

The Pop-up

Cast of Characters

Mei Ling: Female, 16 years old, in school uniform

Kevin Chan: Male, 16 years old, in school uniform

Mr. Wong: Mei Ling and Kevin Chan's class teacher and computer teacher, in his late fifties, wears a pair of black glasses and a black T-shirt
Classmates: F4 students, all in school uniform [voiceover only]

Genie: Gender unknown, age unknown, wears a black hoodie

Gweilo: Male, in his middle thirties, has a blond moustache

Principal: Female, early sixties [voiceover only]

SCENE I

(Computer Room, after recess)

[The bell rings, indicating the start of the lesson. Mr. Wong stands at stage centre. There are two sets of empty tables with laptops on them and chairs located at stage right. Mei Ling and Kevin Chan rush into the classroom from stage right.]

Mr. Wong: Nice to know that you two lovebirds finally decided to show up!

Classmates: OOOOOOOOOOH!!!

Mei Ling: *(politely)* Sorry, we were held back by a teacher.

Mr Wong: *(annoyed)* Hurry up and switch on your laptops, ya slowpokes!

[Mei Ling opens her laptop on her desk and types loudly on the keyboard. Genie enters from stage right and goes behind Mei Ling while putting his hands on her shoulders.]

Genie: *(smirking)* Lucky you! This is your lucky day! Welcome to Genie.com, your chance to change your life!

Mei Ling: *(leaning towards the monitor to examine closer)* What is this...a pop-up? Lucky? Oh yes, of course, that's why I'm in this loser's class, totally my lucky day!

Genie: *(in a devilish manner)* You have 3 wishes. Wish, and I shall grant them.

Mei Ling: *(engrossed)* Any wish?

Genie: Precisely.

Mei Ling: Well, for my first wish, (*glances at Kevin Chan*) I want Kevin Chan to be madly in love with me!!!

Genie: (*giggling*) I thought you two were dating already!

Mei Ling: We're just friends.

Genie: Not anymore. (*smirks*) Okay then, your wish is my command!!!

[Kevin Chan throws a paper airplane towards Mei Ling. Mei Ling opens it.]

Mei Ling: Dearest Mei Ling, I would like to sincerely ask you to accompany me, your loyal admirer, to a movie after school. Please nod your head three times if you accept the invitation, my dear.

[Looks at Genie in awe, then nods three times rapidly]

Mei Ling: (*gratefully*) It...worked! Genie, you're amazing!

[Genie winks and leaves to stage right. Mr. Wong sees Mei Ling nodding at Kevin Chan and staring at him]

Mr. Wong: Well, Mei Ling, are you going to log into your school account or are you going to keep nodding and staring at Kevin Chan throughout the whole lesson?

Classmates: OOOOOOOOOOH!!!

[Mei Ling ignores Mr Wong]

Mei Ling: (*in disbelief*) The Genie actually granted my wish...I wonder what else he can do?

Scene II

(Cinema, later that day)

[Two rows of chairs, with two chairs in each row are located at stage centre. Mei Ling, who is using her phone, is sitting with Kevin in the first row, who is carrying Mei Ling's schoolbag for her. Gweilo is sitting behind the two.]

Mei Ling: (*yawning*) Boring movie.

Kevin Chan: Mei Ling, dear, maybe you shouldn't use your phone in the dark.

Mei Ling: Give me a reason to stop.

Kevin Chan: It's disturbing others, my dear Mei.

Mei Ling: You're exaggerating.

Kevin Chan: But-

Mei Ling: *(irritated)* This conversation is over.

Gweilo: Excuse me, young lady. Could you please switch off your device and stop talking?

Mei Ling: Stop bossing me around, you gweilo!

Gweilo: *(offended)* Gweilo? How rude. Just dim your screen, or I'll Mei

Ling: Or you'll what?

Gweilo: *(frowning)* Hasn't your family ever taught you manners?

Mei Ling: Do **you** have a family?

Gweilo: Excuse me?

Mei Ling: That is not an answer. Do you have a family?

Gweilo: Yes.

Mei Ling: I've got a tool that can harm your family.

Gweilo: *(appalled)* Look, I was simply asking you to-

Mei Ling: I'm leaving. People like you don't deserve my time. Continue with your boring movie, you loser.

[Mei Ling and Kevin leave the cinema and goes to stage left.]

Kevin Chan: A tool?

Mei Ling: I don't know what I was talking about. I never planned to harm his family. Just messing with him.

Kevin Chan: The look on you when you're using the laptop. You look so obsessed. Is the laptop related to the 'tool'?

Mei Ling: Kevin. No.

[Kevin takes Mei Ling's laptop out from her schoolbag]

[Mei Ling quickly covers the website link]

Kevin Chan: *(curiously)* A genie that fulfills any wishes. What site is this ad on?

Mei Ling: You don't need it. You already have me. I'm everything you could ever wish for.

Kevin Chan: But-

Mei Ling: *(glaring at Kevin)* So you want another girlfriend? Or a few more?

Kevin Chan: No, no, I just-

Mei Ling: *(plays cute)* Do you not love me?

Kevin Chan: Of course I do.

Mei Ling: *(manipulatively)* Then listen to what I say. That's what a lover would do.

Kevin Chan: Okay.

Scene III
(Computer Room, the following day)

[Mr. Wong stands at stage centre. Mei Ling and Kevin are sitting at tables with laptops on them and chairs located at stage right. Mei Ling and Kevin stares at each other lovingly]

Mr Wong: *(in a teasing way)* Hey Mei Ling, don't you have anything better to do besides stare at Kevin?

Classmates: OOOOOOOOOOH!!!

Mei Ling: Hey! You're bullying me because you're bitter that you don't have a girlfriend, aren't you?

Mr Wong: I wasn't going to mention this here, but I've changed my mind. Yesterday, a foreigner reported you to the school. Claimed that you and a boy insulted him in the cinema. You're giving me lots of reasons to punish you. *(Mr Wong pauses)* **But** since I am a lenient teacher, I will forgive you. *(Mr Wong pauses once again)* *(Mei Ling rolls her eyes)* But you'll have to apologise sincerely to me.

Mei Ling: I beg your pardon?

Mr Wong: Apologise. To me.

Mei Ling: But that gwei-

Mr Wong: (*nastily*) I don't want your excuses. What I want you two to do is to stand in front of the class, with your bratty mouth and admit that you're sorry.

Mei Ling: (*confused*) Shouldn't the apology be directed at the gweilo?

Mr Wong: Do it here, for educational purposes. And to apologise *to me*. (*sneers*)

[Realising that Mr Wong is trying to make her look like a fool, Mei Ling shakes her head]

Mei Ling: No way.

Mr Wong: If you don't, then I'll have a conversation with your parents. What do you think, Mei Ling and Kevin?

Kevin: I-but-

[Mr Wong walks towards Kevin's seat, then forcefully drags him to the front of the class. In response to this, Mei Ling looks at Genie, planning her next course of action.]

Mr Wong: What's so interesting about your laptop, Mei Ling?

[Mr Wong ambles towards Mei Ling's seat, step by step.]

Mr Wong: What are you looking at? More handsome boys? Come out now, or do you need me to help you?

Classmates: Oooooooh!

[Mei types frantically into her computer. Mr. Wong leaves to stage right. Genie comes from stage right and goes behind Mei Ling.]

Mei: (*screams into laptop*) I want to get rid of Mr. Wong!!! This is my second wish!

Genie: Your wish is my command!

[Mr. Wong's phone rings]

Mr. Wong: *(speaking into his phone)* Yes. I see. I'll be on my way. Class, behave yourselves or you'll end up like them. *(points at Mei Ling and Kevin Chan)*

Scene IV
(Computer Room, a few minutes later)

[A siren sound is heard. Following it is a long beep which signifies Mr. Wong's death.]

[Mei Ling and Kevin have already returned back to their seats. Kevin glances around, nervously waiting for Mr Wong to return while Mei Ling sits back and relaxes.]

Principal: This is an emergency announcement. Mr. Wong was involved in a tragic accident and has unfortunately passed away, but he will forever be remembered. Let us have a moment of silence for our beloved Mr. Wong.

Mei Ling: *(to herself, worriedly)* Oh no, this is very bad. I never thought this would happen. I thought that he would just disappear out of thin air. Would they find out that I used to Genie to murder him?

[Noticing Mei Ling mumbling to herself, Kevin looks at her.]

Kevin Chan: Murder who?

Mei Ling: Eh?! *(looks away from Kevin's eyes because she's lying)* No...Nothing, I was just thinking about...uh the game I play a lot, uhh, Murder Mystery.

Kevin Chan: Really? *(raises a single eyebrow)* But you seem so worried and anxious... like you're guilty of something...

Mei Ling: We can talk later, okay? For now, just shut up.

[Kevin nods and leaves from stage left while Mei Ling does a monologue.]

Mei Ling: I thought the Genie would make him disappear instead of straight-up murdering him.

Scene V
(Classroom, later that day)

[Mei Ling enters from stage right and sits down. Genie walks in from stage right.]

Mei Ling: *(furiously)* Genie!!! I said I wanted to get rid of him! Why is there evidence left?

Genie: *(mischievously)* I did get rid of him, just not in the way you expected. You've still got one last wish.

Mei Ling: *(as if she's addicted)* I wish for more wishes! More!

Genie: No.

[Kevin sneaks onto the stage from stage right, Genie eyes him, clearly sees him but since Kevin is behind Mei Ling, she isn't aware of his presence.]

Mei Ling: *(frustrated)* Ugh, never mind. In that case, I would like to erase everything about Mr Wong: photographs, records, and even others' memories of him. Remove his existence entirely. *(Kevin sneaks closer)* No one must know that I'm responsible for killing Mr Wong.

Kevin Chan: *(horrified)* Wait, what, you what? You used that Genie to kill Mr Wong, didn't you? I had a sneaking suspicion, that's why I followed you. And now you are erasing everyone's memories. That means...not even his family will remember him!

Mei Ling: He forced me to do this! I had no choice!

Kevin Chan: Nobody forced you to do anything!

Mei Ling: *(defensively)* He dragged you across the classroom! I panicked! What if he found out about the Genie and used it against me! Now shut up! *(eyes filled with rage)*

Kevin Chan: *(hesitates slightly)* No, dearest Mei, I want the best for you. I think that you should tell everyone the truth!

Mei Ling: *(clenching her jaws and staring at Kevin Chan)* Since when did you have opinions? I said NO, and that's FINAL!

Kevin Chan: NO! If you won't tell them, then I will! *(Kevin starts to leave and begins to walk offstage)*

Mei Ling: *(screams at him)* You can't stop me, Kevin, no one can. You will soon forget about Mr Wong.

Kevin: But I won't forget about the Genie. I will spread the word. People won't remember Mr Wong, but they will know that you used the Genie. They may even use the Genie against you. I will do all of this to make you see your own wrongdoings.

[Kevin leaves from stage left, Mei turns to laptop and talks to the screen]

Genie: So what now, are you going to erase Mr Wong's existence, or are you going to make people forget about me?

Mei Ling: Execute the original plan. Delete Mr. Wong's existence completely. *(States plainly)*

Genie: Your wish is my command!

[There is a brief moment of silence.]

Mei Ling: *(desperately)* Genie are you still there? Please, I need you. More. I need more wishes. Now.

Genie: *(in a creepy manner)* Yes, I'm here, I'm always here...

Mei Ling: Kevin must not expose me. I want him dead.

Genie: I'm sorry, but you don't have any wishes left. *(smiles maliciously, waves, and prepares to leave)* Farewell...

Mei Ling: I'll do anything. I'll give you everything I have for just one more wish.

Genie: *(pleased and satisfied)* Deal. I will be back to collect what you owe me. I guarantee you.

Mei Ling: Alright, alright.

Genie: Very well, shall I remove Kevin's memories then? He doesn't have to die.

Mei Ling: No. *(eyes filled with cruelty)* Eliminate him and leave no evidence. He betrayed and defied me.

Genie: Your wish is my command!

[Genie snaps his fingers on his right hand, and stretches right hand out in a neck squeezing pose. Kevin moonwalks backwards from stage left while screaming. Genie snaps his fingers on his left hand. Kevin collapses to the floor; no longer moving.]

Genie: You never loved him, did you?

Mei Ling: I - I -

Genie: *(interrupting Mei Ling)* You never wanted his love either, am I right? You wanted obsession and control.

Mei Ling: But - I -

Genie: You don't need to say anything. Farewell for now, until the day comes.

[Genie bows and exits from stage left.]

[Mei Ling closes the laptop, emotionlessly staring into nothingness. Lights out.]

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