

Race on a Pedestal

By: Mason Arsenault

Li Jie - 26, a level headed Chinese man in a green card marriage to Connor
Connor - 30, an tone deaf and dense white American man married to Li Jie
Abraham Lincoln - 213, the sixteenth president of the United States

Living room. There is a couch in the center, a door on the right leading to outside, and a door on the left leading further into the house. The room is filled with Chinese themed decorum (Author's note: the decoration of the room should be purposefully sensationalized and resemble what a white person would imagine a Chinese living room would look like just from visiting Chinatown once). Meanwhile on the back wall is a window with a big American flag waving outside in the distance. LI JIE is sat on the couch reading a book when CONNOR enters from outside.

CONNOR: Ni hao, Li-san.

LI JIE: San is Japanese. I'm still Chinese, Connor. I've told you to just say hi when you come in.

CONNOR: Li, you'll never guess what I brought home.

LI JIE: Is it a book on sensitivity training?

CONNOR: Even better! Check this out.

CONNOR sits next to LI JIE and pulls out a crushed bullet from his pocket, presenting it to him. LI JIE stares at it, unsure what to make of it.

CONNOR: What do you think? Pretty swanky, huh?

LI JIE: You brought home a crushed piece of copper?

CONNOR: No silly. It's a crushed bullet. Didn't guns come from your country? I thought you'd recognize that instantly.

LI JIE: (*sarcastically*) Oh sorry, must've been working out in the rice field when they televised that announcement. (*serious*) Okay, so you have a crushed bullet. What about it?

CONNOR: This is the actual bullet that was shot through Abraham Lincoln. And it's all ours! Can you believe it?

LI JIE: You're saying that's the bullet that killed Lincoln?

CONNOR: Oh right! I forgot. You see Abraham Lincoln was our sixteenth president. Because we here in America have what's called an election where we vote every four years for a presid...

LI JIE: Connor, I know who Abraham Lincoln is. Why do you have the bullet that killed him?

CONNOR: Because we can make a fortune off of this! It's even got some of his blood still stained on it. Everyone will want to get a picture with the bullet Paul Daniels used to kill one of our founding fathers. God, I'm getting hard just looking at it.

LI JIE: I thought John Wilkes Booth killed Lincoln?

CONNOR: Uh, I've lived here my whole life. I think I'd know my country. But don't worry, maybe someday you'll know just as much about America as me.

LI JIE: (*fuming; to himself*) It's for the green card. (*to CONNOR*) Okay so assuming you have some awareness of empathy, wouldn't that be in really poor taste?

CONNOR: Oh innocent little Li Jie. Here in America, we make our own way in the world. And sometimes that means cashing in on the deaths of others.

LI JIE: Well where'd you even get it? How do you even know that's really the bullet from the Lincoln assassination?

CONNOR: Darryl was having a garage sale down the street. He assured me of its authenticity.

LI JIE: You bought that at a garage sale?! Jesus Connor, I think Darryl killed someone. And you just paid to take the evidence off his hands!

CONNOR: Calm down Li Jie, Darryl didn't kill Abraham Lincoln. Besides, he gave me a really good deal on it. He told me there were people in the white house looking to pay millions and he let me have it for a bargain at \$40,000. What a pal.

LI JIE: You spent \$40,000 on a random bullet you found at the garage sale?! I was saving that for university next year!

CONNOR: Relax my little dumpling, I promised I'd take care of you. What do you say we crawl into bed and I love you long time?

LI JIE: Shut up Connor! Just shut the fuck up! I've had enough of all the racist shit!

CONNOR: Racist? Who's being racist? I'm just making you feel more at home by having America more like China.

LI JIE: None of this is "like" China! Don't you remotely see how your constant talking down to me and isolating me for my culture is wildly not okay? Even then, you barely know what my culture is! You can't look at a Chinese food menu and think you have a single iota of what it is. You constantly make me feel like I'm nothing more than my ethnicity. And I know you don't do it to be malicious. But god, you're just too damn stupid and in denial over your white privilege to realize it.

CONNOR: I can't be in denial over something that doesn't exist. I don't think you appreciate all the work I went into researching Chinese culture. Do you know how many dubbed Kung Fu movies I had to watch?

LI JIE: You know what? It isn't worth it. I want a divorce.

CONNOR: What are you trying to say?

LI JIE: ...that I want a divorce?

CONNOR: Well, if you have something you want to say, just say it.

LI JIE: Connor, you're not listening to me. (*sigh*). Alright, it looks like I need to say this in a way you'll understand. The white way.

LI JIE tears off his clothes to reveal an all white attire with a white tank top, a white jacket and white yoga pants (similar to most boy band looks). As Bye, Bye, Bye by NSYNC begins to play overhead, LI JIE has an elaborate breakdancing sequence as he lip syncs to the entire song, posing at the end of it with a brief pause.

CONNOR: Wow...all that Dance Dance Revolution you must play has made you real good!

LI JIE: Never mind, fuck it, I'm just going leave.

LI JIE goes to the door on the right and leaves outside. There are a few moments of uncomfortable silence with CONNOR alone before ABRAHAM LINCOLN opens the door from outside.

ABRAHAM: Have you seen my bullet? I've seemed to have misplaced it.

