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Aftershocks

By Paul Brown

"July 27, 1976 Tangshan"

Dad, fast. Look!

Dragonflies!

There are too many. I don't even
want to chase them.

Dad, why are there so many
dragonflies?

A storm must be approaching.

Dad, I want a popsicle

Let's get off

Go with your brother and take this
fan home.

Tell mom I'm going to the factory.

I'll come back home later.

Are six pennies enough?

Enough.

Be careful.

Two milk popsicles, please.

Ying Tong, let's go.

Give it to me

Ying Tong's brother stole my popsicle!

Fang Da! Hurry, run.

- How dare you?

- Hurry, run.

Run home. Don't let him catch you.

Hurry.

Fang Da, run faster.

Hurry. Come on.

Slow down.

What are you carrying

Dad bought a fan.

Blow it on me. Blow it on me.

Hold on.

I have to plug it in first.

Fang Da,

Don't get your hand caught in the fan.

Get down!

How's this?

Good.

First me.

No, first let it blow on mom.

Mom's all hot from cooking.

we can all cool off together.

Mom, feel better?

Yes, it's cooler.
You two cool off.
Don't put your hands inside.
Okay.
Nice and cool.
Don't move.
Dad has two watches now.
Dad,
What time do you want it to be?
Seven.
Okay
I bought two new book bags for you.
I want the Tiananmen Square one.
I want the Great wall one.
Don't turn it off.
It's hot.
But you can't let it blow on you
like that.
Come here.
Mom's got to put powder on you.
Mom, I want to eat a tomato.
I do too.
Just a minute.
My gosh, look.
Look at the new book bags
Mom bought you.
They're a bit large for you.
These are for you to use
when you're in the 6th grade.
There's only one left.
Fang Deng, let your brother have it.
Mom, Fang Da ate it all.
I want some too.
It's all gone.
Mom will buy some for you tomorrow.
Liar.
I'm not lying.
You can count on Mom.
Okay?
Having twins is strange.
They both go potty at the same time.
If one snacks on sunflower seeds,
so will the other.
They're not imitating each another.

It's really interesting.
So fascinating.
They're still a bit lonely.
Other kids pick on them.
I really want one more.
You do?
Sure
We were scared to death
when you had the twins.
You want to do it again.
Sure, why not.
Too bad I can't get pregnant.
I'm happy with one son and one daughter.
People can see us.
Go to the back
Hurry.
You bad boy
Come here
What are you laughing at?
It's so hot.
We're probably the only ones
in Tangshan doing this.
Everyone must be hot,
So no one can fall asleep.
Just got off work?
Yes
See you tomorrow.
why is the truck shaking?
why's the sky purple?
what's going on?
Hurry and get off.
Earthquake. It's an earthquake!
My children.
Run.
Mom!
Dad!
Mom!
Fang Da, run. Run.
The crane is going to fall!
Come here!
Mom!
I'm coming!
Mom!
Dad!

what are you doing?
Da Qiang.
Zhiguo!
Help! Can anyone help us?
Da Qiang, don't give up.
I'm here.
Yuan Ni is here.
Da Qiang.
Hold on.
Stay with me.
Da Qiang, hold on.
Da Qiang.
Here it comes again.
Da Qiang.
God.
You bastard.
Dad. Mom.
Sister.
Dad, save me.
Sister.
Mom.
Save me.
Mom.
Save me.
Why did you push me away
why'd you leave me by myself?
Da Qiang!
There are children here. Hurry, help.
Yuan Ni. It's Fang Da.
Fang Da!
- where are you?
- Here. Over here.
Fang Da.
Mom, I want out.
I don't want to stay here
Be good. Don't cry.
Mom's here.
We'll get you out soon.
My arm hurts. It's killing me.
Mom, I want to get out of here.
Don't cry. Mom's right here.
Where's your sister?
Is she next to you?
I can't see her.

I can hear her knocking on the stone.
Fang Da, hold on.
Hold on.
I can see Fang Deng.
A concrete slab is on top of them.
where?
Underneath.
- Take a look.
- Let me see
Fang Deng!
Fang Deng, say something.
Fang Deng!
Mister.
I beg you all.
I beg you.
Their dad...
Their dad is already gone.
If my kids aren't saved,
I can't go on living.
I beg you.
I'll do anything you want for
the rest of my life.
I'll be your servant, okay?
Stop crying!
We'll find a solution.
First, we'll remove the slab.
Hurry and get a crowbar.
One, two, three.
I'll go get a pole.
One, two, three.
Hurry up.
I can't hear them anymore.
You can only save one.
Hurry and make up your mind.
They both have to be saved.
You still don't understand?
A concrete slab is on top of them both.
One side's on your daughter.
The other side's on your son.
If we lift up here, the slab will crush
your daughter.
If we lift up the other side,
then the slab will crush your son.
Hurry and make up your mind.

You can only save one.
Both have to be saved.
They both have to be saved.
My gosh.
We can only lift up one side
of the concrete slab.
I beg you. Save them both.
Hurry and make up your mind.
I beg you. Save them both.
Save them both.
I beg you.
Hurry up.
we can't hear them anymore.
Stop waiting. If you wait,
both will be gone.
Save them both.
Yuan Ni, have you finally decided. . .
Which one?
Someone's alive here. Come, help!
We have to go rescue more people
over there.
Mister. . .
Save my son.
Which one?
Save my son.
Hurry, save the son.
Mom...
Forgive mom.
Fang Deng,
Forgive mom.
Fang Da,
Say something.
Yuan Ni,
You should first save the one
who is still alive.
We can't do anything about the dead.
Look, he's not saying anything.
He's not making a sound.
Hurry and take him to the
Tangshan airport.
The People's Liberation Army's
medical teams are there.
Get going.
If you don't hurry it'll be too late.

Hurry up.
Hey kid, Where's your family?
Where are your parents?
Any family members left?
Don't worry.
I'll take you home.
That one.
The girl whose head is lowered.
She's not too old?
Five or six.
She remembers everything.
She's the prettiest.
She can be an actress when she grows up.
She's pretty.
I'm afraid she'll be hard to bring up.
I've asked her many times,
But she can't remember anything.
It shouldn't be hard to develop
a relationship with her.
It's just that. . .
These children have been through so much.
It will take some time.
Are you sure she's an orphan?
Her photo was posted in the
emergency rescue office...
For such a long time.
No relative contacted her.
without anyone having contacted her,
she should be an orphan.
Of course one can't say for sure.
I don't want to end up losing her.
I understand.
You can think it over.
Whenever you have a chance,
you can come and see her.
Please hurry with the paperwork.
Fine.
Please do what you can.
You are doing a good thing.
She doesn't have any problems, does she?
we haven't found any problems.
But. . .
She doesn't like to speak.
I think she's just fine.

Salute!
Learn from the heroes of the
earthquake rescue.
Honor the soldiers of the
earthquake rescue.
Ya Ya,
what do you think?
Our army is like a large
revolutionary family.
Everyone will become like family to you.
You're always carrying her.
Let me carry her.
Don't worry. I'm not tired.
That's not it.
I want to carry her.
Ya Ya,
Go to mommy.
I'll take her.
I've got her.
Look. . .
we live in the apartment up there.
We're home.
Ya Ya,
This is where mom and dad live.
Don't be afraid.
We don't have earthquakes here.
Ya Ya,
Look. . .
This is your room.
We got this room ready just for you.
Do you like it?
Come here.
Later,
We'll take a shower,
Change into clean clothes.
She just got here. It's all new to her.
Don't worry.
The whole way here...
She didn't say a single word.
Could she be mute?
Don't make things up.
If a stray cat or dog
couldn't eat anything for two days. . .
what can you expect of a child

who nearly died?
Look. . .
Isn't she listening to us?
Mom...
Sister...
why'd you come here?
Mom.
Fang Da,
Say hi to your grandma and aunt.
Hi grandma. Hi aunt.
You were waiting a long time.
Hard to find.
No one knew where to find you.
Let's go inside.
Yuan Ni. . .
Let us take Fang Da back with us.
His last name is Fang.
He's my grandson.
we should take care of him.
You're still young.
I've thought about it.
You can move on with your life.
Mom...
You can't just kick me
out of the family like this.
Fang Da is so pitiful.
with only one hand...
He can carry a book but not a pen.
Or a pen but not a book.
I can take good care of Fang Da.
The teacher said he can enroll
in school.
He can go to school in Jinan.
It's better than going to school
in Tangshan.
Look at it here. when will
the new buildings be finished?
Yuan Ni. . .
How about this.
You...
and Fang Da. . .
Can both go to Jinan.
You can look for a job if you want.
If you don't want to work...

You can stay at home with your child.
Our family. . .
Won't let you two feel neglected.
I know you want to help me.
But I can't go anywhere.
why are you so stubborn!
we're thinking about you.
You have to keep us in mind too.
Mom
Mom, don't worry.
Fang Da will be fine with me.
Later when our lives are better,
I'll take him to spend the holidays
with you.
I came all the way here. . .
To bring him back with me.
Fang Da is all I have left.
If he leaves me,
Then this family...
will be all gone.
My son should have left the army
to come back to Jinan.
He stayed in Tangshan to be with you.
Mom...
What are you saying?
I should have died instead of my son.
I'm sorry.
He was so tall.
He was so smart and strong.
He's gone just like that.
Now my grandson is crippled.
Of course I am concerned.
I can't stop worrying about him.
How can I go on living now?
Sorry.
I feel so guilty.
I feel terrible for Da Qiang.
And I feel terrible for Fang Deng
and Fang Da.
I'm the only one who's fine.
I agree.
Take him. . .
Just as long as he'll be better off.
Okay.

we're all one family. . .
we shouldn't act like strangers.
So many terrible things have happened.
So many people have died.
We have to come together...
And think of our future.
At home...
All your belongings are gone.
Last time you sent us photographs,
I brought one back for you.
Sit tight
Hold on
Fang Da. . .
Do what your grandma tells you.
Don't misbehave.
Don't forget.
Mom.
Yeah.
Mom
Be good.
Mom
Be good.
Mom.
Mom,
By taking Fang Da from her. . .
It is like stealing Yuan Ni's
life away.
Mom!
Fang Da!
Mom!
Let's go.
Wang, This is your daughter?
Yes.
She's very pretty.
- Say hi.
- What's your name?
Say hi.
Doctor Dong,
This is the girl who was brought
back from Tangshan.
Yes.
Let me see your face.
Do you look like your dad or mom?
Come on, let's eat.

what are you doing. . .
Scaring the child?
what's her name?
Ya Ya.
Say hi to your "uncle."
Go on.
You're impolite.
Here, men are called "uncles,"
And women are called "aunts."
Don't embarrass her.
Ya Ya,
Is a bit shy around new people.
Is that pretty?
Ya Ya, are you ready?
we need to go now.
You are a pretty girl.
what's your name?
Wang Fan. "Fan" means "sail."
I'm wang Deng.
whatever she wants.
"Deng."
was this your name before?
Later on. . .
when you think of things
from the past...
You can tell mom and dad.
Dad can take you to Tangshan
to look for your relatives.
Right?
I don't remember.
You'll remember.
Alright.
Everything's taken care of.
From this day on,
you are the student Wang Deng.
Let's go home.
"Tangshan 1986"
Watch out.
Fang Da,
Hurry and eat breakfast.
Give me the towel.
Give it to me.
Go on in.
Hurry and eat.

when you finish, put your arm on.
I don't want to.
It hurts too much.
You still need to wear it.
Young men need to look decent.
Also...
It was very expensive.
If I knew you had borrowed money
for it,
I wouldn't have wanted it.
Eat, don't talk.
Mom,
what are you doing?
Your teacher told me...
You need to have a good place to study.
The fridge is too noisy.
I'm moving it to my room.
Even if you move it,
I still won't get into college.
I don't want to take the test.
What are you saying?
If you don't go to college, then what?
Take my job?
You can't do the work at the factory.
You can't drive.
You can't cook.
I've thought of all types of jobs.
You have to go to college.
I can be a guard.
How about a bathroom attendant?
No way!
If you don't get into college,
Your grandmother will blame me.
You didn't go to Jinan,
All these years,
So she sent money and cakes.
If you get into college,
Then I'll have repaid the debt to her.
What is there to pay back?
She's my grandmother.
Why are you always thinking like that?
If I die...
What will you do?
If you don't have any skills,

what girl would want to marry you?
I want to help you raise a child.
Then the child can help you
when you are old.
Mom...
Don't worry.
Later I promise I can find a girl
who will marry me.
Get to school.
Go on.
Hold on.
Yuan Ni! Yuan Ni!
There's a call from Fang Da's
school again.
The passengers are coming out
of the station.
They are coming out.
Anyone need a hotel?
Need a hotel?
Need a hotel? We can give you a ride.
The room's clean and cheap.
Mister, need a hotel?
It's raining. We can give you a ride.
Come in.
Teacher Jiang.
The school has a policy. . .
Students are suspended after
fifteen absences.
Fang Da has missed three days
of school already.
Is he planning to take the
college entrance exam?
Yes.
Da Qiang.
Fang Deng.
Don't think I'm annoying.
Each year...
we talk to you both.
We moved.
If you want to come back,
Don't go the wrong way.
Our alleyway...
Is next to the railway's school.
At the first row of houses, turn left.

Our home is the first one.
Don't forget.
Where we used to live. . .
They're building a department store.
we can't move back.
Mom,
Dad and my sister died ten years ago.
How can they come back?
It's spooky when you say these things.
I don't know how to tell your
dad and sister.
I was waiting for the day of
your college entrance exam.
But you didn't even go to take it.
Why can't you do the right thing?
I'm so disappointed.
Disappointed. . .
If you had known,
You could have saved my sister instead.
Dad!
Mom!
I'm Fang Deng!
Ya Ya.
You've had another bad dream.
Don't be afraid.
I'll get you some water to drink.
Ya Ya,
Does your head hurt?
Dad will massage your head.
Feel better?
Are you stressed out about
the college entrance exam?
You're too nervous.
Don't worry.
So what if you don't get in.
In any case. . .
Even college graduates...
Can turn out to be worthless.
And you can still succeed
if you don't go.
That's enough.
Is this the type of advice
you give her?
Ya Ya,

Have some water and go back to sleep.
Wang,
You've said enough.
If you keep talking, then she'll never
get back to sleep.
Ya Ya,
Drink the water and go back to sleep.
Okay.
She's sleeping.
what a disgrace.
Me?
what have I done?
She's already an adult.
Look at what you're wearing.
I'm just at home.
Should I be dressed like a king?
I can't go into my own child's room?
Don't pretend you don't understand.
You've changed.
It's impossible to get along with you.
Listen to me.
For things like this,
You always have to pick on me.
I keep ignoring it.
Don't mix things up.
Like a thief yelling to
catch the thief.
How can you be so stupid?
Dad,
I still have to get ready for the exam.
I'm not in the mood to see a movie.
I'm letting you go see a movie...
Because it will refresh your brain.
Ya Ya,
as for your major...
Have you finally made up your mind?
Mom,
I still want to study medicine.
My health is poor. Dad is too busy.
Why not go to a nearby college?
Then it would be easy to come home.
Wang, what do you think?
I respect her decision.
I'm just thinking of what's

best for her.
She has never left me before.
I'm worried about her being
so far from home.
But there's no good medical
school around here.
why does she have to study medicine?
Do you know how hard the work
is in the hospital?
You never listen...
to what I have to say at all.
Mom is the one
who doesn't listen to us.
Stop arguing.
I really don't want to see a movie.
Mom, I'm going home.
See you.
why are you saying that in front
of her?
we didn't give birth to her.
She'll never come back after
she leaves.
why are you saying that again?
Who cares if she's adopted?
In any case. . .
People do have feelings.
Here, have a chicken leg.
Mom, I don't like chicken.
You still have to eat it.
You need the nutrition.
I'm full.
In two days,
I will go to Tangshan for a meeting.
Ya Ya,
Do you want to come with me?
How can she do that?
She's about to take the
college entrance exam.
It won't take long.
Only one day.
Even one whole day is too long.
She can't even waste an hour.
I'm driving myself this time.
I want to take Ya Ya to have a look.

Dad,
I don't want to go.
Okay.
Fine.
Mom,
Go on back.
I'll see you.
You don't have to keep studying
for the exam.
Don't leave.
Didn't we already talk about this?
I'm not alone.
But who can take care of you
like I do?
It's not like our home out there.
I just want to see if I can
make it on my own.
Otherwise I'll never know.
Tangshan's not large enough for you.
Tangshan's large?
You didn't learn anything by
watching TV?
All the villagers have left for
ShenAhen.
I haven't even been to ShijiaAhuang.
Go on.
Xiao Long,
Look after him.
Okay.
Mom.
Stay well.
Why are you smoking in front of my mom!
Welcome. which department?
Basic medicine.
Basic medicine is over here.
Please sit.
Thanks.
Here's my acceptance letter.
wang Deng.
Your dorm room is 206 in building 9.
Who will take her to building 9,
room 206?
I'll go.
Thanks, buddy...

For going over there again.
where's the bathroom?
I'll take your things.
wang Deng...
Don't forget to get your student ID
at the student affairs office.
Give your stuff to me. Let's go.
There's the bathroom.
Your bag!
Thanks!
Look at you.
You can support yourself and
do whatever you want.
Each day when I go home,
I see everyone in my family.
I get agitated,
And can't control my temper.
That's the way I was too
Before whenever Fang Da upset me.
It's just that no one ever knew.
I'm going to lose my mind
if he doesn't hurry and grow up.
That's the way I felt too.
work at the factory is boring.
At that time. . .
I wish I had lost my job like you.
You're...
Just never satisfied.
working at the factory's better than
being on one's own.
Yuan Ni. . .
Phone call.
wait a moment.
Thanks.
Hello.
Fang Da?
It's been so long.
Why haven't you called?
Busy?
You're busier than the Premier.
Officer,
Are you here on business?
Do you want a tour?
A one-day tour of HangAhou?

No thanks.

Where is the HangAhou Medical School?

Come with me. I'll take you there.

No, really. Thanks.

I'm an army officer. It's not right.

Officer...

You're an army officer,

I'm disabled.

Please help me.

Are you okay?

Yes.

Though I'm missing an arm,

my legs are fine.

I bike over here every day.

What happened to your arm?

It was crushed in the 1976

Tangshan earthquake.

The Tangshan earthquake?

Yes.

Are you from Tangshan?

why?

In 1976, I was stationed in Tangshan.

we were part of the rescue operation.

Today I'm giving a ride to our hero.

Your ride is free.

Hello, where is building 9?

Right there.

Thanks.

Who is it?

Fang Deng.

Dad.

why are you here?

Surprised?

Open the curtains.

Okay.

Here, have a seat.

Dad, why didn't you call me first?

I should have picked you up

at the train station.

You don't have to do that.

The weather in HangAhou...

Is so hot.

Yes.

HangAhou in the summer is very humid.

You two talk. I'll go buy a watermelon.
Fang Deng,
Who's the boy?
He's a graduate student.
He's in residency.
He came from HangAhou.
Dad, drink some water.
Your mom asked me to bring
this for you.
Your favorite foods.
Wow, dried haw fruit.
Get your dad a wet towel.
Okay.
How's mom's health?
Not too good.
what do you mean?
She's in the hospital.
What's wrong?
She won't let me tell you.
It's just that. . .
You haven't been back the
last two summer breaks.
She just wanted me to see you.
why is mom in the hospital?
what's wrong with her?
If you can,
Go back and see your mom.
Come back if there's a problem again.
Thanks, Mr. Niu.
Zhao,
Please keep an eye on things for me.
Here are some magaAines. . .
To keep you entertained.
You shouldn't have.
Fang Da hasn't called for days.
I've been too busy to tell you.
I got a phone at home.
You paid 5000 for it?
Yes.
You wasted the money.
My phone wasn't enough.
During the day it's fine,
but what about at night?
what if he needed to call me at night?

I can send a message to you
at night too.
I've got a favor to ask you.
What?
There's no sound.
It should be fine.
It's fixed.
I knew that was the problem.
Why didn't you tell me?
Can I have a drink?
Sure.
I'm hungry.
Just a moment.
I never thought you'd be able to drink.
Don't just drink.
Have a bowl of soup.
Before I came to Tangshan to sell fans,
I made some friends here.
I didn't have any plans but...
I just wanted to earn a living.
Half a year later, my wife liked
someone else.
This year when I went home,
She wanted to confess everything to me.
I didn't want to listen to her.
we got divorced.
That's all.
I just feel bad for my child.
In the 1976 earthquake,
My family of four became two.
After Fang Da left,
Two became one.
After so many years,
you're not lonely?
I fear the holidays.
These years without Fang Da,
I go back home for the New Year.
Drink.
Is this from the earthquake?
Yeah.
Why let yourself suffer?
You're still attractive.
Niu,
Sit back down.

I had too much to drink.
Don't be angry.
It's nothing.
I really apologize. I feel bad.
We're already so old. . .
It's nothing.
Be with me.
I can't.
Then things will be like they
were in the past.
No, that can't happen either.
Hello, director.
Mom, sit up more.
So fast. . .
Ya Ya,
School started already. You should go.
Don't worry.
I took a vacation.
I work in a hospital this semester.
I don't have any classes.
The nurses say you are very pretty.
They say you look like me.
They just came a few years ago.
There's a lot they don't know.
Mom,
I am like you.
Your temper's like mine.
Stubborn.
You did end up studying medicine.
when I was a child, I loved when
you took me to the hospital.
I cared about you two the most
in my life.
But you both. . .
Never wanted to be with me.
Mom...
Don't hate me.
Mom.
Take care of your dad for me.
Dad's always saying good things
about you.
He says,
Even children you give birth to...
Leave home when they grow up.

Later,
There won't be anyone to argue
with him.
He'll feel so bored.
Mom,
Dad loves you.
I love you too.
Come,
Help me get the things from
under my pillow.
This watch. . .
Is for you to wear.
The savings account. . .
Is money that we saved for you.
You've grow up.
You can go back to Tangshan
and look for your family members.
Your father is right.
You must still have some.
Family. . .
will always be family.
Come,
Mom will be gone soon.
Let me kiss you.
Dad,
Where should we put Mom?
Didn't we agree?
why won't you do it?
You'll graduate in a year.
You can't waste four years of college.
I didn't.
I met you.
We are dating.
We're not getting married.
How can you have a child?
wang Deng,
Getting pregnant isn't a big deal.
It's just an accident
And it is easy to fix.
You've gone to the gynecologist's
office.
You've seen how many women have
abortions each day.
Others can do it.

But I can't.
why can't you?
why are you so unreasonable?
Yang Zhi. . .
I told you before.
I am from Tangshan.
I woke up in a truck filled
with dead bodies.
My dad was lying next to me.
You really don't understand.
You can't understand me.
But you can't be too impulsive.
I know you love me.
I love you too.
I cherish you, but you are only 21 .
A woman's youth ends when she has
a child.
I don't want you to make such
a sacrifice.
wang Deng,
How can you know what sacrifice is?
Yang Zhi!
Yang Zhi,
Come over here.
Someone's looking for you.
Wang Deng's father.
Okay, thanks.
Goodbye.
Sir.
where's Wang Deng?
She hasn't contacted me for
a long time.
Have you looked for her?
Yes.
I've been looking but can't find her.
Did you know she quit school?
I knew.
What happened?
She got pregnant.
Pregnant?
She's pregnant and you're here
playing basketball?
She left school to get away from me.
She doesn't want me to find her.

Sir,
I urge you not to look for her.
If she wants to see you,
she'll go find you.
If she doesn't want to see you,
You'll never find her.
Sir.
I think...
I don't care!
You should look for her!
Why are you hitting him?
How could you treat her like that?
Get out of here.
Tell me.
I'm sorry.
I'll go look for her.
I will for sure.
"Tangshan 1995"
Try to impress my mom.
If my mom doesn't like you,
Then we'll have to break up.
Am I getting married to you
or to your mom?
My mom gave birth to me three times.
what do you mean?
The first time was when I was born.
Soon after,
I got pneumonia and nearly died.
The doctor said not to save me.
But my mom said I must be saved.
That was the second time.
The earthquake.
The third time.
Mom!
I'm home.
Mom,
I've brought my girlfriend home.
This is my mom.
Xiao He.
Ms. Li.
This is my dad.
And my sister.
She looks like me when I was a child.
This house is so small.

With more people, there's
even less room.

Ms. Li, don't worry.

I'm thin.

I don't take up much space.

Mom,

Why are you still working?

Didn't I give you money?

The clients are friends.

I like to keep busy.

Mom,

The food is all ready.

Let's sit down.

Shall we drink together?

Sure.

You two drink. I'll drive.

Here, hurry and open this.

Is this Tangshan's best restaurant?

I think Tangshan has many good
restaurants.

Mom,

I miss you.

Mom,

In HangAhou, I have my own company,
My own car and house.

I also have Xiao He.

I'm only missing you.

If you miss me, just come back
to see me.

But didn't you say you would help
look after my child?

If you don't come, how could you?

Send the child to live with me.

I'd get rid of the sewing machine
right away.

Mom,

Come to HangAhou with me.

If you don't want to live with me,
I'll buy you a house.

I can't just let you stay here
all alone.

Your dad and sister are here.

I can't go anywhere.

When it's time to visit the

graves each year,
Xiao He and I will come back with you.
We need a home in Tangshan.
when the spirits of your dad
and sister return,
They must have a place to go.
Don't bring this up again.
It's already been so many years.
You can't always be like this.
You don't know what losing something
means until you've lost it.
Then find a partner to live with.
I could have a long time ago.
It's not that no one wanted me.
Then why?
For your dad.
He traded his life for mine.
If he hadn't stopped me,
I would have gone inside.
For the man who can give up his
life to love me,
I'll be his wife my whole life.
I don't feel it's unfair.
But you're old now.
You live all alone.
I'm far away and worry about you.
You got what you deserved.
That's the way I felt when you left.
Some people are just lucky.
Others only suffer.
Thanks, mom.
Okay, then.
I'll buy you a house in Tangshan.
First buy a grave site.
Okay.
Let's do as mom says.
First we'll buy a grave.
Cheers.
Mom,
Come and look at the apartments.
Let's not buy one.
Here's the place.
I have to buy one.
Then buy one,

But I won't live there.

Mom,

Are you just being difficult?

You won't go to HangAhou.

You won't live in a new apartment.

why do you want to make things
hard on yourself?

I don't feel things are tough.

You think things are fine?

what will your neighbors think?

My life's good. You're on your own!

Fang Da,

Don't get upset at your mom.

Be nice to her.

Mom,

Even if I don't take care of you,

I have to think of dad and my sister.

But I'm doing this for both of them.

Last time I moved I had to tell them...

exactly how to get to the new place.

I told them for more than 20 years.

If I move again. . .

I'll have to tell them the
new directions.

I can't keep telling them.

I'm tired of telling them.

That's it. I'm not moving.

Okay, let's review lesson three.

Teacher wang, excuse me.

Thank you.

Don't touch it.

You'll cut your hand.

You're okay?

Mom, it wasn't me.

She broke it.

Dian Dian,

Didn't I tell you to be careful?

It's not valuable.

You can go back to teaching.

Here's the money for today's class.

I can't take it.

I know it's not enough to pay

for the broken plate.

Take it. Don't worry about it.

I didn't break that plate.
I won't go back to their home.
Be good.
Don't push it.
I'm leaving my mom at home
for the New Year...
And going to your family with you.
What else do you want?
I want to take Dian Dian with me.
I don't want to be away from him.
Didn't we already agree?
I wasted all the nice things I said.
Fang Da,
Other than this,
You can have me do whatever you want.
I don't need anything else.
I don't need to go to Europe.
Or shop for Louis Vuitton.
I don't need a new car.
I just want my son. Alright?
Didn't we agree on this
before we were married?
Isn't that right?
Answer me!
If I knew you'd be like this,
I wouldn't have married you.
Then who would you have married?
Don't change the subject.
You have to let Dian Dian
stay with my mom.
Then what about me?
My parents haven't seen my son.
What will they think
if it's only the two of us?
Also,
He's so small,
I want to have him sleep with me.
You'll tear us apart so your
mom will be happy?
Other than your mom, who else
is in your heart?
There's nothing more to discuss.
Maybe we should just all stay here
in Tangshan.

You've got to be kidding.
You've never spent the holidays
at my home.
Also,
This house is so small.
where can we stay?
Do you want me to stay in a hotel
on New Year's eve?
Stop arguing.
I said I'd go back home with you.
Don't provoke me, Fang Da.
we'll leave you.
Don't you provoke me!
There are plenty of other women.
If you think...
I love you for your money,
Then you're wrong.
Let me go.
Stop yelling.
Are you awake?
Is he awake?
He just woke up.
Are you awake?
Dian Dian
My darling, Dian Dian.
Mom has to go.
Be good.
Mom,
Sorry to inconvenience you.
No, it's fine.
Mom...
we can't be with you for the New Year.
It's not the first time
I've been alone.
We'll keep our cell phones on.
You can call us anytime.
I'll be fine.
Don't worry.
I raised two children.
Xiao He.
Dad,
Why are you smoking?
Just for fun.
Here. Try it on.

A down coat. Just what I needed.

Ya Ya,

where have you been these last
few years?

The sleeves are a bit long.

No, they're fine.

You still remember this home?

Dad.

Have you been to Tangshan to
look for your family?

Dad, do you like it?

Yes.

Ya Ya,

Sit down.

In my mind. . .

You are very tall.

How can the sleeves be too long?

Don't worry about it.

why. . .

Didn't you come home?

I was too ashamed.

You could have sent a letter...

Or called me?

I was afraid I'd make you worry.

You didn't want me to be worried?

I worried every day!

Where'd you go?

Dad.

I'm sorry.

Look, how high it is.

Dian Dian, can you see it?

Dian Dian, be careful

Dad, are you okay?

I'm fine.

Go and play by yourself.

I need to catch my breath.

Be careful.

I often see this place in my dreams.

when I was a child,

I would chase after you and

mom to the mess hall.

It seems like it was only yesterday.

You were only that big back then.

Dian Dian's grandparents in Tangshan

would be so happy to meet her.
You're her grandfather.
Come on.
Don't change the subject.
You know what I mean.
All these years,
You have asked me many times.
During the earthquake,
My brother and I were both buried
under the rubble.
Someone said only one of us
could be saved.
My mom said...
Save my son.
These three words. . .
Keep ringing inside my ears.
Dad,
It's not that I don't remember,
It's that I can never forget.
I understand.
Deng,
But you need to remember...
Your family is always your family.
But I can't get it out of my mind.
Dian Dian,
Offer your grandma a glass of wine.
Dian Dian,
Let's talk to your grandma.
Gui Lan,
Ya Ya has come home.
She brought our granddaughter with her.
Tell grandma your name.
Dian Dian.
Say hi to your grandma.
Hi, grandma.
Grandma can't hear you.
Grandma!
I wish grandma could be here.
Cheers.
Dad. . .
How's my cooking?
It's strange.
I never saw mom teach you to cook.
But your food tastes...

About the same as what she
used to cook.
For so many years,
You've eaten by yourself on
New Year's eve.
No.
I have my friends from the army.
I went to their homes.
why didn't you think of. . .
Getting remarried?
Your mom is with me every day.
Here, Dian Dian.
Dad,
I'm getting married.
Yeah.
He's a lawyer.
His job is not important.
I just want him to be good to you.
He is.
And to Dian Dian?
He's good to her too.
Then I support you.
Dad,
He's a foreigner.
Foreigner?
Shoot.
I forgot.
I totally forgot.
Lao Feng,
It's all my fault. So sorry.
I was having such a good time,
I forgot all about this.
My daughter came home with
my granddaughter.
That's right.
How can I?
I've got my whole family here.
I can't leave.
How about this?
Tomorrow, I'll bring Deng over. . .
To wish you a happy new year.
How's that?
Okay.
I'll punish myself by drinking

three glasses.

"HangAhou 2008"

Mr. Fang,

As for the tour group to Xinjiang,
which insurance should we get?

Go with China Life.

It's safe.

Is it an earthquake?

It's an earthquake! Earthquake!

Hurry, run!

Come back!

Tell everyone not to worry.

You don't need to run from a
small earthquake.

And you can't escape from a large one.

Tell everyone to get back to work.

Okay.

Come on back. Everything's fine.

Mom.

Are you alright?

"Vancouver, Canada"

Hey, you are back so early

What happened?

Something very bad.

Did anything happen to Dian Dian?

No.

I called and she's coming home now.

Honey, let's go inside.

The force of the earthquake
was so powerful. . .

That many homes didn't simply collapse

They were destroyed, smashed into
pieces and in many cases

Beneath the pile of wood and brick,
are the people who once lived here

The focus say...

the officials are not on finding
the dead,

but on trying to save the living.

Oh, my God.

I can't believe it.

It's so terrible.

Look at these poor children.

Mom,

Honey, are you okay?
I have to go back.
It's okay.
I have to go help them.
I understand.
Whatever you want.
Assemble.
Don't unload the items in Chengdu.
Head toward the epicenter.
If the roads are fine, they won't
need food and medical supplies.
The faster the better.
Tell me as soon as you pass Chengdu.
I'm waiting for you in Han wang.
Liu Wei.
Mr. Fang, I got it.
Did you get in contact with
the Tangshan rescue team?
Yes, we already did.
What do they need?
They need more medics.
I'll think of something.
Thanks, sir.
Is this the medic team?
Yes.
I studied medicine.
Can I join your team?
Sure
Let me help you.
Thanks
Give me the backpack.
Thanks.
Mr. Fang, we're here.
where are you?
I'm in the town.
I'm with the Tangshan rescue team.
who should we give the stuff
in the vehicle to?
First to the local Red Cross.
Got it.
Are you from Tangshan?
Yes.
I'm also from Tangshan.
I got here late.

Better late than never.
Grab a tool. Help save them.
It's like this.
This is your child's leg.
There's a slab on her leg.
On top, a column is holding up
a building.
we need to remove the slab in order
to save your child.
But as soon as we remove the slab...
your child and the soldiers will
all be in danger.
Calm down. We'll do our best to
save your child.
Do something!
I beg you!
Okay!
My daughter!
Is anyone injured?
My daughter!
Is anyone hurt?
The girl's okay.
Who is it?
Li Qing, Li Qing.
Lift him up.
Let us through.
Get an ambulance!
My daughter.
Don't be afraid.
Mom's here with you.
Get the doctor.
Cut off her leg
Ma'am,
That's only a last resort.
Of course I don't want this.
My daughter.
You can't keep digging her out.
The building will collapse.
I can't risk your lives. Your parents
would never forgive me.
Get the saw.
when the child grows up,
Let her hate me.
My daughter!

My daughter's leg.
My daughter!
I want my daughter's leg.
My daughter.
I want my daughter's leg.
Forgive me!
Attention please,
Tangshan rescue team.
It's time to eat.
If you're hungry, go ahead and eat.
If you're not hungry,
Wait a while. Okay?
What do you want?
Sorry,
I'm really hungry.
I don't eat much.
It's too dry. Take a bottle of water.
Thanks.
How many people are with the
Tangshan rescue team?
A few days ago there were about 10.
Today you have more than 40.
People see the Tangshan rescue
team's banner,
And then they join us.
What happened to your arm?
Were you buried in rubble?
In 1976,
I was two years old.
I don't remember what happened.
I lost my mother.
I'll go through my whole life
without a mother.
what about your family?
Only my mom's left.
My sister and father are gone.
My sister and I were twins.
When the earthquake struck,
we were both trapped under a
concrete slab.
when my mom called for help,
She was told that by removing the
slab from on top of me,
My sister would be crushed.

If the slab was removed from on
top of my sister,
I would be crushed.
They asked my mom to choose
which one of us to save.
How can she decide?
I know
"Both the palm and the back of the
hand are made of the same flesh."
My mom didn't say anything.
They got impatient.
If she didn't choose,
she'd lose both of her kids.
Your mom saved her son.
The 1976 earthquake...
Destroyed my mom's entire life.
Her heart. . .
was ripped into pieces.
Do you know what my mom used
to always say?
What?
You don't know what losing something
means until you've lost it.
The homes that were destroyed
have been rebuilt.
But my mom's heart...
Can never be put back together.
For 32 years...
My mom's heart. . .
Has remained in ruins,
covered in debris.
Sister.
Fang Deng.
Our home used to be at that
intersection up ahead.
Now there's a department store.
Why are you staring at me?
Mom,
Is your blood pressure alright?
I'm fine.
If I can handle a lifetime of grief,
then I can handle happiness too.
Where does your sister live?
Canada.

She's hiding so far away from me.

This is our home.

I feel as if I've been here before.

Mom,

Your daughter's come back.

This is my wife, Xiao He.

That's my son.

Hurry,

Say hi to your aunt.

Hi, aunt.

Mom,

Your daughter's come back.

First go inside.

Go inside.

Okay.

Sister, let's go inside.

Go on...

Take the backpack inside to your dad.

After the earthquake, we lived in a tent for three years,

And then we moved here.

Mom has lived here for 30 years.

I bought a new home for mom.

She won't move.

Why is this picture still hanging here?

Mom must have been so happy...

She forgot about this.

I washed the tomatoes for you.

I didn't lie to you.

Forgive me.

Mom...

What...

How did you suddenly reappear?

So many years...

Why didn't you contact me?

I thought you were with your dad.

Mom, Get up.

I thought about you two all day long.

I thought about you for 32 years.

why didn't you think of me?

Where'd you go?

- Why didn't you come back? Deng?

- Mom, get up

Deng. . .
Mom.
Get up.
Deng. . .
They are my foster parents.
PLA soldiers.
(People's Liberation Army)
The soldiers rescued many people
in Tangshan.
My foster mother died in 1990.
My foster father...
Is retired.
His health is okay.
I'd like him to come and see me abroad.
He still refuses.
This is my husband.
A foreigner?
How much older is he?
Sixteen years.
This is my daughter.
Her name is Dian Dian.
She's also called Dian Dian?
She's very pretty.
How old is she?
18 years old.
She's in college.
She studies psychology.
You had a child when you were 22?
Yes, with a graduate student.
He wanted me to have an abortion.
I wouldn't do it.
We split up.
And then?
I quit school.
Who took care of you after
you gave birth?
What about the child's father?
He left China.
I lost touch with him.
You didn't ask someone to help
find him?
He didn't want me.
Why bother?
Da Qiang. . .

You love me so much.
You sent our daughter back.
I opened it for you.
Mom,
I'll get someone to remove this tomb.
There's no need.
Later, no matter where I'm living,
when I die, I will come back here.
I want to be with my father.
Do as your sister says.
She feels wronged.
Okay.
From elementary school to high school,
Each year mom bought two sets
of textbooks.
A set for me,
And a set for you.
Mom,
All these years,
How have you managed?
I've been fine.
In a woman's lifetime,
How many periods of 30 years
are there?
why'd you do that?
Really, I've been fine.
If I lived a carefree life,
I would feel even worse.
Mom,
I'm sorry.
From the first time I saw Fang Da,
I started to hate myself.
He is my brother.
For him to live...
It is wonderful.
Mom, I'm sorry.
I tortured you for 32 years.
32 years!
I can't forgive myself.
Mom...
Mom, I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.
I'm sorry. Mom.
I'm sorry.

"In 2008, the Tangshan municipal government... erected a memorial wall to commemorate... the 240,000 victims of the 1976 earthquake."

"Song Shoushu, Age 65"

"Retired from the Tangshan Metal Machinery Factory"

"He lost his father, sister, and son in the Tangshan earthquake."

"His son, Song Yongjie, died at the age of 5."

In two days, I'll see you again.

"This film mourns the 240,000 victims of the Tangshan earthquake"

"Like the phoenix rising from the ashes,"

"this film commemorates the rebirth and restoration of a great city - Tangshan."

"we sincerely thank the many people who supported the making of this film."

THE END: