

## A Family Quarrel

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### LIST OF CHARACTERS

George

Tina

Willy

Fiona

Terry (only mentioned)

### ACT ONE

**SCENE:** *The action takes place in a simple but neat living room. In the middle of the room, there is a sofa and a coffee table. And next to the sofa is a small square table which has a telephone on it. There are three doors in the room, one is to outside, another is to the bedroom, and the other is to the kitchen. In the background is a set of book shelves, and some paintings. The telephone starts to ring. Lights go up and Tina, an old lady in her 60s wearing an apron, comes out of the kitchen. She directly walks to the phone and answers it. At the same time, there is a man, also in his 60s, who peeps at Tina's action through the barely opened door. He is Tina's husband George.*

TINA. Hello? Oh, Willy! (*with excitement*) How are you doing? Fine? Then how about Fiona and Terry? Oh, they are both fine. That's great! Your father and I talk about you often, especially our cute little Terry...You say that you plan to travel around Japan during New Year vacation? That's a good idea; Terry must be excited about that ...So you mean that you three can't get together with us during Chinese New year. (*Her facial expression shows her disappointment, but she pretends she doesn't mind at all.*) Oh, never mind! You just go and have fun! We can get together after you come back from Japan. OK. Bye. (*She hangs up the phone.*)

(*George rashly comes into the room, with an angry face.*)

GEORGE. (*saying to Tina with excited loud voice*) Do my ears deceive me? Willy said that he won't come back in New Year!? I can't believe it! He is the only son in our family! How can he do this to us!

TINA. Don't be so mad, honey. (*sitting*) The time is changing. Young people have their own ways of lives which are very different from us. But we should try to accept them or the young may think that we are conservative and not following new era. Moreover we can not... (*interrupted*)

GEORGE. (*still in anger*) Who cares those so called "new" or "innovative" thoughts! Coming back home before the eve of Chinese New Year and spending time together during the New Year vacation are the most important traditions of we Chinese! He shouldn't do that!

TINA. Those traditions are not as important as the old days. I heard that many working people are stressed out by their works, so they need to relax and have fun in vacations. (*As she talks, she picks up some books on the coffee table and puts them back to the bookshelf.*) You know our Willy very well. He is a very good hard-working boy. You should be more considerate as I am, then Willy will.... (*interrupted*)

GEORGE. Considerate? Are you kidding me? Both Willy and Fiona don't show any respect to us, and I should be considerate to them? No way! The other day I got on a crowded bus, I saw many young people sitting on the priority seat, but no one gave me a seat! The young are all the same! They don't know how to respect elders!

TINA. (*turning her head toward George with angry expression*) PLEASE DO NOT

lump my Willy in with those rude kids! (*She walks back to sofa and stands next to it.*) Willy won't do the thing like that. Why can you say that he doesn't respect us! He does! Willy is always nice to me because I understand him best. And he said in phone that he will come to visit us with Fiona and Terry after coming back to Taiwan. Willy is such a thoughtful boy! He's the best boy I have ever seen, and....

GEORGE. I still can't accept his idea! ... (*short silence*)... Oh, I can't stand it! I'm going to call him! I will tell him that I disagree with his absence in New Year and he should obey me if he respects me as his father! (*picking up the phone*)

TINA. Oh, you stubborn old man. Do your worst! I don't want to talk to you anymore or I will become mad! (*She leaves the room and goes back to the kitchen.*)

GEORGE. That's what I'm supposed to say! (*He dials the number and waits.*)...

(*lights gradually fading*)

## ACT TWO

**SCENE:** Another living room. In the middle of the room, there is a bright-colored sofa and a fancy coffee table. There is a cell phone on the table. There are also three doors in the room the same as George's home. In the background is a set of shelves with antiques, and a window. The lights go up. There is a woman, Fiona, in her 30s sitting on the sofa and reading magazine. The cell phone suddenly rings.

Fiona. (*shouting to the bedroom door*) Willy! Willy! Your phone is ringing!

Willy. (*He comes out from the bedroom.*) I'm coming. (*He picks up the cell phone*) Oh, it's my dad. (*Unwillingly, he answers the phone.*) Hello? Hi, Dad. How do you ... Oh, please calm down. I know that not visiting you during New Year time doesn't conform to the tradition. But sorry Dad, Terry has wanted to go abroad for a long time, and New Year vacation is the only time Fiona and I have time to take him abroad... I know! So, I said sorry to you... Oh, Dad, please do not say such a harsh word. I didn't mean to contempt you at all! We can't cancel our schedule, we have already got everything ready including tickets, hotels and... Dad, I'm so sorry but I really can't go back home in New Year. But... (*the sound of slamming down the phone*) Dad? Dad! (*to Fiona*) He has slammed down the phone!

Fiona. (*She puts the magazine away.*) Your father seemed so angry. I heard his shouts from the phone.

Willy. Yeah. (*He sits down and puts the cell phone back on the table.*) He thinks that we treat him disrespectfully because we won't visit him in New Year. That's a ridiculous idea!

Fiona. So we're not going to cancel our plan right? Honestly, I am tired of visiting your parents' place every year. (*She signs.*) Every year is just the same! Your father is angry at something we never know, and your mother always talks about how she raised you and that I should do exactly the same way to take care of Terry! I know they are your parents so I try very hard to get along with them, but I'm stressed out doing it!

Willy. Sorry, honey. (*Holding Fiona's hand*) I know you try your best on it. It's not your fault at all. The problem is the conservativeness and stubbornness of my father and talkativeness of my mother! I sometimes also feel annoyed of their behaviors such as the call earlier. But I don't want to be called an undutiful son, and you too, right? Thus, we must choose one day to visit them after we come back. Besides, they are eager to see Terry.

Fiona. I know. Only one day! I think Terry also misses his grandparents. That's no problem at all.

Willy. Thanks Fiona. You are the person who understands me the most! I love you so much. (*He hugs Fiona.*)

(*While Willy and Fiona hug, the door bell rings*)

Willy. (*He stops hugging.*) Is that Terry coming home?

Fiona. No, it is too early for him to come back. Maybe it's the repairman. I ask him to come and fix the sink. (*Door bell rings again.*) I'm going to answer it. (*She stands up, walks to the door and opens it.*)

(*George rushes into the house, Tina follows him.*)

Fiona. George! Tina! Why ...uh, I mean hello. I didn't know you are coming today.

George. (*He ignores what Fiona said.*) Willy! I'm coming to talk to you directly!

Willy. (*He is surprised and stands up.*) Dad!? I can't believe that! You are crazy!

Tina. Sorry, Willy and Fiona. I try to prevent him from doing this stupid action. But he didn't listen to me.

George. (*Being very excited and angry*) It's not stupid! It's VERY IMPORTANT! You are not allowed to spend Chinese New Year by yourselves! (*He hits the table*)

Willy. Dad!! Why can you be so stubborn! I don't want to talk to you! Please go home! You are not welcomed to my house!

George. What!? You ask me to go home! You, such a rude son! Undutiful son!

(*George seizes Willy by the collar, they start to fight.*)

Tina and Fiona. (*trying to stop them*) Stop! Stop!

(*Chaos on the stage*)

Fiona. (*She goes into kitchen and takes out a pan and a ladle, and then she hits them to make a loud noise.*) That's enough! Calm down, everyone! Calm down! (*The other three are frightened by her action, and all stop what they are doing.*) I have an idea. (*saying calmly*) The idea that can make everybody happy.

Willy. What's that? Tell us quickly.

Fiona. (*still calm*) How about we all go to Japan in New Year.

Tina. (*very happily*) That's a wonderful idea! Oh, Fiona, you are so smart! I know that the girl Willy chose cannot be wrong! I'm for her. George, you too, right?

George. (*Trying to hide his delight and satisfaction*) Better than the previous one.

Willy. (*Pulling Fiona to the front corner of stage*) Are you crazy? I don't want to take them with us to Japan! It's tiring! You said that you also do not want to spend time with them, didn't you? What's wrong with you?

Fiona. Well... I did say we can all go to Japan, but I didn't say we can go there TOGETHER. After all, Japan is so big, we go our way, and they go their way!

(*Blackout*)