

Act II, Scene 2 - Not A Club Scene

Written By

Jason Nguyen

7419 N Concord Ave, Portland, OR 97217  
(503) 317-6973 | j6nguyen@scu.edu

EXT. BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

THUY TIEN, now a freshman in high school, is sitting alone on a bench next to a bus stop CENTER STAGE, doing her homework while she waits for the bus to arrive. She is wearing a sweatshirt, skinny jeans, and tennis shoes, fitting in while still being fairly modest. Her backpack sitting next to her looks like it's filled with bricks.

IMANI WILLIAMS enters STAGE LEFT, carrying a backpack that looks just as heavy with a textbook in one arm that clearly didn't fit in the backpack. She is dressed pretty similarly to THUY TIEN. She walks up to the bench where THUY TIEN is sitting.

IMANI  
Can I sit here?

THUY TIEN  
Oh, of course. Sorry.

THUY TIEN moves her backpack to the ground to make room for IMANI. IMANI takes her backpack off, sets it on the ground, and sits down, looking relieved.

IMANI  
Thank you.

THUY TIEN  
You're welcome.

IMANI  
Hey, you look pretty familiar! Do we have any classes together?

THUY TIEN  
Um... Algebra I?

IMANI  
First period?

THUY TIEN  
Yes!

IMANI  
Awesome! We should study together sometime! I'm Imani, by the way.

THUY TIEN  
Oh, you can just call me Tweety.

IMANI  
(amused)  
(MORE)

IMANI (CONT'D)

Tweety? Is that your real name?

THUY TIEN

(smiling forcefully,  
averting IMANI's gaze)

Oh... Not really.

IMANI

Huh. Interesting.

THUY TIEN

It's just easier to have people  
call me Tweety than try to teach  
them how to pronounce my real name.

IMANI

Well, that's not really fair to  
you. It's your name. I know I'm not  
about to let people get away with  
calling me "A Manny" (uh-MAN-ee).

THUY TIEN laughs. IMANI smiles but continues in the same  
tone.

IMANI

I'm serious! I don't spend this  
much time getting ready in the  
morning to be called a man. Nope.

THUY TIEN

(still smiling)

I think your case is a little  
different. I wouldn't want to be  
called a man either.

IMANI

So you like being called Tweety?

THUY TIEN looks up at IMANI, surprised at the question.

THUY TIEN

(sheepishly)

...No, I guess not.

IMANI

Then what's your name?

THUY TIEN

(impatiently)

It's Thuy Tien.

IMANI

(slowly but meticulously)

(MORE)

IMANI (CONT'D)

Twee Theen?

THUY TIEN

Close enough.

IMANI

No, let me try.

THUY TIEN

(sighs)

Well, you have to say it in the same tone as I do.

IMANI

Can you repeat it?

THUY TIEN

(slowly)

Thuy Tien.

IMANI

Thuy Tien?

THUY TIEN

(smiling brightly)

Yes, you got it!

IMANI

Oh, that's so cool! It's like music! Does it mean anything?

THUY TIEN

I think Thuy means water, and Tien means fairy.

IMANI

That's such an interesting combination!

(scoffs)

And yet you've been going by Tweety!

THUY TIEN

To be honest, Vietnamese has always sounded ugly to me, but you make it sound poetic.

IMANI

It doesn't seem ugly to me, but I guess anything can seem ugly if you're comparing it to something else.

THUY TIEN

What do you mean?

IMANI

I mean... Well, you know moms.  
They're always going to tell you  
you're beautiful--

THUY TIEN

My mom always says I'm too fat. Or  
too skinny.

IMANI

Uh... Anyway, my point is even if  
my mom thinks I'm beautiful, I  
can't help but feel ugly if society  
tells me I have to be light-skinned  
or have straight hair to be pretty.

THUY TIEN

Or have big eyes?

IMANI

Exactly! And let me put it this  
way: I'm pretty sure Vietnamese  
people in Vietnam don't think  
Vietnamese sounds ugly.

THUY TIEN

(smiling)

I guess you're right.

IMANI smiles back, then leans forward and looks down the  
street (STAGE LEFT).

IMANI

Do you know if the bus is coming  
soon?

THUY TIEN

Um... I'm not sure. This is my  
first time taking the bus home  
actually.

IMANI

Really? How were you getting home  
before?

THUY TIEN

Oh, well... My dad used to pick me  
up after school.

IMANI  
Used to? He can't anymore?

THUY TIEN  
It's a long story. Just some family  
issues.

IMANI  
Oh, no. I'm sorry.

THUY TIEN  
It's okay.

IMANI  
Are you okay though?

THUY TIEN  
...Yes.

IMANI  
I'm not convinced.

THUY TIEN  
I know.

IMANI  
Well, if you ever need something to  
get your mind off things, I  
recommend picking up a new hobby.

THUY TIEN  
Like what?

IMANI  
How about hip hop? That's always  
been my outlet. They offer a free  
class every Saturday at the  
community center. I can take you if  
you want.

THUY TIEN  
I'm not sure...

IMANI  
Come on! It'll be fun!

THUY TIEN  
Okay, fine. But promise not to  
laugh at me?

IMANI  
You'll be too busy having fun to  
care! Oh, I think the bus is here!

FADE TO BLACK.

The sound of the bus pulling up can be heard in the darkness.

INT. THE HO HOUSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The Ho house living room features a couch or something that resembles a couch, a coffee table or something that resembles a coffee table, and an old TV or something that resembles an old TV - all CENTER STAGE. Both the couch and the TV are tilted at an angle such that the audience can see who's sitting on the couch and what's on the TV. The coffee table is in between the couch and the TV and is covered in dirty cups, bowls, and silverware.

THUY TIEN and KEVIN are both sitting on the couch, but THUY TIEN is doing homework while KEVIN is watching TV. MAI enters from STAGE RIGHT with a ton of groceries.

MAI  
(in a Vietnamese accent  
henceforth)  
I'm home!

THUY TIEN AND KEVIN  
(in unison, without  
taking their eyes off  
what they're doing)  
Welcome home, mom.

MAI walks across the stage, exits STAGE LEFT, sets the groceries down, then enters again from STAGE LEFT.

MAI  
THUY TIEN, you look more happy  
today. How was school?

THUY TIEN  
School was fine.

MAI  
How was the bus? Should I ask  
someone to drive you home? My  
co-workers say it's dangerous--

THUY TIEN  
No, it's okay, mom! I have a friend  
who takes the same route home, so  
I'm not alone.

MAI  
 (relieved)  
 Oh, that's good! I'm going to go  
 start cooking dinner.

THUY TIEN  
 Okay.

MAI exits STAGE LEFT. As she walks away, KEVIN turns around,  
 visibly upset, then turns back around and continues watching  
 TV.

THUY TIEN  
 (loudly)  
 Oh, mom?

MAI  
 (loudly, from offstage)  
 Yes, con?

THUY TIEN  
 Can I take a class with my friend  
 on Saturday?

MAI  
 Oh, I was hoping you can take care  
 of Kevin and help him with school  
 while I go to work. Do you need  
 this class?

THUY TIEN  
 ...Yes.

MAI  
 (sighs)  
 Okay, con. Do what you need to do.

KEVIN  
 Of course.

THUY TIEN  
 What?

KEVIN  
 Nothing.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

MODERN DANCE does their thing. Afterwards, everyone clears  
 out leaving just THUY TIEN and IMANI in the studio.



THUY TIEN

This was so much fun! I never  
thought I would be dancing to hip  
hop. It feels so random!

IMANI

Well, Jason wanted to incorporate  
the modern dance seamlessly into  
the skit without including a club  
scene.

THUY TIEN

Wait, what? Who's Jason?

IMANI

(abruptly)

I like hip hop.

Awkward silence.

IMANI

...Anyway, you were really good!  
Are you sure you haven't danced  
before?

THUY TIEN

Well, I have. When I was really  
little. But it wasn't hip hop. It  
was a traditional Vietnamese dance.

IMANI

Really? You should show me  
sometime!

THUY TIEN

It's kind of embarrassing... I  
don't think you'd like it.

IMANI

Who do you think I am? Simon  
Cowell?

THUY TIEN

Who's that?

IMANI

You've never watched American Idol?

THUY TIEN

Nope.

IMANI

Well, anyway, if you don't want to show me, you don't have to. But as I've said before, your culture isn't something you should be ashamed about.

THUY TIEN

(smiling)

You sound just like my dad.

IMANI

(smiling back)

I'll take that as a compliment.

(pause)

To be honest, I'm kind of jealous of you. I know my ancestors are from Africa, but I'm so out of touch with my heritage.

THUY TIEN

It's not as nice as you seem to think it is. For me it feels like going against the current. It takes so much effort. Like my name, for instance. I appreciate your open-mindedness, but I don't want to have to go through what I did with you every single time I introduce myself. It would be so much easier just to say my name and be done with it.

IMANI

I think the best things in life require effort.

FADE TO BLACK.