

SCENE 4

START

Princess Cafe.

In circular motions, Jenry rubs RAW GINGER on Bosley's forehead.

JENRY

You rub like this, *ha*?

BOSLEY

Just raw?

JENRY

Aswangs are not fond of the ginger.

BOSLEY

Mom would make us eat raw ginger whenever we were bad or something.

JENRY

That is a good punishment.

BOSLEY

Mom had to know about Dad, right?

JENRY

It is hard to believe she did not know.

BOSLEY

You think maybe she was making me eat it for protection? From my Dad?

JENRY

I do not know.

BOSLEY

You think she was *aswang*?

JENRY

I never meet her, Bosley.

Jenry pours a round of shots. They drink.

BOSLEY

Did you ever think about asking your wife to convert you? Like wouldn't it be easier if you were both *aswangs*?

JENRY

My wife, Sol, she did not want this for me. I tell her I am willing, but she try to live normal life. But when Romina is born, there is no choice.

BOSLEY

She was just born *aswang*?

JENRY

Sol died while giving birth. When this happen, the powers are automatically transferred to the baby.

BOSLEY

Aww Jenry, I'm sorry.

Jenry downs another shot.

JENRY

I know Sol is *aswang* since grade school. Everybody in the village knows who are the *aswang*. Many times when we are only boyfriend-girlfriend, she break up with me, *ha*?

BOSLEY

Why?

JENRY

Because she does not want to hurt me. When she finish her teaching diploma, I propose to her and tell her we will go away. So we come here to Palawan where nobody know us.

BOSLEY

That's romantic.

JENRY

We are originally from Barbaza. Also in the Visayas. Not too far from where your mother is from.

BOSLEY

Oh.

JENRY

But there is something about the *aswang*. Even when we move here, people, they know. They feel it. The eyes seeing inside you, the darkest red glass, almost black. So they stay away.

BOSLEY

Did she curse you into liking her?

JENRY

How do you mean?

BOSLEY

They have evil eyes, right? So she cast a spell on--

JENRY

Bosley, you cannot think of all *aswangs* as evil. They are people, *ha*?

BOSLEY

I know, but we're not supposed to look them in the eye.

JENRY

When they are angry, yes. But if you are lucky, you can see the beauty also. Sol's eyes were like Palawan pearls, dark, and framed by the moonlight.

END ----- Henry pours a round. He drinks.

BOSLEY

What else can I do to be safe?

JENRY

You can make a chant for yourself. A prayer you can say if you are feeling you are in danger.

BOSLEY

Maybe I should start going to Church again.

JENRY

If you like.

BOSLEY

Will that protect me?

JENRY

You think *aswangs* do not go to Church?

BOSLEY

Oh.

JENRY

Who you think make the *aswangs*? God is the one, Bosley. *Aswangs* believe in God and we believe in *aswangs*, the two together. Your thinking is very American, *ha*? Evil and good, always one or the other.

BOSLEY

My father was evil.

JENRY

Don't say that.

BOSLEY

He was, honestly. With me at least.

JENRY

He is gone now. You must let it go.

BOSLEY

The day before he died, I was standing at his bedside. Just looking at him, for like fifteen minutes, maybe twenty. Just standing, not saying anything. I had no clue why.

(MORE)