



# KIM'S CONVENIENCE

김씨네 편의점

INS CHOI

Foreword by Albert Schultz

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ANANSI

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# AUTHOR'S NOTE

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My father grew up in North Korea. From the time of his birth until the end of the Second World War the country was occupied by the Japanese. Soon after the Second World War, the Korean Civil War broke out. During that time, he and his family walked south, across the mountainous Korean peninsula, with thousands of others in search of freedom. My mother grew up in an orphanage in war-torn South Korea, raising her younger brother from the age of five. After graduating from high school she worked as a secretary for the government, at which time she met my father. They arrived in Canada in 1975 with two hundred dollars, three kids, and a lot of hope. My father worked at my uncle's convenience store by day and went to ESL classes by night, while my mother took care of me and my two older sisters.

After a performance of *Kim's Convenience* at the 2011 Toronto Fringe Festival, my parents came up to me, hugged me, and said, "We are very proud of you. Thank you."

*Kim's Convenience* is my love letter to my parents and to all first-generation immigrants who call Canada their home.

# FOREWORD

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Two years ago I had a very important conversation with Ins Choi, who had proven himself in the previous year to be a gifted actor — who was also a gifted musician, who was also a gifted poet. No one yet knew that Ins was also a playwright. He was halfway through a two-year residency as a member of the Academy at the Soulpepper Theatre Company, where I am artistic director. The conversation was about life choices, and particularly about one that Ins was not sure he could make: dedicating himself to an artistic life. Ins had been to a family funeral recently, and had had a conversation with a policeman friend who had nearly convinced Ins that the steady employment, pension, and community status of an officer of the law were just the answer to his future.

For Ins, it was much more difficult to choose an artistic life than it was for others in the Academy. He arrived in this country from South Korea as a very young child, and grew up in a tight-knit Korean community with a pastor father and an extended family that did not include professional actors or poets or musicians or playwrights. I don't remember exactly what I said during our discussion, but I know the gist: You have great talent; there are so many opportunities in front of you right now; give at least another year. Six months later I was handed the first draft of *Kim's Convenience*. A year later I am writing a Foreword to a play that is now breaking box-office records at Soulpepper, where it launched our fifteenth-anniversary season.

*Kim's Convenience* is an astonishing debut play. That said, there is nothing original about the form of this play (it does not stray far from the neoclassical unities of time, place, and action), and its subject matter is extremely familiar (literally). What is remarkable about the play is that despite this familiarity, it feels so original. And it feels *very* Canadian. Ins has managed to take the most mundane (dare I say, convenient) institution of our daily life and show us its beating heart. For anyone who has watched this play, it will be impossible to pick up a litre of milk at the corner store without wondering what story is unfolding behind the cash register. Every time we hear the electronic doorbell announce our departure, we will think about the lives we have left behind.

*Kim's Convenience* is a textbook example of Mark Twain's maxim "Write what you know." Ins has written from a very personal and specific place, giving us a picture of one family in one community. The magic depth to which he has taken this specificity is the same depth from which the play's universality is sprung. This play, on hearing, becomes *our* story about *our* family in *our* community.

As a classical actor, Ins has been around great plays and he has learned from them. We feel the ghosts of Willy and Biff Loman in this play, and it is interesting to note that Ins was rehearsing and performing *Death of a Salesman* while writing *Kim's Convenience*. Ins' ability to capture cadence and humour reminds us of the great Mercer family trilogy of David French.

But the play that *Kim's Convenience* reminds me of the most is Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. Like Hansberry's great breakthrough play, *Kim's Convenience* arrives as both an artistic triumph and a major cultural event. Ins Choi has opened a door through which many will follow. Ten years from now there will be a new generation of first- and second-generation Canadians who will know, with confidence, that they can make a meaningful contribution to the well-being of their community without a uniform and a gun. For many of this generation, the first step of that journey to cultural confidence will be through the door that Ins Choi has opened. (*Cue sound of doorbell*)

Albert Schultz  
Artistic Director  
Soulpepper Theatre Company



# INTRODUCTION

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In the late nineteenth century, Canadian missionaries began working in South Korea. They built churches, hospitals, schools, and universities, while developing close relationships with the people. In 1948, a mission-sponsored medical student named Tae-Yon Whang arrived in Canada to continue his studies. After completing his education, he decided to stay and inadvertently became the first Korean to officially immigrate to Canada.

In 1965, there were seventy Korean immigrants in Canada. In 1967, the first Korean church was established at St. Luke's United Church on the corner of Sherbourne Street and Carlton Street in downtown Toronto. Originally named the Toronto Korean Church, it was renamed the Toronto Korean United Church after becoming a part of the United Church of Canada. In 1973, the Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association (OKBA) was established. The organization offered group purchasing to small businesses through its wholesale outlet, and serviced mainly Korean convenience store owners.

With the Korean church and the OKBA established, Koreans could come to Toronto, make friends, gain support, purchase a store, fill the store with products, and make a pretty good living without even having to learn English. Korean convenience stores spread all over Toronto, as did the Korean churches. In 1980, there were 20,000 Koreans in Canada, and in 2011, that number rose to 200,000. I've always considered the church and the store to be the *Umma* and the *Appa* of Korean communities in Canada.

When I graduated from the acting program at York University in 1998, there were few Asian actors to look up to. In fact, there was a lack of roles for Asian males in plays, TV shows, and movies. The only roles out there were two-bit parts in three-bit movies-of-the-week, involving silent-on-camera Asian gang members. Was this my career? There were the plays of Rick Shiomi, Jean Yoon, Marty Chan, and M. J. Kang, which inspired me, but that was about it. Something needed to change.

Then, in 2002, fu-GEN Asian Canadian Theatre Company was launched under the leadership of Nina Lee Aquino, Richard Lee, David Yee, and Leon Aureus. Through fu-GEN, the Asian theatre community in Toronto was being nurtured, award-winning shows were being produced, and new plays were being written. In 2005, Nina invited me to be part of their third playwriting unit. That was the beginning of *Kim's Convenience*. Over the next five years, I received writing grants from the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council, and was given workshop opportunities to finish this play from fu-GEN, Diaspora Dialogues, and Grace Toronto Church. It was a gruelling process. I gave up many times and celebrated the work's completion on countless occasions. And although I didn't think the play was finished, in 2010, I submitted it to a few theatre companies in Toronto, just to see what feedback I'd receive. All of them were encouraging, but none of them were interested. It was then that I realized I would have to birth this play myself. In my research of independent theatre festivals in Toronto, I came across the New Play Contest held by the Toronto Fringe Festival. The winner would automatically have his or her show in the festival, the eight-hundred-dollar entrance fee would be waived, and the title "Winner of New Play Contest" would be plastered all over promotional materials. I entered. It won.

Renowned theatre director Weyni Mengesha had agreed to direct the show, but due to scheduling conflicts, she couldn't. So I took on the Herculean task of producing and directing the play I had written, which I was also performing in. I had no money, so I began raising funds through donations from friends and family, and selling ad space in the playbill. Soon after, actor and playwright Leon Aureus came on board as co-producer. We knew that we could count on the Toronto theatre-going

crowd because of the quality of the cast and because the play had won the New Play Contest. What would prove to be a challenge was reaching the Korean audience, which was vital to me.

We went to every Korean store in K-town south (Christie and Bloor) and K-town north (Yonge and Finch), putting up posters and talking up the show. We sent posters with a cover letter to every Korean church in Toronto. We were interviewed by all the Korean media outlets and even ran a “Win Free Tickets: Korean Trivia Contest” through our Facebook page. Leon posted trailers on YouTube, which a lot of the Korean media picked up and ran on their programs. Later, Sojeong Choi came on board and did an incredible job in helping us publicize the play to the Korean community. Even cast members were tweeting, posting on Facebook, doing whatever they could to help the show gain exposure. That was the producing side of it. That was the hard part.

The show itself proved to be the easy part. I already had the cast in mind from doing workshops in the past, and they were all willing to be in the play for pretty much nothing. Actors Paul Sun-Hyung Lee, Jean Yoon, Esther Jun, Andre Sills, and I, along with stage manager Kat Chin and designer Ken Mackenzie, met whenever we could, rehearsing, free of charge, in the basement of Grace Toronto Church and in the sanctuary of Toronto Korean Bethel Church. Rehearsals were highly collaborative. We ate out together a lot and got to know each other very well.

By the time we opened, all of the advance tickets (50 percent of the run) had been sold and there was an incredible, euphoric buzz surrounding the show, especially after it had been featured on the cover of *NOW Magazine*. People were lining up for tickets two to three hours in advance and many were turned away. One Korean family came all the way from Parry Sound at the request of their friends, who told them to “close the store and come see this play; it’s about us.” The audience was about one-third Korean, one-third Caucasian, and one-third every other ethnicity under the sun, young and old. All seven performances at the two-hundred-seat Bathurst Street Theatre had sold out. The play then went on to win the Patron’s Pick Award, selling out an additional show in three hours. It was invited to be part of the Best of Fringe Uptown Festival, where it sold out an additional seven shows at the two-hundred-seat Studio Theatre at the Toronto Centre for the Arts.

It was then that I began receiving emails from commercial producers and artistic directors of Toronto theatre companies, who were interested in mounting my play. Soulpepper was the best fit. Soulpepper’s founder and artistic director, Albert Schultz, wanted the play to open the company’s 2012 season. Everybody was available except Andre Sills, who had to honour a previous contract for another show. So we auditioned all the available amazing black actors in Toronto and arrived at Clé Bennett. When I was asked about a director, I immediately proposed Weyni. This time, her schedule was open.

On December 19, 2011, we began rehearsals for *Kim’s Convenience* at Soulpepper Theatre Company. Weyni began with a ritual: each of us would share a personal object and the story of what had got us into theatre. (Those objects are hidden in our set.) We rehearsed six days a week, eight hours a day, for three weeks. Every Wednesday night, we ate Korean, Ethiopian, or Jamaican cuisine, and on Saturdays we brought sweet treats to the rehearsals. The show opened at Soulpepper on January 19, 2012.

*It’s Thursday, February 2, 2012, 7:30 p.m. I’m sitting on a couch in the green room at Soulpepper Theatre. Nancy, the stage manager, just gave us the thirty-minute call. I’m tired . . . I should get ready . . . Paul Sun-Hyung Lee, who plays Appa in the show, is sitting beside me playing some game on his iPad. Esther Jun, who plays Janet, walked in and asked something about hosting our closing night party. Jean Yoon, who plays Umma, just sat down. Actor Clé Bennett, who plays four roles in the show*



*came in and dropped a bunch of sweet potato chips that he discovered recently, and which we all love (Everybody gets up to hug Clé. He just brings that out in all of us.) Natalie, the dresser, is doing a crossword puzzle at the table. Kat, the assistant stage manager, walked by tweeting something. Nancy is now knitting a baby blanket for the soon-to-be-born baby of Ken Mackenzie, the set designer. Everyone has now vacated the room to get ready for the show . . . I'm alone in this room writing on my laptop now. I've been alone in some room writing on my laptop for the past six years, dreaming of the Chipping away at this unrelenting script, wrestling with these characters, laughing and weeping as I find myself in the story, can't help but feel sad knowing that the Kim's Convenience file titles on my laptop end here.*

kc.2006.05.FinalDraft2.cwk  
kc.2006.fugenPotluck.cwk  
kc1.2007.now.cwk  
kc2.2007.09.27.DiasporaDialogues.cwk  
kc3.2008.06.28.fugen.megapotluck.cwk  
kc5.2009.04.22.cwk  
kc6.2009.05.20.GraceChurch.cwk  
kc.2010.Autumn.Fringe.NewPlayContest.pdf  
kc.2011.04.01.Fringe.cwk  
kc.2011.07.03.Fringe.cwk  
kc.2011.12.07.soulpepper.postreading.rtf  
kc.2012.01.12.soulpepper.rtf  
kc.2012.02.11.anansi.doc

*In our opening week, Kim's Convenience sold out its entire thirty-eight-show run in the two-hundred-seat Michael Young Theatre. Soulpepper is bringing the show back in May, and we plan to tour it across Canada and around the world . . . honoured and humbled. As if a pack of wild rhinos trampled a path before me, knocking down all the barriers and smoothing every rocky place . . . I should get ready . . . Not many people in the arts have faith in God anymore. But I do and I thank God for having faith in me. Enough faith to let me play . . . I should get ready . . .*

Ins Choi  
Toronto, Ontario  
February 2012

# KIM'S CONVENIENCE

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김씨네 편의점

*Kim's Convenience* made its debut at the 2011 Toronto Fringe Festival, where it was first performed on July 6, 2011, at the Bathurst Street Theatre. The play was revived in Toronto on January 19, 2012, by the Soulpepper Theatre Company at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts. The original cast members are:

APPA Paul Sun-Hyung Lee

UMMA Jean Yoon

JUNG Ins Choi

JANET Esther Jun

RICH, MR LEE, Andre Sills (Fringe Festival production)

MIKE, and ALEX Clé Bennett (Soulpepper Theatre production)

Fringe Festival production directed by Ins Choi

Soulpepper Theatre production directed by Weyni Mengesha

# CHARACTERS

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APPA

A 59-year-old first-generation Korean-Canadian man, and owner of Kim's Convenience store. Speaks with a thick Korean-Canadian accent.

UMMAA 56-year-old first-generation Korean-Canadian woman. APPA's wife. Speaks with a thick Korean-Canadian accent.

JUNGA 32-year-old second-generation Korean-Canadian man. APPA and UMMA's son.

JANETA 30-year-old second-generation Korean-Canadian woman. APPA and UMMA's daughter.

*The following characters are played by one actor:*

RICHA young black man

MR. LEE

A successful black real estate agent and a friend of APPA

MIKE

A black man with a thick Jamaican accent

ALEX

A 32-year-old black police officer and a childhood friend of JUNG

## SCENE

A convenience store in Toronto's Regent Park, a low- to middle-income neighbourhood made up mainly of recent immigrants.

# 1. Open

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*Autumn. Morning. Inside a convenience store.*

*APPA is heard humming a medley of hymns as he enters from the back of the store with a pocketful of money, a mug of coffee in hand, and scratch-and-win card trays. He puts the coffee mug on the counter, inserts the money in the cash register, and slides in the scratch-and-win trays. He turns on the lights, then goes to the window and flips the CLOSED sign to OPEN. He unlocks the front door. He returns to the counter, pours sugar in his coffee, and stirs. As he looks out the window, he sips. He sighs. He turns on the radio and begins pricing a case of cans with a price gun.*

## 2. I am Korean

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*Early afternoon. Bell. RICH enters.*

APPA: Hi.

RICH: Hey, wassup?

APPA: Nice day.

RICH: Yeah. Hook me up with a scratch-and-win card, please? (*APPA pulls out the tray and RICH chooses a card.*) Thanks.

APPA: Is that one you car?

RICH: Sorry?

APPA: *Pointing to a car outside.* Is that one you car?

RICH: Is that one my car?

APPA: Yah.

RICH: Which one?

APPA: White Honda in no-parking zone. Is that one you car?

RICH: No, man, I don't even have a car.

APPA: Oh.

RICH: And a du Maurier Balanced, please.

APPA: Large or small?

RICH: Small.

APPA: King size or regular?

RICH: King size.

APPA: If you don't have car, why you ask, "Which one?" when I ask, "Is that one you car?"

RICH: I don't know. Didn't know what you were talking about.

APPA: *Indicating the case of cans on the counter.* Insam Energy Beverage?

RICH: What?

APPA: It's Insam Energy Beverage. It's new one, very good from Korea. Made from —

RICH: Ginseng.

APPA: No, insam.

RICH: No, like what it's made from, looks like ginseng.

APPA: No, looks like insam. That's why it's call —

RICH: You're not hearing me. (*Picking up a can.*) The picture, right here, it's ginseng.

APPA: No, picture is insam.

RICH: Yo — forget it, it's no big deal. (*Putting the can back.*)

APPA: Yo, it's very big deal. Look same, not same thing. 1904. You know what happen 1904? Japan attack Korea.

RICH: Japan attacked Korea?

APPA: Yah.

RICH: In 1904?

APPA: Yah.

RICH: Are you Japanese?

APPA: No.

RICH: You look Japanese.

APPA: No.

RICH: Yo, you look like that guy in *The Last Samurai*.

APPA: Who, Tom Cruise?

RICH: No, the Japanese guy.

APPA: Look same, not same thing. You look like you is from Kenya.

RICH: I am from Kenya. I was born there. How'd you know that?

APPA: I can tell.

RICH: Really?

APPA: Yeah. Really.

RICH: Yo, that is cool.

APPA: I know. I am.

RICH: Why were we talking about Japan attacking Korea?

APPA: Japan attack Korea 1904, make slave of Korean. I am Korean. Ginseng is Japanese name. Insan is Korean name. (*Beat.*) Look same —

APPA &

RICH: — not same thing.

APPA: You understand.

RICH: Yeah, I gotcha. Hook me up.

APPA: Okay. I hook up. Anything else?

RICH: No, that's it.

APPA: *Tallies up the total on the cash register.* \$12.52.

*RICH gives APPA a twenty.*

RICH: Thanks.

*APPA gives RICH his change.*

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APPA: Okay. See you.

*RICH remains at the counter and plays the scratch-and-win card. He loses.*

APPA: You win?

RICH: Nah.

APPA: You choose bad one. Okay, see you.

RICH: Yeah, have a good one.

*RICH exits. Bell.*

### 3. Call police

*JANET enters from the back of the store with her camera bag. She goes to the side closet for her jacket and fills up on candy throughout the scene.*

APPA: Janet.

JANET: Bye Appa.

APPA: Call police.

JANET: *Startled.* What happened?

APPA: Car is no-parking zone. (*Offers her the cordless phone.*) Call police.

JANET: I gotta go.

APPA: *Slowly dialling.* Nine . . . one —

JANET: Stop being so nosy.

APPA: YOU nosy! Talk to police.

JANET: I'm not talking to the police.

APPA: I'm push last one.

JANET: I don't care if you push last one. I'm not talking to the police.

APPA: I don't care if you don't care, I'm push last one.

JANET: Mind your own business, Appa.

APPA: This is my business. Talk to police.

JANET: What, it's a Toyota?

APPA: No.

JANET: Mitsubishi?

APPA: No. (*Beat.*) Okay, it's Honda, but still —

JANET: How many times do I have to tell you, Appa, Japanese people aren't the only ones driving



Japanese cars.

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APPA: You buy Japanese, you is guilty by association.

JANET: What about your Canon SLR camera, made in Japan?

APPA: Appa get half-price.

JANET: Your money still went to Japan.

APPA: Half-price, I rip off Japan.

JANET: Still Japanese.

APPA: I scratch name. Nobody can tell. Talk to police.

JANET: What about Mr. Shin? He's a salesman for Honda.

APPA: Mr. Shin is Mr. Shit.

JANET: I thought you guys were best friends?

APPA: No, he is pimping the Jesus now.

JANET: What?

APPA: He is pimping the Jesus.

JANET: He's doing what to Jesus?

APPA: Pimping.

JANET: Peemping?

APPA: Not peemping, pimping.

JANET: Pimping.

APPA: Yah. He is using church to selling Honda. Different church every Sunday, selling Honda. That's pimping the Jesus.

JANET: How'd you learn about a word like pimping?

APPA: Janet, I am cool, what you talking?

JANET: Okay, what about Mr. Park? He sets up cheap sushi restaurants in the Annex. He's promoting Japanese cuisine. He's guilty by association, and since you're his best friend, so are you.

APPA: No.

JANET: Yes.

APPA: No.

JANET: Yes.

APPA: No. That's different. He is pimping Japan. Pimping Japan is okay. He is make money selling Japan food, but he is Korean. White people can't tell difference. Kind of look same. Korean Grill House, run by Chinese. Chinese pimping Korea. That's no good. Appa boycott. Talk to police.

JANET: Talk to them yourself.

APPA: Police hear accent, they don't take serious.

JANET: Appa —

APPA: Janet! 1904 Japan attack Korea —

*Bell. MR LEE, a successful real estate agent, enters.*

JANET: Okay, fine! I'll call the police.

APPA: 그래! 아이씨 참! [That's right!]

*JANET takes out her cellphone.*

## 4. The offer

LEE: Mr. Kim.

APPA: Oh, Mr. Lee! My black friend with Korean last name!

LEE: Hi Janet.

JANET: Hey, Mr. Lee.

*JANET exits. Bell.*

APPA: Long time now see.

LEE: Yeah, it's been a while.

APPA: Wah, look at you, nice jacket, pants. Turn around. Turn around. (*LEE does a flashy Michael Jackson turn.*) Wah, looks very good.

LEE: You like this? I can get you one.

APPA: Oh, no, no thank you. Not my style. How's mommy, daddy?

LEE: They're doing very well, thank you.

APPA: And how's you business?

LEE: Business is good. Business is very good. (*Beat. Gazing out the window.*) Lotta condos going up in the area, eh, Mr. Kim?

APPA: Yah, very fast. They is working hard.

LEE: Did you hear about Walmart?

APPA: Walmart? What's Walmart?

LEE: Apparently once those condos are up and ready, Walmart's moving in.

APPA: Why Walmart wants to moving to Regent Park?

LEE: 'Cuz once those condos are up and ready, Regent Park isn't gonna be Regent Park anymore. (*LEE hands APPA his card.*) Here.

APPA: I already have you card.

LEE: This is a new one. Flip it over.

APPA: What flip?

LEE: The card. Flip the card over, Mr. Kim. (*APPA turns the card upside down.*) That's not a flip, that's a turn.

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APPA: Oh, flip, okay.

*APPA flips the card over twice.*

LEE: You're back on the same — just — I'm serious, Mr. Kim! (*LEE grabs APPA'S hands, showing him the back of the card.*) There. See?

APPA: No, I can't see. Light is no good here. (*APPA goes back behind the counter.*) What is?

LEE: That's my offer for your store, Mr. Kim.

APPA: Offer?

LEE: Mr. Kim, I want to purchase your store.

APPA: You want to buy my store?

LEE: Yes, I want to buy your store for that amount.

APPA: Oh, Mr. Lee, this is lots of money.

LEE: I wouldn't dare insult you with anything less.

*Beat.*

APPA: This is very generous, Mr. Lee, but, no. This community need me. Even if Walmart moving in, people in neighbourhood need this store.

LEE: I understand that, Mr. Kim, but once Walmart moves in, I'm sorry to say, but that's it. No one can compete with that kinda buying power. Dufferin Mall, Jane and St. Clair —

APPA: Mr. Lee, my answer is no! Thank you.

*APPA offers the card. LEE takes the card and resolves to leave.*

LEE: Mr. Kim, do you have an exit plan?

APPA: Exit plan?

LEE: What's your exit plan, Mr. Kim? What's your exit plan from this life? You plan on working at the store 'til you die? That's not a good exit plan. You've had a rough life, especially with your son. Don't think for a minute that I don't remember the kind of trouble Jung put you through. Now if Jung were here, he'd take over the store. But he's not here and he's not coming back. (*Offering her card.*) This is your only opportunity to enjoy life a little, Mr. Kim, before there's only a little life left to enjoy. (*APPA doesn't take the card. LEE puts it on the counter.*) Well, think it over. Give me a call tonight. I gotta go. I'm parked in a no-parking zone.

*Bell. JANET enters.*

JANET: Appa, did you see my Day-timer?

APPA: Mr. Lee! (*JANET puts her bags on the counter and rushes into the side closet.*) White Honda is your car?

LEE: Yeah. Mr. Shin gave me an offer I couldn't refuse. Give me a call.

*Bell. LEE exits. APPA takes out a printing calculator and adds up some figures. He tears off the receipt and looks at it close up. It's impressive. He puts LEE'S card on the cash register and begins making a list of things to pick up at the wholesaler.*

## 5. I am serious

*JANET is in the side closet looking for her Day-timer.*

APPA: Janet?

JANET: What?

APPA: Did you call police?

JANET: Yeah.

APPA: Good. Now, call police again and cancel order.

JANET: What?

APPA: Cancel order, we don't need.

JANET: Forget it. You cancel the order.

APPA: I am serious, Janet.

JANET: Seriously?

APPA: Yah, seriously.

JANET: No kidding?

APPA: No kidding.

JANET: You serious?

APPA: Yah, I am serious.

JANET: No foolin'?

APPA: Who is fooling?

JANET: You.

APPA: No. What you talking?

JANET: I'm talking serious.

*JANET appears.*

APPA: Me too.

JANET: You don't look serious.

APPA: My face is serious.

JANET: That's your serious face?

APPA: This is my serious face!

JANET: Seriously?

APPA: Seriously!!

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*UMMA enters with her jacket on, carrying her purse and a covered tray of food.*

UMMA: *To APPA.* 그만해 아이씨참!! [Will you two quit it!!]

*JANET, with a mischievous smile, exits to the back of the store.*

*APPA restocks the gum shelf as UMMA puts the tray of food behind the counter.*

## 6. I'm going

UMMA: 내가 이따가 와서 치울게요. [Just leave it, I'll clean it up when I get back.]

APPA: 주일날 최집사님이 저녁 같이 하자네. 시간돼? [This Sunday Mr. Chae wants to get together for dinner. How's your schedule?]

UMMA: *Picking up LEE'S card.* 이게 뭐예요? [What's this?]

APPA: 어... 그거... 그러니까 그게... Mr. Lee 가 오퍼낸거야... 우리가게. [Oh... that's, uh... Mr. Lee's offer... for the store.]

UMMA: 오퍼요? 가게 판다는 얘기 안했잖아요. [I didn't know you were selling the store.]

APPA: 팔려고 하는게 아니라... Mr. Lee 방금 오퍼를 상의도 없이 주고 갔데니까. [I wasn't... Mr. Lee just made an offer. Just now.]

UMMA: 가격은 꽤 관참네. [It's a generous offer.]

APPA: 그러게... [I know...]

UMMA: 은퇴할 수 있겠네. [You could retire.]

APPA: 그러게. [I know.]

UMMA: *Beat. Gets herself together.* Janet, I'm going. Janet, I'm going to church. Janet? Janet!

*JANET appears.*

JANET: What?!

UMMA: 엄마 갔다올께. [I'm going to church.]

JANET: Then 가 [go] already.

UMMA: *Under her breath as she leaves.* 아휴, 이 기집애 때때 내가 죽겠다, 죽겠어. [Ugh, I swear she's gonna be the death of me, the death of me.]

*UMMA exits. Bell.*

## 7. What's your plan?

*APPA resumes pricing the cans. JANET is organizing her camera lenses and lens-cleaning material at the counter.*

APPA: Janet.

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JANET: What, Appa, she drives me crazy!

APPA: Do you have exit plan?

JANET: What?

APPA: Do you have exit plan?

JANET: Do I have a what?

*APPA stops pricing.*

APPA: Exit plan. You having?

JANET: An exit plan? For what?

APPA: No, like what's you life plan?

JANET: What are you talking about?

APPA: You is thirty years old now. Have to think what is plan you future. What you think, take over store?

JANET: I don't want to work at the store.

APPA: What's wrong with store?

JANET: How can I work at the store, Appa? I'm busy.

APPA: Not work at store. I am talking take over store. Make Kim's Convenience dynasty.

JANET: Take over the store?

APPA: Yah.

JANET: Don't you want me to succeed in life? Look, Appa, you did what you had to do, right? And I appreciate that. I do. But didn't you do what you had to do so I wouldn't have to do what I had to do but could choose what I wanted to do?

APPA: What?

JANET: I'm a photographer, Appa. This is what I've chosen to do.

APPA: Yah, you can do weekend. Hobby, like me. But you don't make money take picture. Store make money. Take over store: money. Picture: hobby. It's good deal for you.

JANET: I don't want to take over the store. I don't even know how to run the store.

*JANET goes back into the closet.*

## 8. Jamaican

*Bell. MIKE enters. He speaks with a thick Jamaican accent.*

MIKE: Hey, man, wa gwan? D'ya have a tub o' Vaseline fa me? A tub o' Vaseline?

*Beat.*

APPA: What?

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MIKE: D'ya have a tub o' Vaseline?

APPA: Seen? Sorry, I don't — I can't catch fast what you talking.

*Beat.*

MIKE: What?

APPA: I can't catch hearing you speak mouth too fast.

MIKE: What ya talking about?

APPA: No, uh, what you talking?

MIKE: About what?

APPA: What?

MIKE: What what?

APPA: No, you ask me —

MIKE: Y'aks me what I talking, what ya referring to?

APPA: Why you talking like you want to fight me?

MIKE: Me not speaking like me want to fight ya. Me not want to fight. Me just need a tub o' Vaseline, see, and dis how me speak, take it or leave it.

APPA: Okay, I take.

MIKE: Ladda mercy, me look for it me damn self. Cha! (*As he walks down an aisle*) Chinaman wan run business in Canada and him can't even speak da language proply.

## 9. Steal or no steal

*JANET appears and APPA ushers her behind the counter at the window.*

APPA: Janet, Janet, you see?

JANET: See what?

APPA: That guy.

JANET: Which guy?

APPA: Not front of store, back of store. See? Don't look! See, but don't look.

JANET: The black guy?

APPA: Janet, don't be racist.

JANET: What?

APPA: You see?

JANET: Yeah, I saw the guy. So?

APPA: He is steal.

JANET: What?

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APPA: He is steal.

JANET: You saw him take something?

APPA: No, he is going to steal.

JANET: How can you tell?

APPA: He is black guy, jean jacket. That combo is steal combo. You don't know how to run store, I teach you. This is training day. Lesson number one, steal or no steal. Every customer, have to know. Steal or no steal. (*Beat. Pointing to a girl outside.*) See that girl? She is no steal. She is black girl, fat. Fat black girl is no steal. (*Pointing to a guy outside.*) Fat white guy, that's steal. Fat guy is black, brown shoes, that's no steal. That's cancel-out combo.

JANET: That is so awkwardly racist.

APPA: Not racist . . . survival skill. Look. Secret survival skill. (*Closes his eyes and looks around.*) Make eyes very small. Then nobody know you even looking. (*Reopens his eyes.*) Okay, brown guy, that's steal. Brown girl, that's no steal. Asian guy, that's no steal. Asian girl, that's steal. If you is the gay, that's no steal. Easy. The gay is never steal. If you is the lesbian, that is girl who is the gay, that's steal, one hundred percent guarantee they is steal. But two lesbian, that's no steal, cancel-out combo.

JANET: What about a black lesbian with long straight hair and a fat Asian gay man with short hair together? Steal or no steal?

APPA: That's impossible.

JANET: What's impossible?

APPA: The gay, Asian, fat?

JANET: Appa, there are Asians who are gay, y'know?

APPA: I know, but the gay Asian is never fat. Only skinny Asian is the gay. That's rule. Shhh.

## 10. Hapkido

MIKE: Me find it in da back.

*MIKE comes to the counter with a tub of Vaseline.*

APPA: Oh, Vaseline. You using for feet? I using for feet. My heel get hard and cracking. Vaseline make smooth.

MIKE: Right.

APPA: *Tallies up the total on the cash register. \$4.65. (MIKE gives APPA a twenty.)* Thank you. Okay, I give to you change.

*APPA closes the cash register and comes around to the other side of the counter, standing between MIKE and the door.*

MIKE: Wa gwan?



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