

LEERY

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

The seats of a lecture hall begin to fill with students.

STUDENT #1

You sure this is the right class?

STUDENT #2

Go ask Jackie Chan over there.

LARRY LI, skinny and hesitant, keeps his head down as he settles into his seat amongst sea of white students.

PROFESSOR (O.S.)

Again, if you're not here for  
Introduction to Software  
Engineering, I'm afraid you're in  
the wrong class.

A short-haired MEI WANG takes stock of Larry from a couple seats away, then moves to sit next to him. Larry visibly relaxes and introduces himself with a handshake.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS GROUNDS - DAY

Larry and Mei stand in caps and gowns in front of school building. Mei waits with interest as Larry finishes a phone call.

LARRY

I got the job? ... Yes! ... Yes,  
that sounds great! ... I'm at my  
graduation ceremony. ... Yep, see  
you soon Bill.

MEI

Wow, they hired you already?

LARRY

Yeah, they were my top choice by  
far.

Larry smiles a toothy grin at Mei.

MEI

Nice work! They're in a pretty old  
building, aren't they?

Larry's smile falters.

INT. OFFICE SPACE - AFTERNOON

Mei in a loosely fitting sweater and jeans browses over Instagram feeds on his phone. A sharply dressed Larry traces his finger over a screen cluttered with thirty windows. He stiffens.

LARRY

Finally! I fixed it! Hey, new guy,  
you want to check my work?

Larry turns toward an unresponsive Mei, stares for a moment, then shakes his head and turns back.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

BILL, 40, with wet hair and a gray suit, sets down a tray of champagne flutes and his dripping coat. He joins Larry and Mei, both seated at the bar.

BILL

I made it! Everyone, let's have a  
toast!

Bill grabs a flute and raises it. Mei and three others follow suit. Bill notices Larry empty-handed and hands him a glass, which he barely lifts.

BILL (CONT'D)

To our success tomorrow, winning a  
huge client! And let us officially  
welcome our newest employee, Mei,  
to the team!

After everyone else downs their champagne, Larry throws back his own.

MEI

Hey guy, looks like we're  
officially coworkers! This company  
can't be more awesome.

Larry silently stares toward the bar's lounge area.

MEI (CONT'D)

What's so interesting?

Mei follows his gaze and sees an attractive brunette scanning her phone.

MEI (CONT'D)  
Oh, nice taste, but a bit out of  
your league, Larry. Or should I say  
Leery?

Larry stares daggers.

LARRY  
I wasn't leering.

Mei holds up her hands in mock surrender. Larry grabs another  
flute and finishes it as Bill approaches.

BILL  
Larry, not too many, okay?

LARRY  
I'm not gonna be staying much  
longer anyway.

Larry sets his glass down.

BILL  
Before you go, I've been meaning to  
tell you...

Bill notices Larry's hand over the bar.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Hey, that's a nice ring.

Larry brightens, admiring his ring, then opens his mouth to  
speak as Mei leans in to look.

MEI  
That looks so uncomfortable. Take  
it off.

LARRY  
No, my Dad gave it to me. And don't  
tell me what to do.

MEI  
Okay, okay, calm down Leery. I  
won't talk about your fashion  
choices anymore. Wear what you  
like, I won't say a word.

BILL  
Leery?

MEI  
Yeah, he's been stalking a woman  
out there.

LARRY  
I'm not fucking stalking her.

MEI  
C'mon, talk to her.

Larry squares with Mei.

LARRY  
I said, don't tell me what to do.

Larry turns toward Bill.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
She wasn't always like this, but  
I'm seriously tired of her shit.

MEI  
He gets temperamental sometimes.

Larry's eyes roll back toward the champagne tray. He grabs another and drains it. Bill shifts his eyes uncomfortably.

BILL  
Larry, you're not driving anywhere  
tonight, right?

MEI  
We carpooled since we share an  
apartment. Anyway, wouldn't want  
Leery to crash the car he dumped  
his money into. The way he's  
drinking, it'll be worth half that  
by the time he's sober.

Bill chuckles.

BILL  
But seriously, Larry, I wanted to  
tell you...

Larry spins toward Mei.

LARRY  
I knew it'd be a mistake to tell  
you about this job. Bill, you know  
what my (air quotes) friend said  
when I told her I got my dream job?  
She said it was in an old building.  
Just subtle enough.

MEI  
Tell me, are you done with your  
little tantrum?

BILL  
(to Mei)  
Give us a minute?

Mei steps away with a sigh.

LARRY  
I just can't take her anymore. I'm  
done with her.

BILL  
Look, I'm not sure of the history  
here and you don't need to be  
friends, but...

LARRY  
Friends. It's bad enough she knows  
them all. I'll just pay my last  
three months of rent and be done  
with her.

BILL  
Wait, sure, but, you can at least  
work with her, right? She has  
skills that are hard to find.  
Also...

LARRY  
No.

Bill purses his lips and looks over his shoulder.

BILL  
Mei, help me out here.

He waves Mei back over.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Ya think you can you stop giving  
Larry a hard time? I need you both  
to get along.

LARRY  
And I need her out of my life.

MEI  
You're going to have to deal with  
me at some point. We'll be in the  
same building.

LARRY  
Not if I quit. The building's too  
old anyway.

BILL  
But you love your job! And one more  
thing...

LARRY  
Please Bill, I can't work with her!

MEI  
(whispering to Larry)  
Behind you. Now's your chance!

Larry freezes as the brunette he's been staring at steps up to the bar and places a drink order. Dave's nudges only result in Larry's nervous glances. The woman walks away without incident. Mei shakes his head and leans toward Bill.

MEI (CONT'D)  
Ya gotta understand, Leery's Dad  
wasn't around long enough to teach  
him about women.

Larry stands, his eyes stabbing into Dave's, the corner of his mouth twitching.

LARRY  
You asshole.

Larry pushes himself away from the bar.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
I'm so done with this. I quit.

Larry turns to leave but Bill moves to intercept.

BILL  
Wait, Larry...

Larry shoves past him.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Larry stands at the front desk, wheeled suitcase in hand, talking to a RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST  
Just a minute while I check you  
out.

LARRY  
Can you call a cab for me too  
please?

The elevator dings and releases a frantic Bill.

BILL

Larry!

Bill races up to Larry while he's trapped in line.

BILL (CONT'D)

Larry, you've been working on this for two years, and it's about to pay off! I need you!

LARRY

I'm sorry. I just need a clean break. You saw...

BILL

I know. I understand. But, Larry, there's something I was trying to tell you the other night.

LARRY

Oh?

BILL

We weren't just there to celebrate Mei joining the company. I want to promote you, to manager.

LARRY

Wait, what?

BILL

Mei would be reporting to you.

After a moment of consideration, Larry's eyes meet Bill's. Larry grins.

FADE OUT