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TO THE MOSTLY MUNDANE

Asian Stories (Book 3)

Posted by Zoe Wood Oct 21, 11:53 PM to scenes : local

Do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife?

I do.

*Do you promise to lead this man on, for five f***ing years, and then leave him two weeks before the wedding!*

So starts Asian Stories Book III, with Jim Lee (played by James Kyson Lee - currently guest starring in Heroes) ad-libbing for the bride and groom figurines, while lying on the living room floor in his wedding tux. She takes his \$10,000 wedding ring, his Xbox, and even his Depeche Mode CDs. He gets to keep the wedding champagne, which he seems to drink amply. In this champagne-induced, Depeche Mode-deprived state, he concocts a plan to do away with himself... by having his best friend promise to kill him by Valentine's Day. They both head up to a cabin for the week, where he camps, meets a spanku-writing artist, and generally realizes that life might be worth living.



The production quality? Not big budget. The acting? I've never seen swear words said unconvincingly until this movie. The comedic timing? Dead on or not there. But this movie was worth watching. The cross-cultural bashing by itself provided enough laughs to last the movie. Nonetheless, they went the extra step and provided more than a few clever jokes and scenarios.

I was slightly disturbed by the portrayal of all *caucasian Americans* as hicks who don't know a thing about Asia (especially since my major was Mandarin). But seriously, who under the age of 60 (that lived in California no less) would ask somebody if they spoke *Oriental*? I am pretty sure the only somewhat intelligent and culturally-aware white guy in the movie had

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his exit. And besides that he was an ass.

This isn't to say I didn't love the juju beads-wearing hippie asking Jim whether Jet Li or Jackie Chan would win in a fight, or that there wasn't enough stereotyping to go around. I especially loved the repartee between the Nicaraguan and Vietnamese guys, each equally poking fun at the other's culture. I'm just saying the small town hicks got it the hardest. Was it karmic retribution for the other well-known stereotype of all the white guys getting the Asian chicks? I'm not sure. It's surprisingly one source of jokes they left out of the movie. Perhaps it was balance for years of two-dimensional Asian characters in the cinema. Or revenge for David Carradine starring in Kung Fu.

Of course, like every story of this type, there is a natural progression when faced with death. Jim Lee reflects on his past and realizes he's made mistakes in how he approaches life, from not tipping and being cheap, to missing out on opportunities, to dating the wrong girls. He remains straight-laced throughout, but he is a sympathetic character and you can see him as being possibly worthy of the incredibly hot Korean artist (Kathy Uyen) he's been lucky enough to snag. Ultimately it's hard for me to believe that he was ever in that much pain to begin with, but this film isn't about believability. Its campy nature and surprising humor make it a great movie to watch in a group.

This movie was part of the [*26th Louis Vuitton Hawaii International Film Festival*](#), which we will be covering for the next two weeks. The title is indicative that there may be prequels in the future.

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