

# Suyuan / Jing-Mei

Maybe I'm being paranoid, being a mother and all, but you just can't be too careful. *(People around the table glance at Jing-Mei, who, self-conscious, stops eating.)* You should go see my guy, Mr. Rory. He does fabulous work — although he probably charges more than you're used to.

JING-MEI. Maybe I could afford Mr. Rory if someone's firm paid me on time.

WAVERLY. Excuse me?

JING-MEI. It's pretty ironic that a big accounting firm can't even pay its own bills on time.

CANNING. Hey, hey, you girls. No fighting.

WAVERLY. That's right. We don't want to talk about this right now.

JING-MEI. Well, every time I call you on the phone, you can't talk about it then, either. *(An awkward silence.)*

WAVERLY. Listen. June. I don't know how to tell you this. But that stuff you wrote — well, it's unacceptable.

JING-MEI. What? *(Waverly shrugs.)* You said it was great.

WAVERLY. I didn't want to hurt your feelings. And I thought maybe we could fix it. But it's not quite ...

JING-MEI. Most copy needs fine-tuning. It's normal not to be perfect the first time, I should have ...

WAVERLY. June, I really don't think ...

JING-MEI. Re-writes are free. Believe me, I want it to be perfect as much as you do ...

WAVERLY. Look. I'm trying to convince them to pay you for at least *some* of your time. I owe you that much, at least ...

JING-MEI. Just tell me what you want changed. I'll call you and we can go over it, line by line. Okay?

WAVERLY. June — I can't. It's just not ... sophisticated. I mean, really. *(Imitating a television announcer.)* "Three benefits, three needs, three reasons to buy ... for today's and tomorrow's tax needs ..."  
*(Everyone laughs.)* See? See what I mean? *(Jing-Mei stands suddenly and begins clearing the table. The laughter dies.)*

JING-MEI. Excuse me. *(Jing-Mei carries the dishes into the kitchen. Suyuan follows.)* Good dinner, Ma. *(Suyuan shrugs. Jing-Mei indicates a plate.)* What happened to your crab? Why're you throwing it away?

SUYUAN. That crab die. Even a beggar don't want it.

JING-MEI. How could you tell?

SUYUAN. Can tell even before cook! I shake that crab. His legs — all droopy. His mouth — wide open, like a dead person. I only

Start

Suyuan/  
Jing Mei  
Linda

cook because I thought ... maybe he only just die. Maybe not too bad. See? Only you pick. Nobody else take it. Everybody else want best quality. You thinking different.

JING-MEI. ... Ma, why don't you ever use those new dishes I bought you? If you didn't like them, you should have told me. I could've changed the pattern.

SUYUAN. Of course I like. Sometime something is so good, I want to save it. Then I forget I save. *(A pause. Suyuan suddenly unhooks a pendant and chain from her neck and takes Jing-Mei's hand, pressing the necklace into her palm.)*

JING-MEI. What's this?

SUYUAN. For you. Is yours.

JING-MEI. No, Ma. I can't take this.

SUYUAN. Take, take. For a long time, I wanted to give you. See, I wore it on my skin — so when you put it on your skin, then you know my meaning. This is your life's importance. *(Jing-Mei hesitates; then puts the necklace on.)* Not so good, this jade. Young jade, very light color. But if you wear it every day — it will become more green.

JING-MEI. Thanks, Ma. *(Suyuan exits. To audience:)* That was the last time I saw her. And today, I find myself thinking about my life's importance. Like my mother said, I've been wearing it every day — just as she did before me. And I wonder what it means, this little piece of jade. *(A pounding at the door.)*

End

~~YING-YING. *(From offstage.)* Jing-Mei! Jing-Mei! *(Jing-Mei answers the door and lets in the three aunties, much agitated.)* See, I tell you! She is here!~~

~~LINDO. Why you no answer phone? Day and night, we call, we call, phone ring and ring ... no answer!~~

~~AN-MEI. I say, call police! Your Auntie Lin say, Bad idea! Auntie Ying say, try again! Everything all confused!~~

~~LINDO. So we come ourselves! *(Ying is opening curtains.)*~~

~~JING-MEI. I'm sorry about the phone. I know I missed the Joy Luck Club last week. It's just that I haven't been really ...~~

~~LINDO. Is no matter. We have something else to tell you!~~

~~YING-YING. Something important.~~

~~AN-MEI. Should I tell? *(To Lindo.)* Or maybe you tell. Ying, you want to tell? *(Lindo swats at her.)*~~

~~LINDO. ... it's from your mother!~~

~~JING-MEI. My mother?~~

~~YING-YING. She die with an important thought on her mind!~~