

PERFECT HARMONY

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Story by

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EXT. MANILA - CHURCH - DAY

Heavy rain. A crumbling church building can be seen. Young children can be heard singing gospel music that soars over the sound of the rain.

INT. MANILA - CHURCH - DAY

The heavy rain is causing the beams in the building to groan. A small group of parishioners are watching a children's choir sing. The music makes them forget their surroundings. They watch and sway happily.

A small Filipino girl, YOUNG MELODY DE LUNA, breaks out into a solo. MELODY'S MOTHER, watches in joy and smiles. One of her NEIGHBORS puts her arm on Melody's Mother's shoulder. She puts her arm over her neighbors and smiles with joy.

CUT TO:

INT. MANILA - CHURCH - DAY

Mass has finished. Melody's mother and her friend, JESSICA, approach Young Melody.

YOUNG MELODY

Was I ok mama?

JESSICA

Oh Melody you have the voice of an angel! Your singing is this church's salvation!

MELODY'S MOTHER

You were fantastic Melody. Look, look at the faces of these people.

She points at everyone filing out. They all seem happy and chatty.

MELODY'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

You see how happy you make them? They all know that no matter how bad things can get in the Philippines, they can always come here every Sunday and hear you sing. You have a gift Melody, never forget that.

Young Melody smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. MARINA BAY SANDS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

A white sheet covers our view. We can hear humming to the THEME SONG with tinges of a melodic voice singing here and there. The sheet is whipped away to reveal a magnificent hotel room and a large window looking out onto sunny Singapore.

MELODY, now in her 20s, is listening to music through earphones as she cleans the room in a hotel housekeeper's uniform. She bops and bumps totally absorbed by the music.

MR. CHIN (O.S.)

Melody! Melody are you listening!?

MR. CHIN, in his early 30s and the Deputy Head of Housekeeping, is standing at the entrance of the hotel room calling out to her. He goes up to her and sharply pulls out one of her earphones.

MR. CHIN (CONT'D)

MELODY!

Melody yells out and jumps in fright. She sees him and immediately removes her other ear piece and stuffs it in her pocket.

MELODY

Yes Mr. Chin!

MR. CHIN

I've been standing there calling your name for- I need you to hurry up! We have twenty more rooms to clean. You know the hotel is fully booked!

MELODY

Y-Yes Mr. Chin!

MR. CHIN

And what have I told you about listening to music while cleaning the rooms? Put it away right now.

MELODY

Yes Mr. Chin. I'm sorry Mr. Chin.

MR. CHIN

Don't be sorry. Just be professional.

He pulls out his walkie talkie as he walks away.

MR. CHIN (CONT'D)

This is Chin, I'm heading up to the presidential suite now. There better not be a spec of dust in there!

He leaves. Melody sighs shakily and takes out a sterilized wipe and starts to wipe the TV remote controls. As she does so she mistakenly hits the power button and the TV comes on to a local news channel.

A FEMALE REPORTER is standing in the hotel lobby. There is a lot of commotion as people walk around the lobby. There are also crews with all sorts of equipment going back and forth. A large sign reading "THE SONG - ASIA'S PREMIERE SINGING COMPETITION" is behind her along with JOHN RIMO, a music producer. He wears a jacket with a silk shirt and wears tinted glasses.

Melody takes a moment, she looks towards to the door to ensure Mr. Chin has left and then watches TV.

FEMALE REPORTER

We're here at the Marina Bay Sands hotel where preparations for the upcoming season of the longest running singing competition in Asia, "The Song", are well underway. The winning band gets a hundred thousand dollars and a record contract! I have with me today one of the most renowned music producers in Asia and one of the judges, Mr. John Rimo. Mr. Rimo, how is the competition looking this year?

JOHN RIMO

It's looking better than ever. This is the third year that I've been invited to judge in "The Song" and I feel the slate of contestants are the best we've ever had. I'm personally very excited and looking forward to some incredible performances.

CUT TO:

INT. MARINA BAY SANDS LOBBY

John Rimo continues to be interviewed and as he talks we see JOJO, Johan Karlsson, walk by in the background.

He drags a pulley bag with a damaged wheel so needs to keep stopping to readjust the bag's position. He talks on his mobile phone throughout to his girlfriend, RONNIE, who sounds disinterested and distracted in the conversation.

JOJO

No, no, I just got here. I'm going to check in now.

RONNIE (V.O.)

I wish I could have come on the same flight as you.

JOJO

The important thing is to rest your voice babe. I can't have you losing it half way through the competition. How're you feeling now?

RONNIE (V.O.)

Fine. Think it must have been a 24 hour thing.

JOJO

I'm glad to hear that. How's the rest of the band?

RONNIE (V.O.)

They're good, they're good.

JOJO

We win this competition and all our hard work will pay off. Trust me I know.

RONNIE (V.O.)

Yeah, yeah. I know, you won it once. You told me like a million times.

He gets to the check-in counter and nods to the RECEPTIONIST. He hands over his passport.

JOJO

Anyway, once you guys get in tonight we'll go straight to the stage and do a quick sound check. Just need to make sure the acoustics are perfect. Ronnie? You there?

Slight pause.

RONNIE (V.O.)
 Sorry, got caught up with
 something. Sure that sounds good.
 Listen, I better rest up. I'll see
 you tonight.

JOJO
 Uh ok. I love-.

She hangs up before he can finish.

JOJO (CONT'D)
 -you.

He hangs up the phone.

RECEPTIONIST
 Thank you Mr. Karlsson. You'll be
 happy to know that we're upgrading
 you to a suite. I'll just need your
 credit card for the deposit.

Johan pulls out a large number of credit cards and chooses
 one.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
 Thank you sir.

JOJO
 Where's the ballroom located?

RECEPTIONIST
 We have a number of ballrooms sir.
 Are you looking for one in
 specific?

JOJO
 I'm here for the competition.

RECEPTIONIST
 Of course. It's in the convention
 center sir. You can take the lift
 or escalators up to the fifth
 floor. And will you be competing
 Mr. Karlsson?

Johan laughs.

JOJO
 Me? No, no. I used to play a long
 time ago. I'm a music producer now.
 My band will be playing. You may
 have heard of them, The Valkyries.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry sir but I'm afraid your card has been declined.

JOJO

That's strange.

He shuffles through his cards again and pulls another one.

JOJO (CONT'D)

Try this one.

RECEPTIONIST

One moment sir. Yes, that works fine. Your room is on the fourteenth floor. Would you like me to send your bag up?

JOJO

No need. Thank you!

RECEPTIONIST

Good luck sir!

As he walks a GROUP OF MEN recognize him and call out. He goes and shakes their hands.

INT. THE SONG AUDITORIUM - DAY

A massive auditorium with a large stage with lots of people walking around testing lights and sounds. A nondescript band stands on stage and test out the equipment and instruments.

MAX VOLDSTEIN, a rival music producer, stands with his arms crossed and grimaces as he listens to the tests. He is in his 30s with a big beer belly. Johan goes and stands next to him taking everything in. Max notices him after a moment.

MAX

Jojo? Is that you? My god how long has it been?

They shake hands.

JOJO

Heya Max. How you been?

MAX

How are things in Bangkok? Still there right?

JOJO

Yah. Still there.

MAX

I didn't know you had a band in the competition. I don't remember seeing your name on the list.

JOJO

Oh we're in the competition. You know how they are with the paperwork. Some document didn't make it or something. I'm gonna go sort it out in a bit. Just, you know...

MAX

Of course. Scoping out the battleground. Checking on the enemy.

JOJO

These your guys?

MAX

Them? God no. Terrible aren't they? No chance.

JOJO

Well, this is where you cut the dreamers from the professionals.

Max laughs disproportionately at Johan's comment.

MAX

Oh Jojo! I've missed your little phrases! It's so good to see you. Really. I'm glad to see you in the big time again. I still remember when we first met here three years ago. When you were on top.

JOJO

That's right. You had your first band. God that feels like ages ago.

MAX

Feels like yesterday to me. Check this out.

Holds out his wrist to show a flashy watch.

MAX (CONT'D)

You know how much this cost? Guess. Go on guess.

JOJO
I have no idea.

MAX
Thirty thousand. And I didn't even blink.

JOJO
That's great Max.

MAX
Hey, I have to run but lets catch up later at the hotel bar or something huh? You take care buddy.

Johan nods and Max leaves.

JOJO
(mutters)
Asshole.

INT. MARINA BAY SANDS STAFF CANTEEN - DAY

A cavernous canteen area with lot of staff members sitting and eating. Melody sits by herself at a table slowly eating her food. She feels for her locket around her necklace and opens it. Inside is the picture of her 6 year old son, ANTHONY.

CUT TO:

INT. MARINA BAY SANDS STAFF CANTEEN - DAY

A few tables away sit another set of housekeeping staff. Two of them, MARIA TORRES and JERAMAE RODRIGUEZ are eating dinner. Maria is in her early 30s and religious with a golden cross on her necklace. Jeramae aka "Chicken wing" is in her late 20s and is a fat and jolly girl. She has a large plate of fried chicken wings in front of her and goes through them as she talks.

JERAMAE
What was wrong with that movie?

MARIA
Too much violence and too much sex.

JERAMAE
What's wrong with that? That's what makes a good movie now a days you know!

MARIA

A good movie should make you feel good. Not...like whatever you felt like after.

JERAMAE

You need to take the stick out of your butt Maria.

MARIA

Jeramae!

JERAMAE

I'm just saying. It will help you to loosen up a little. Hey!

She indicates in the distance.

JERAMAE (CONT'D)

Ms. Jessica!

Maria turns and looks.

CUT TO:

INT. MARINA BAY SANDS STAFF CANTEEN - DAY

Jessica, now one of the senior housekeeping staff approaches Melody.

CUT TO:

INT. MARINA BAY SANDS STAFF CANTEEN - DAY

JERAMAE

Holy crap! I told you she knows the new girl!

Maria hits Jeramae.

JERAMAE (CONT'D)

Ow!

MARIA

Don't swear. You think they know each other?

JERAMAE

Who knows? All I know is that any girl who starts cleaning rooms this early must be doing something fu-

Maria looks at her sharply.

JERAMAE (CONT'D)
 Uh, unreligious! You know what I mean? You see how Mr. Chin is always hanging around her? My first year I was stuck in laundry. In the basement. No daylight, no nothing. I didn't know if I was coming or going.

Jeramae looks at Maria's untouched food.

JERAMAE (CONT'D)
 You gonna eat that?

CUT TO:

INT. MARINA BAY SANDS STAFF CANTEEN - DAY

Jessica sits down with Melody.

JESSICA
 Mind if I join you?

Melody immediately smiles.

MELODY
 Not at all!

JESSICA
 Haven't made friends yet?

MELODY
 Oh I will. I've just been...you know a little busy. Getting used to this place.

JESSICA
 Yes, I heard Mr. Chin complaining. Listening to music on the job?

Melody blushes a little.

MELODY
 I'm sorry about that.

Jessica laughs.

JESSICA
 Oh Melody, I don't care about that. I know how much you love music.