

Fortune

By

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FADE IN:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

MARTY (40) sits at a table alone, eating with chopsticks. He is white, overweight and sweaty, pushing his glasses up his nose as he reads a fantasy novel opened on the table next to him. ZHANG appears, staring at Marty.

ZHANG

How is the rice, Martin?

Marty jumps; Zhang smiles.

MARTY

Heavens, Zhang. I've told you not to sneak up on me.

ZHANG

I'm sorry, Martin. You have been involved into that book for quite some time now. What is it?

MARTY

Nothing, just a novel.

ZHANG

Ah, may I?

Zhang picks up the book.

ZHANG (cont'd)

'Wizards of the Red Plains'. Sound like an interesting tale. This what you read here every day for lunch?

MARTY

(in between bites)

Mostly.

ZHANG

You like wizards?

Marty grunts, his mouth full.

ZHANG (cont'd)

I see. Anything more, Martin?

MARTY

Just the check.

(CONTINUED)

ZHANG

Right away. Here is your book. You have it finished soon. Maybe you have new book here for lunch tomorrow?

MARTY

We'll see.

ZHANG

(ominously)

We will.

Zhang walks away, hands clasped behind his back, noting everybody in the restaurant. Marty returns to the book. The check arrives, but Marty doesn't look up. He reaches for it and Zhang appears again.

ZHANG (cont'd)

I almost forget.

Marty is startled again.

ZHANG (cont'd)

Your fortune!

Zhang sets down a fortune cookie. Marty picks it up.

INS: CU FORTUNE COOKIE

MARTY

Thanks, Zha-

Zhang has disappeared. Marty shakes his head and unwraps the fortune cookie, setting the fortune aside under the edge of his plate until he eats the whole cookie. As he chews, he surveys the restaurant tables and spots:

MONTAGE

- 1) A BLONDE in a tight dress, eating alone.
- 2) A table of MAFIA HENCHMEN in chains and silk shirts.
- 3) A long-haired TEENAGER in a trench coat with narrowed eyes, staring at the cash register.
- 4) A family with several out-of-control CHILDREN and toys cascading from the table.

Marty reaches for the fortune and holds it up to read...but the fortune is torn in half.

INS. CU FORTUNE SLIP - "YOU WILL FIND--"

Marty rubs his stomach.

MARTY

Too bad.

INS: INTERTITLE: OTHER HALF OF FORTUNE SLIP "--DANGEROUS OPPORTUNITIES ARE NIGH."

Marty is signing the check when one of the Mafia men sits down across from him.

MAFIA

You look like a smart guy.

MARTY

What?

MAFIA

Smart guy. Guy that might know an opportunity when it presents itself.

MARTY

No, I'm sorry, I don't think so.

MAFIA

I do. So you take this-

He slides a cliché silver briefcase towards Marty.

MAFIA (cont'd)

-to Union Station and leave it in locker 415. There's an envelope in that locker that you can have.

MARTY

What, I don't under-

MAFIA

See you.

Mafia leaves with the group. Marty sits speechless. He looks around, and then cracks open the briefcase to peek inside. Zhang appears sitting across from him.

ZHANG

I think that's not a good idea, Martin.

(CONTINUED)

MARTY
(slams shut briefcase)
Zhang!

ZHANG
Time to go.

Zhang nods towards the door over his shoulder, where several men in suits and dark sunglasses are walking in the door, heading for Marty.

MARTY
Are they coming for me?!

ZHANG
Who knows. Perhaps you run now.

MARTY
What? No, I don't even know-

ZHANG
Run, Martin.

The men are almost to Marty. One of the points at him, and Marty stands up, clutches the briefcase to his chest and runs towards the back of the restaurant.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT KITCHEN - EVENING

Marty runs into the kitchen and through it, whimpering and knocking down dishes. The men are close behind, pushing cooks out of the way. Marty runs out the back door.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT ALLEY - EVENING

MARTY
Oh God, Oh God, Oh God...

Marty slips, dropping the briefcase. It slides out of reach as the men bust out of the restaurant. Marty screams.

SUIT
Hold it!

MARTY
I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I don't even know what that is, some guy gave it to me! Take it! *Take it!*

The man moves towards Marty, reaching into his jacket, as though to draw a gun. Marty screams again, squeezing his eyes shut...

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Marty has his hand on his stomach, chewing the fortune cookie. Sweating, he reaches for the fortune under the edge of the plate. It's torn in half again.

MARTY

What? Oh no.

The BLONDE sits down across from Marty. Her dress is cut low, revealing enormous cleavage.

INS: INTERTITLE: OTHER HALF OF FORTUNE SLIP "--LUST AND PASSION."

BLONDE

I need a man.

MARTY

What?

BLONDE

I'm tired of being alone. My husband's a two-timer, I know it. I just need someone to be with. Someone...big.

She rubs his arm. He jerks it away.

MARTY

I...I...you...

He stares at her cleavage.

BLONDE

Come on.

She leads Marty out by the hand. Marty looks around and spots Zhang standing a few tables away, watching. Zhang flashes a toothy grin and gives Marty and thumbs-up sign.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - EVENING

The woman throws Marty against a late-model convertible, and tries to force a kiss. Marty squirms away.

(CONTINUED)

MARTY

Hey! I'm not that kind of guy!

BLONDE

But I'm that kind of girl...

She begins to loosen a strap on her dress. Marty screams and runs back inside, throwing open the door and...

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Marty is back to sitting at the table, chewing the cookie. He spits it out, shocked.

INS: INTERTITLE: OTHER HALF OF FORTUNE SLIP "--HEROISM DEEP WITHIN YOURSELF."

The teenager in the coat stands up, pulling a gun. Simultaneously, Marty stands up to run away.

TEENAGE

Everybody freeze or you die!

Marty runs frantically for the door, knocking the teenager to the ground, and tripping himself in the process. Zhang calls from a few tables away.

ZHANG

Good work, Martin!

Several people subdue the teenager, and Marty sits up...

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Once again, he's chewing. This time, out of breath, he looks around, terrified.

INS. INTERTITLE: OTHER HALF OF FORTUNE SLIP "--SIMPLICITY IN YOUTH."

One of the children from the next table sits across from Marty, spilling building blocks all over the table. Marty swallows the cookie, scared of the child.

(CONTINUED)

CHILD
Want to play castle?

The kid begins to build walls.

CHILD
Here!

The kid pushes some blocks towards Marty. With trepidation, Marty begins to stack them.

CHILD (cont'd)
See, we both have castles.

Marty becomes more involved with the blocks. The mother notices from the next table.

MOTHER
No, Charles! Leave that poor man
alone.
(to Marty)
I'm so sorry.

MARTY
(chuckle)
No problem. Kids got imagination.

As the kid goes back to his mother, he knocks some blocks onto the floor. Marty bends over to pick them up.

MARTY
Here you go.

He sits up...

...and is chewing the cookie again. He sighs, no longer holding the block.

MARTY
I give up.

He reaches for the check, pulling some money from his wallet. As he sets the money down, he notices a small slip of paper under the check. He picks it up, and it is the other half of the fortune.

INS. CU FORTUNE SLIP - "--THE MISSING PIECE."

Marty laughs, and then leaves the restaurant. Zhang comes and picks up the check.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

8.

Wizards. ZHANG

END