

Bamboo House

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. BAMBOO HOUSE - NIGHT

The light from a small terraced house, with large windows advertising "HOME DELIVERY", shines out of the darkness engulfing the rest of the street. Above the windows is a large illuminated sign reading "BAMBOO HOUSE".

INT. BAMBOO HOUSE - NIGHT

MAIR, 65, straggly greying hair and tatty old clothes, her shyness and anxiety hiding a deeper pain, waits at the counter, head down.

LIN, 50, the austere owner, is sat behind the counter on a stool, head lowered, filling in the ledger.

YAN, 25, Lin's cheerful daughter, emerges from the door curtains behind the counter with Mair's order in a carrier bag and places it on the counter.

YAN

Here you go, Mair. Del not with you today?

Lin looks up from her work at Yan with a disapproving glare. Mair, miserable, shakes her head, takes the bag and goes, leaving Yan looking concerned.

EXT. BAMBOO HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Mair exits and walks away, past the large windows, Lin can be seen through them, berating Yan.

INT. MAIR'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The front door opens. Mair steps in with her takeaway and turns on the light. She stands in the doorway, looking at the room in misery. It is sparsely decorated with old furniture, and there is no sound or sign of any welcome.

LATER

Mair sits alone on the sofa, watching TV and eating her takeaway on a folding side table. She slowly turns her head to look at the empty space on the sofa next to her and stares at it with deep sadness.

INT. MAIR'S FLAT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mair scrapes leftovers off her plate into the bin. She slowly turns and stares mournfully at a corner of the floor.

She puts the plate and cutlery in the sink and sighs deeply. She looks at her takeaway bag on the counter. It is empty but for a single fortune cookie.

Mair takes the fortune cookie and unwraps it. She cracks it open and unfolds the fortune within.

The fortune reads "Fear less and invite life in." Mair stares at it, looking miserable.

INT. MAIR'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mair enters from the kitchen, walks towards an unseen wall and sticks the fortune to it.

She stands back to view the wall. It is covered in a mass of fortunes. Standing before the wall of optimistic messages, Mair hangs her head in misery.

INT. BAMBOO HOUSE - NIGHT

Mair anxiously waits for her order in the seating area. She looks up to see a security camera focused on her, and startled, she shyly lowers her head.

Lin is sat in her usual position, behind the counter on her stool, head lowered, filling in the ledger.

Mair looks up, shocked by the RING of the bell above the door. GRIFF, 65, shabby, eccentric and carefree, enters.

Mair quickly grabs a magazine off the seat next to her as Griff turns to the seating area.

Griff sits next to Mair. She's pretending to read the magazine, holding it up, obscuring her face.

She slowly turns, lowering the magazine to peer over the top. Griff is staring right at her.

GRIFF

Dog!

Mair is confused and startled.

GRIFF

On the calendar.

Mair glances at the Chinese calendar on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

GRIFF
That's me. Griff the dog.
 (imitating a dog)
Griff! Griff!

Griff leans his head back and laughs heartily. Mair lowers her magazine, revealing her face and briefly cracking a smile before returning to her look of bemusement as Griff stops laughing and his attention returns to her.

 GRIFF
 (looking at calendar)
Full of loyalty and integrity. If
a dog comes to your house, it
symbolises the coming of fortune.

Mair smiles timidly at Griff.

 GRIFF
What about you?

 MAIR
 (shy whisper)
Horse.

 GRIFF
 (looking at calendar)
Strong, enthusiastic and good at
socialising.
 (beat)
That's good. You can teach me
some of that. I'm not much of a
one for socialising.

Yan emerges from the door curtains with Mair's order and places it on the counter.

 YAN
One egg fried rice, small chips,
and tofu in black bean sauce!

 MAIR
 (to Griff)
That's me.

 GRIFF
Sounds filling.

 MAIR
It's always too much...without my
Del to finish it off.

Mair looks down mournfully, and Griff gives a sympathetic look of recognition.

GRIFF
Has he been gone long?

 MAIR
 (rising to get her order)
A few months.

 GRIFF
 (disheartened)
I see.

Depressed, Mair takes her order from the counter.

 YAN
 (concerned)
Everything alright, Mair?

Mair says nothing. Lin looks up from her work at Yan with a disapproving glare. Mair, head down, rushes to the door.

 GRIFF
Perhaps I'll see you again?

 MAIR
I'm here Fridays.

 GRIFF
What time?

 MAIR
Around eight.

Griff looks disappointed. Mair steps towards the exit but then stops, turns to Griff and builds up her courage.

 MAIR
Or we could do something before?

 GRIFF
 (delighted)
That'd be lovely. I'll think of something.

Mair smiles timidly at Griff.

 GRIFF
Nothing too taxing mind. I'm not much of a one for excitement.

Griff's smiling face.

MATCH CUT:

MONTAGE - MAIR AND GRIFF AT BARRY ISLAND PLEASURE PARK

-- Griff's smiling face disappears into the air. He is bouncing up and down on a bungee trampoline. He makes gleeful yelps as Mair watches, smiling.

-- Griff is in a dodgem car, being repeatedly pounded by another car. Mair appears in a dodgem car and knocks the other car out the way. She and Griff smile at each other.

-- Mair and Griff are sat next to each other on the waltzer, spinning at furious speed and laughing with giddy delight.

-- Griff takes a shot at the shooting gallery. He wins the top prize, a huge stuffed dog, which he passes to Mair, smiling. Mair looks intimidated by the dog.

EXT. BARRY ISLAND PROMENADE - DAY

Mair and Griff walk along; Mair is holding the stuffed dog. She still looks uneasy, and Griff notices.

GRIFF

It's been a smashing day.

Mair is silent.

GRIFF

Everything alright?

MAIR

It's nothing.

GRIFF

Please, you can tell me.

MAIR

I used to come here with Del.

GRIFF

(disappointed)

I understand.

MAIR

Are you okay?

GRIFF

I'm fine. I just don't think I can deal with--I mean--I just don't think you're over Del is all.

MAIR

But, Griff--

(CONTINUED)

GRIFF

No, Mair. I think it's best I go.

Griff leaves, and a dismayed Mair is left holding the dog.

INT. MAIR'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mair is sat on the sofa in silence, empty and alone. She turns to look at the empty space on the sofa next to her.

INT. BAMBOO HOUSE - NIGHT

Griff enters and looks hopefully towards the seating area. He's disappointed as he sees the seats are empty.

INT. MAIR'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mair has her coat on and is pacing nervously by the front door. She stops and stares into the kitchen. The stuffed dog is in the bin, head poking out. Mair strides angrily into the

KITCHEN

and pushes the bin over. She looks down. The dog is on the floor, staring back at her with a permanent smile, and rubbish has spilt everywhere. Disappointed with herself, she kneels down and starts picking it up.

She picks up a menu for "BAMBOO HOUSE". Large letters read "HOME DELIVERY".

INT. BAMBOO HOUSE - NIGHT

Griff is sat in the seating area, anxiously staring at the clock on the wall. It's well past eight.

Griff looks at the calendar on the wall. The description of the "DOG" reads "Full of loyalty and integrity." Griff looks guilt-ridden and hangs his head in shame.

He stands up and heads for the door as the phone behind the counter RINGS, and Yan answers it.

YAN

(into phone)

Bamboo House.

Yan spots Griff heading for the door.

YAN
(hand over receiver)
Griff, what about your order!

GRIFF
Lost my appetite.

Lin, sat in her usual place, looks up from her work, giving the troubled Yan a disapproving glare.

Griff opens the door to exit.

YAN
(into phone)
One egg fried rice, small chips,
and tofu in black bean sauce. Be
right with you!

Griff stops dead in his tracks, recognising the order. He rushes over to the counter as Yan hangs up the phone.

GRIFF
Was that Mair?

YAN
Yeah, she's ordered in. Not like
her, but she hasn't been the same
since her Del died.

GRIFF
(ashamed)
No, I know.

LIN
(not looking up from her
work)
She really loved that dog.

GRIFF
(desperately to Yan)
Please, can you tell me--
(looks to Lin, puzzled)
What?

YAN
She said she really loved that
dog.

Griff is in shock as the truth dawns on him.

FLASHBACK - MAIR AND DEL, HAPPY TOGETHER

-- Mair enters her front door, and DEL, an excitable terrier, rushes to greet her.

-- Mair is sat on her sofa, watching TV and eating takeaway. She looks to her side and smiles at Del sat on the sofa next to her.

-- Mair scrapes her leftovers into Del's bowl in the corner of the kitchen and smiles as he happily devours them.

INT. MAIR'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Mair is sat on the sofa, looking miserable. The doorbell RINGS, and she rises.

EXT. MAIR'S BLOCK OF FLATS - NIGHT

Mair opens the door and stands there staring in surprise. Griff is standing before her smiling with a takeaway bag in each hand; behind him is Yan on a delivery scooter.

Mair smiles and escorts Griff inside as Yan drives off.

INT. MAIR'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mair and Griff are knelt before each other, their hands held as they kiss, their takeaway dinner beside them, lit by romantic candlelight that casts a heart-shaped light on the wall, illuminating the hopeful fortunes.

The stuffed dog is on the sofa, filling the empty space.

FADE OUT.

THE END