

Natsu, you don't understand.

(pause)

...Perhaps it's because you've been living in the United States. You probably don't see the kind of pressure that women our age get in Japan.

(pause)

Besides, I want to start a family; I want to have children.

NATSU:

...But, don't you want to have children with someone whom you truly love?

YOSHIMI:

Of course it would be nice. But what is it to truly love? I even don't know if I truly love Takaya.

NATSU:

You do love Takaya.

YOSHIMI:

I think I do, but I can't say I truly love him.

NATSU:

What are you talking about? Love is love, that's it.

YOSHIMI:

True love is different.

(pause)

I think I like Mr. Miami, and I think I will love him, I mean, I know I will.

(pause)

I will, ...someday.

(Yoshimi's eyes aren't focused. She is recalling the time she made the decision. Natsu looks at Yoshimi in silence.)

NATSU:

(pause)

(sadly)

I just want you to be happy.

YOSHIMI:

I'm the one who has control over my happiness, and I am going to be happy.

(pause)

Anyhow, I've already made the choice.

(NATSU quietly mumbles, "...You've...already...made the choice.", but no one can hear. YOSHIMI, however, understands it and nods yes.)

YOSHIMI:

(Pause)

...You know, we always have to make choices.

(pause)

...Every moment is our starting point.

NATSU:

...I know...

YOSHIMI:

I made the choice to marry Mr. Miami, and I stood at the new starting point.
...I can't go back.

(YOSHIMI looks at NATSU, but NATSU avoids eye contact. They don't say anything for a while.)

I think I'll be happy. I know I'm going to miss Takaya, but I also know that I'm going to be happy with Mr. Miami.

NATSU:

Yoshimi, I think you are brave.

YOSHIMI:

(YOSHIMI is a little surprised. quietly,)

No.

(pause)

No, "Brave" isn't the right word. The word is...

(pause)

The word is "weak". ...I AM weak.

(YOSHIMI and NATSU both keep silent. YOSHIMI is looking at somewhere far away. NATSU is looking down at the floor. For a while, only the sound of the clock echoes.)

YOSHIMI:

I guess I should go home.

(NATSU sadly looks up at her, but she didn't say anything.)

YOSHIMI:

Don't look at me as if I were to be pitied!

NATSU:

I'm sorry, Yoshimi. My mind is mixed up.

YOSHIMI:

I'm okay, and I'm happy. And if YOU are going to be HAPPY for me, I will become MUCH HAPPIER!

(Smiles)

NATSU:

(Smiles)

If you are happy, of course, I'm happy, too.

YOSHIMI:

Good! Thanks, Natsu.

(She stands up and puts her jacket on.)

NATSU:

Oh, you can't forget these!

(She picks the playboy magazine and the bra.)

YOSHIMI:

Oh...

You know, you can keep them.

NATSU:

These are yours.

YOSHIMI:

Well.... they are my gifts for you.

NATSU:

I bought them for YOU!

Why don't you give them to Mr. Miami?

YOSHIMI:

Suuuuuuure!!

(Pause)

Okay. I'm going to keep them. But I'm not going to show them to Mr. Miami. So, don't tell him that I have them.

NATSU:

Maybe you can show them to your children someday.

YOSHIMI:

That's a good idea. I've always wanted to give my children a multicultural education.

(YOSHIMI puts the magazine and the bra into her bag.)

YOSHIMI

Natsu...

(Pause)

Thank you.

...And...

...I'm really sorry about the trip.

NATSU:

(quietly and a little sadly)

...that's okay. It's not your fault.

(a little loudly)

Maybe we can plan again when I'm married.

YOSHIMI:

...when you meet the right man!

Yeah, let's do that. A plan for four of us! But most of the time during the trip, we're going to leave our husbands alone and two of us are going to have fun together.

NATSU:

Sure!

(a little quietly)

Thank YOU, for coming. I'll see you again next summer!?

YOSHIMI:

You're going to see me in April at my wedding!

NATSU:

Am I invited?

YOSHIMI:

Of course!

Actually, Mr. Miami is arranging a plane ticket for you already.

NATSU:

Why?

YOSHIMI:

That was also included in the marriage contract.

NATSU:

Oh, my! But...

YOSHIMI:

It's a gift for you. ...And, at the wedding, you're going to sit right at the most-important-person's chair!

NATSU:

(impressed, a little quietly)

Yoshimi...

(pause)

THANKS! I'll come. You also have to TREAT me as the-most-important-person, though.

YOSHIMI:

Of course!

NATSU:

Take care, Yoshimi.

YOSHIMI:

Take care, Natsu.

(They smile at each other. NATSU bows to YOSHIMI, and YOSHIMI opens her arms widely to offer a hug.)

NATSU:

(a little surprised)

Of course!

(NATSU slightly laughs and accepts the hug from YOSHIMI. They hug each other for a while.)

(YOSHIMI walks towards the door and slightly bows again to NATSU. NATSU slightly waves her hand bye as she closes the door. NATSU stands by it for a while still holding the door knob. Then she slowly moves her head towards the piles of snacks on the floor. She walks towards them, sits on the floor by her bed, and looks at the map, tourist book, and notebook. She throws them across her room. Then she looks at the snacks. She takes all the American snacks and puts them to her left side. Then she takes all the Japanese ones and puts them towards her right. Then she gazes at them for a while. Then she puts them together again and mixes the two kinds. After gazing at them for a while, she slowly puts her head down on her knees.)

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