

2020

RESIDENCY

JALAN BESAR SALON
PRESENTS

RANSOM

DRAFT 1



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JALAN BESAR SALON²⁰²⁰

Presents

RANSOM

Draft 1

by Euginia Tan

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SYNOPSIS

A kidnapping goes wrong when nobody is willing to hand over the demanded ransom for the hostage.

Haikal - Kidnapper

Estelle Ong - Hostage

Various callers – *Haikal* engages with them over phone calls

Foreword

I initially worked on *Ransom* as a submission to Wild Rice's 2020 Singapore Theatre Festival Open Call, however it was rejected. Later on, for this residency, I opted to do another draft to work on the piece.

It is another two-hander, which I wanted to focus on for my residency. I really enjoyed working on the piece because of the absurdity of the situation, and I often got carried away with the dark humour of the piece (which might explain why I'm still not too happy with how the drafts have turned out, it's easy to get lost in your own world creation). I foresee a draft 3, 4 and 5 and so on because of the various issues this situation touches on: Class differences, pursuits of personal happiness, sacrifices. I think that this piece needs to mature in time, the same way I am learning more about the world every day as well. I believe I am still quite sheltered in terms of knowing about privilege, and I can only hope that the years give me more wisdom as time goes by.

As a parting note for this residency, I've been reminded throughout this process that my writing keeps me human. It's the work that I do that forces me to confront the ugly parts of myself I acknowledge - my fears, insecurities, confusion. It's also the part that helps keep me going each day, something I can hold on to, something to create, something to share. I don't know how my relationship with writing would change because it was never something I mapped out for myself to follow as a career, and I'm still open to trying other options to make a living and contribute to society. Still, having a chance to take part in this residency helped me see how far I've tried to push my craft.

Thank you JBS! Enjoy the read, everyone.

Euginia

29 May 2020



Act 1

An abandoned warehouse. Estelle Ong is being shoved into a room by Haikal. Her mouth is taped up.

Haikal: Move! Move!

Estelle struggles. Haikal pushes her down on a chair.

Haikal: Listen, I am not going to tie you up ah. I'm not like those crazy psychos on the movies. And you see my size, you see your size, you try to escape, you know who will win.

Beat.

Haikal: Sit quietly there, keep quiet, and we can make this very easy for both of us.

Estelle immediately tries to run out of the room. Haikal effortlessly catches her, pushes her back down on the chair.

Haikal: Ah ah you see. What did I say huh? What did I tell you? I can carry you like Fairprice plastic bag.

Estelle tries again and again, Haikal effortlessly picks her up and pushes her down.

Haikal: Fairprice, you know where or not Aunty? You go before or not? Hah! Now sit still lah. This is nothing for me you know?

Estelle finally submits. She slowly, gingerly peels off the tape from her mouth.

Estelle: Ow, ow... Oh my pores... and don't call me Aunty, you understand? Where am I? What are you doing?

Haikal makes a call.

Haikal: I am kidnapping you.

Estelle: What?

Haikal: Kidnapping you. Or Adultnapping. Whatever you want lah.

Estelle: This is –

Haikal: Shh Shh. Hello? Hello?

The recipient on the other line answers.

Phone: Hello?

Haikal: Miss Madeleine Ong?

Phone: Ya no, not interested in any insurance. Bye!

Haikal: Insurance your head. I have your mother.

Phone: Huh? Have what?

Haikal: Your mother! Your mother!

Estelle: Maddy! Maddy! It's me! The crazy new driver, he's locked me up in some warehouse, don't know where... Please!

Haikal puts the duct tape back on to Estelle's mouth.

Haikal: Ah. You heard her, right? Okay. So I make this very simple. I'm not unreasonable. I want five hundred thousand dollars. In my account by tomorrow. And I will let your mother go, in fact now she is very comfortable already ah. I never even tie her up or what. She is just sitting in the chair.

Phone: Err... Not interested.

Haikal: My account is... Wait what? Hello? Hello? Your mother is kidnapped. By me, you understand? Kidnapped!

Phone: Look, I'm very busy. Call someone else or something? And besides, that's way too expensive.

Haikal: What... Your own mother... You... Aiyah. Okay okay. Three hundred thousand dollars. And I can tahan till Sunday. Sunday, I get the money, your mother –

Phone: What's your name?

Haikal: Haikal.

Phone: Okay. Haikal, see, you're clearly very kind, not wanting to hurt that bitch and all. But I'm telling you, you're just undertaking a really futile transaction here. No one is going to miss her.

Haikal: I...

Haikal turns to Estelle.

Haikal: Mrs Ong, you hold on ah. Err, your daughter... She err... She is very very panicky. She.. She want to... Err find some time... To raise the money... anyway, here here. You drink some water lah. Hold on ah.

Haikal gives Estelle some water, returns back to the phone.

Haikal: Excuse me, Miss Ong, seriously, she is your mother right? No matter what she did, I'm still holding her here in some ulu place. You want to let her go through with this?

Phone: Haikal, you want money, I'll give it to you. But all I'm going to part with is three hundred dollars. Send me your account details or whatever. Goodbye!

Haikal: Wait wait wait! I...

The call ends.

Haikal: Puki mak!

Estelle: Hakim? What did Maddy say?

Haikal: Seriously? Haikal. I'm Haikal. Do I call you Mrs Wong? Or Mrs Tong? Or Mrs Chong? No right? I call you Mrs Ong.

Estelle: Okay ya Haikal. What did my daughter say?

Beat.

Haikal: Aiyah. Door is there. You go lah.

Estelle: Go...?

Haikal: Ya. Your daughter... she... will transfer some money. You can go.

Estelle looks at Haikal warily at first, then she bolts out through the door.

Haikal lies on the floor of the warehouse, looking helplessly at the ceiling.

Estelle returns.

Estelle: Haikal.

Haikal: Eh sia lah chao chee bye... Mrs Ong? Why you come back?

Estelle: I... I don't know how to get out. Where are we?

Haikal: Your car outside. You drive out lah, anyhow drive also can find one road one lah.

Estelle: I... I forgot how already.

Haikal: What?!

Estelle: Aiyah, I have driver for so long, you know this kind of thing, easy to forget...

Haikal: Walk lah! Use your two legs to walk! Go lah go! I seriously don't want to see you!

Estelle: Haikal, how much is my daughter transferring you? I double that. I pay you to get me out. Okay? Double you know! Just like that. And I won't tell the police. You can take the money and go and have a good life, maybe go JB lah, or Indonesia lah...

Haikal starts laughing uncontrollably.

Estelle: What? You think I can't afford it? Let me tell you, money is really not an issue to me ah, okay, triple. Triple! You just need to drive me home.

Haikal: Mrs Ong. I don't know what you did. But you double, triple, even times ten of what your daughter offered, even secondary school kid can go and earn from holiday job lah, Mrs Ong. Go overseas also need to buy flight ticket, you know?

Beat.

Estelle: How much ransom did you ask for?

Haikal: Half a million. Eh Sing dollars hor! Not Rupiah, understand!

Estelle: How much did Madeleine say she would give you?

Beat.

Haikal: Just go lah, later dark already, even harder for you to find your way.

Estelle: Haikal. How much, did my daughter, say, she would, give you.

Haikal: I give you directions lah. You walk straight, just keep walking straight, until you see this fork in the path ah, then you turn left –

Estelle: Haikal. I'll give you half a million dollars now if you tell me what she said.

Beat.

Haikal: Give me one million dollars, I will tell you what she said.

Beat.

Estelle: Call her again. I will talk to her myself.

Haikal: Mrs Ong. Your phone bigger and shinier than mine. You call her, you can ask her. Okay?

Estelle: I... can't call her.

Haikal: What? You don't know how to drive then now don't know how to use phone also ah?

Estelle: No. I think she blocked my number.

Beat.

Haikal: Okay lah I call. But first give me your hand bag. I call.

Estelle reluctantly hands over her hand bag to Haikal. Haikal proceeds to call.

The call goes to voice mail. Haikal repeatedly tries, until the call is finally blocked.

Haikal: No answer.

Estelle: Here, here's my phone. Call somebody on my phone. Ask them for... Ask them for half a million dollars also. To save me from you.

Haikal: Wah Mrs Ong. You know how tiring it was or not? To plan this whole thing? Now have to spontaneous again ah? Difficult you know?

Estelle: Here, here, take my necklace, my earrings. They are all real diamonds. Plus my hand bag, you will get a good deal also.

Haikal takes Estelle's jewellery and phone.

Haikal: Mrs Ong, you got a lot of contacts here, who can I call?

Beat.

Estelle: Call... Call Lauren.

Haikal: Lauren, Lauren what?

Estelle: Lauren Grant.

Haikal: Wah, angmoh ah? Mrs Ong, angmoh always cannot understand me over the phone one.

Estelle: No no, she married angmoh. Chinese woman. She was in the car with us before.

Haikal: Orh, that one the tetek very big one ah?

Estelle: Ya, move will burst one. That's why need to be driven around.

Haikal: Mrs Ong... you very bad ah? Talk shit about your friend like that?

Estelle: Just call her will you? And put it on speaker.

Haikal makes another call.

Lauren Grant: Hellooooo?

Haikal: Is this Lauren Grant.

Lauren Grant: Yes... Oh! You must be the caterer. Yes I want an extra vegetarian option if you have more of those –

Haikal: Caterer your head. I have Mrs Estelle Ong with me.

Lauren Grant: Oh which spa is she at? Her membership card's with me, yes.

Haikal: Not spa. Can you stop interrupting? Bloody SPG. I have kidnapped her. I want money from you.

Beat.

Lauren Grant: Look, I do not take to prank calls kindly. I will call the police –

Estelle: Laurie! Laurie!

Lauren Grant: Stelly! Oh Stelly, what is happening?

Estelle: Look, this mad man driver, the new driver I hired, he's taken me to some... deserted place, and he wants money for my safety.... Please, Laurie, will you help?

Haikal: Five hundred thousand dollars Lauren Grant. In my account by tomorrow.

Lauren Grant: Oh you brute! Wait, could you pass the phone back to Estelle?

Haikal: Wah lau, kidnap also I still must pass phone...

Estelle: Laurie? Yes?

Lauren Grant: Stelly, where are you, really? I'll just get my driver to pop by.

Estelle: No no, Lauren, this is serious... He... He uh... He doesn't want anybody involved!

Beat.

Lauren Grant: Has he called Madeleine?

Estelle: Madeleine... Erm... Madeleine's abroad. The call didn't get through.

Lauren Grant: Okay, Stelly, pass the phone back to him, will you? And I'll speak to him alone. Just him, alright sweetie?

Estelle: Erm... Okay.

Estelle mouths to Haikal to keep leaving the phone on speaker mode.

Haikal: Hello. Lauren Grant.

Lauren: Hi, look, is Estelle alright?

Haikal: Yes. Oh I mean no. She... She err...

Estelle does charades to try to get Haikal to follow her prompts.

Haikal: She... she giddy. Very giddy? Err... Heart problem. Her heart... Beating very fast. She... Hypertension?

Lauren: Okay, whatever. There are these little pills in her bag, just give them to her.

Haikal: Eh hello, I am asking for ransom here. I won't let Mrs Ong go until I get the money.

Lauren: Look, Hakim was it.

Haikal: Haikal! Haikal!

Lauren: Yes, my husband is very busy, and I have to ask him for permission for such a copious amount. Which I don't think he'll take very patiently to. So you see. Just give her some of those pills, or more of those pills, and just bring her home. Don't harm a little hair on her, will you dear? And for all that effort, I'll give you three thousand dollars. That's a lot for a little errand like this, isn't it?

Haikal: Wah, all you woman, like to bargain only ah.

Estelle suddenly begins shrieking.

Estelle: Owwww! Owwww! Aaarrghhhh! Don't!!!! Let me go! Stop it!!!! Owwww! My... My.... My fingernails are being pulled out one by one!!!!

Haikal stares at Estelle in muted shock. She mouths for him to play along.

Haikal: Err... err... Ya... err... Pliers... My big pliers... Pulling Mrs Ong's.... nails.... one by one... a lot of blood... Err...

Estelle: And my toe nails now!!! Owwww!

Lauren Grant: Estelle? Are you on speaker mode?

Haikal: No of course she is not.

Estelle slaps her forehead in resignation.

Haikal: Lauren Grant, eh, don't take this torture lightly. You know people can die of blood loss one?

Lauren Grant: Good man, will you please put this phone off speaker?

Haikal looks to Estelle. Estelle nods. Haikal moves to a far corner to take the call.

Haikal: Ya, okay.

Lauren Grant: Good. See, obviously you're in some sort of pickle, to be doing this. But I know how Estelle loves to create drama out of nothing. So I'm offering you another price again. Three thousand five hundred dollars, just take her home. And I'm very late for the opera, so just make this quick, will you?

Haikal: Ma'am, come on. Just... Just take pity on Mrs Ong lah okay? I called her daughter. The daughter only offered me three hundred. Three hundred you know? And ya, I really need the money. Please.

Lauren Grant: Three hundred! Oh the cheek of that spoilt girl.

Haikal: At least... at least one hundred thousand lah ma'am. Okay.

Lauren Grant: Oh don't be stupid. You're testing my patience now as well. It's back to three thousand for you. Take it or leave it.

Haikal: Okay okay. Ten thousand. Ten thousand, I already throw my face on the floor for you.

Lauren Grant: Two thousand and I'm hanging up if you don't say anything.

Beat.

Haikal: Take your dirty whore bule cock sucking trophy wife money and stuff it between your bedek breasts.

The call ends.

Estelle: So?

Haikal: Eh. You talk nicely to me hor. I'm your kidnapper.

Estelle: What did Lauren say? Am I being saved?

Haikal: Ya save la save la. I tell you what. I call Grab for you. Grab Premium. Charge to your card.

Estelle: She's not coming?

Haikal: Her tetek painful lah. Sick. Not feeling well.

Beat.

Estelle: I have to go to the toilet.

Haikal: Here jungle lah Mrs Ong. Just anyhow go outside the grass there lah. I won't look.

Estelle: I mean... Don't... Don't go, will you?

Beat.

Haikal: I stay here until you finish.

Estelle: There's tissue in my hand bag...

Haikal: Eh you really very leh chey you know?!

Haikal throws her a packet of tissue. Estelle leaves to urinate.

After a while, she returns.

Estelle: What time is it, Haikal?

Haikal: Nine.

Estelle: You could have at least kidnapped me in the middle of the night. At least they might be more frightened that way.

Haikal: Aunty, I need to sleep leh. How I know this would take so long? I thought I call already, they agree, I get the money, can go home. I wasn't even planning to keep you here overnight!

Estelle: I mean who does a kidnap right after dinner time. Everyone wants to unwind, relax...

Haikal: Eh. You don't come and push the blame on me. When you're the one nobody wants to rescue!

Silence.

Estelle: They just need proof. Proof that I'm hurt and suffering.

Haikal: Eh Mrs Ong. I not sadist ah. I don't even want to tie you up.

Estelle: Just.... Perhaps if they knew, how serious this whole thing is....

Haikal: What serious? I already let you go. You give me all this barang barang can already. Okay? I think this ugly bag of yours is worth a lot right? People waitlist ten years to get one of this right?

Estelle begins to attempt to pull out her own finger nail.

Haikal: Mrs Ong. Mrs Ong! Stop! Stop! It's not worth it! Stop!!!!

Estelle: Let me do it. Let me do it.

A twisted expression begins to take over Estelle.

Estelle: Don't you need money, Haikal?

Haikal: Mrs Ong, those people out there, they are not good... It's not worth it to get their attention like this...

Estelle: I'll give you five hundred thousand dollars, just send all my fingernails to both Madeleine and Lauren.

Haikal: No!

Estelle: You won't have to do a thing. You just have to sit there, and receive my nails from me, and send them... and take a picture of my hands. I'll do all the work myself.

Haikal: No!

Estelle: Oh, Haikal. do you really think you are being kind to me? By sacrificing whatever you are just to spare me pain?

Haikal: I... I just needed the money... I... I don't want to really hurt anyone...

Estelle: And there's your problem Haikal. You want such a big sum. You have to see it through. Such a big sum of money Haikal... it doesn't fall into your lap like that.

Haikal: Get out! Get out!

Estelle: Is your mother dying Haikal? Are you just going to give her life up like that to spare mine... A rich society woman who has been treating you badly all these months?

Haikal: Leave my mother out of this!

Estelle: Don't forget Haikal. I'm your employer... I know all about you. Your wife left you didn't she? Your children are under your mother's care? You want to lose your kids because you couldn't do this one task properly?

Haikal starts to shove Estelle out of the room.

Haikal: Move! Move your ass! Walk home! Walk the fuck home!

Estelle: Yes Haikal... Get angry at me. I'm a heartless person, aren't I? Even my own daughter can't be bothered with me. Why should you protect my dignity?

Haikal: Look, Mrs Ong... Please stop this... Okay, we can discuss this. Yes, I need the money for my mother. Her kidney... It's giving her problems. My children are still young Mrs Ong.

Estelle: So make someone give you the ransom. For me.

Haikal: Mrs Ong... I already tried right? You think it's so easy to scout out location like this ah? And timing all that? I already did my best...

Estelle: Get the ransom. For me.

Haikal: You... You tired right? Look, I send you home, I bring you back to your comfortable house. There is nothing for you here. I don't even have food.

Estelle: And I don't want to leave. So you are just going to have to make me go, right Haikal?



Act 2

Haikal: No answer from Doris Tang.

Estelle: Dolores Tang. Dolores Tang!

Haikal: Ah ah you see now you know how it feels. Haikal, not Hakim!

Beat.

Estelle: Fine. We'll switch tactics. Enough of these useless friends I can't count on. Call somebody I have made recent transactions with.

Haikal: Your plastic surgeon?

Estelle: Yes. Dr. Murdoch.

Haikal: Wah another funny name.

Estelle: He named himself after the university he graduated from.

Haikal: Eh you Chinese people, if Chinese can stick to proper Chinese name or not? You ever see a Malay guy called Lincoln? No right?

Estelle: I was about to sign a twenty thousand dollar package with him. I've only put down a five thousand dollar deposit. He will come to save me.

Haikal: Mrs Ong, what time doctor shift end?

Estelle: Haikal, a rich person's doctor never sleeps. Do you think women like me go to see our surgeons at normal working hours? Women go when their husbands are sleeping, so the next day, they can wake up, pretty and fresh and wrinkle-free, and say "Good morning honey, how did you sleep?"

Beat.

Haikal: I call now.

Haikal makes a call.

Dr. Murdoch: Dr. Murdoch's office.

Haikal: You secretary ah?

Dr. Murdoch: Yes?

Haikal: What time already? He paying you OT or not?

Dr. Murdoch: *(Pause)* Are you an existing client with Dr. Murdoch?

Estelle: Anne? Anne! It's me, Mrs Estelle Ong!

Dr. Murdoch: Mrs Ong! Was that your driver? Are you downstairs? I can buzz you in –

Estelle: Yes, it's my driver. He's gone completely insane. Can you put me straight to Dr. Murdoch?

Dr. Murdoch: Dr. Murdoch is currently helping Mrs. Tang with her treatments.

Estelle: Oh so that's why she didn't pick up!

Haikal: Hello, hello, enough of this talk. Listen here, Anne, put Dr. Murdoch on the phone now. I have kidnapped Mrs Estelle Ong, and I will hold her hostage until he delivers my ransom.

Beat.

Dr. Murdoch: I'll get the Doctor right away.

Beat.

Dr. Murdoch: Hello. This is Dr. Murdoch speaking.

Haikal: Dr. Murdoch. I have kidnapped one of your clients, Mrs Estelle Ong. She currently has a twenty thousand dollar package with you. And I don't know how many woman have twenty thousand dollar packages with you, so I want you to transfer me a ransom amount of five hundred thousand dollars so I will let your client go.

Dr. Murdoch: Where are you holding my client?

Haikal: Give me half the money first, and I will tell you the location after I have received the amount. Bring the other half with you. And no police involved.

Beat.

Dr. Murdoch: Will you let me speak to Mrs Ong?

Haikal: Yes.

Estelle mimes no.

Haikal: I mean no. I...

Estelle continues her charades.

Haikal: She... Aiyah. Just talk to her lah!

Estelle: Dr. Murdoch!

Dr. Murdoch: Estelle! Estelle, are you alright?

Estelle: I'm so frightened Doctor. I just want to go home.

Dr. Murdoch: Yes yes, that's not a problem at all. I'll get you out. And I'd also just like to check Estelle –

Estelle: Yes?

Dr. Murdoch: How is the last procedure holding up?

Estelle: Oh. *(Estelle feels her jawline)* Quite well. Sturdy, thank you.

Dr. Murdoch: Ah, brilliant. And I just want to be sure, that you're continuing your services with us?

Estelle: Oh M, you know how happy I am with your expertise. Why would I just jump ship like that –

Dr. Murdoch: Yes yes, glad you are happy, Estelle. It's just that, I've got a new shipment in.

Estelle: Shipment?

Dr. Murdoch: Yes, a state of the art, industry changing product.

Haikal: Time's up. Time's up. Dr. Murdoch, I want the money by –

Dr. Murdoch: Look look, young man. You sound like a respectable chap. I mean, you can't have the lady killed or you clearly won't get your end of the deal. Let me just talk to Mrs Ong, will you now?

Beat.

Haikal: Mrs Ong.

Dr. Murdoch: Ah Estelle. You are quite alright, aren't you now?

Estelle: I... I... Yes....

Dr. Murdoch: Anyway, I was saying. This new state of the art shipment, guaranteed to help you with the problem you were telling me about.

Estelle: You... you want me to take it. Is that it, Doctor.

Dr. Murdoch: I'm recommending it to you, Estelle. Highly recommending it. And that would up your current package to fifty thousand dollars, just a very slight, value for money incline.

Estelle: You bastard.

Dr. Murdoch: Oh Estelle, there's no need for such hostility.

Estelle: I've frequented your clinic for years.

Dr. Murdoch: And that doesn't make us friends Estelle. Beauty is business.

Beat.

Dr. Murdoch: I'm just your aesthetician Estelle. You must be in pretty bad shape to be calling me, out of everyone else you have around you. Fifty thousand dollars for a new package, and whether you come in or not, it's up to you!

Estelle: You really are the best in the trade, Doctor.

Dr. Murdoch: That's what they all say.

Estelle: So help me I will make sure your clinic burns to the ground.

Dr. Murdoch: Good night Estelle.

Dr. Murdoch hangs up.

Haikal: How, Mrs Ong?

Beat.

Haikal: Mrs Ong? Here lah, I have some bread. My.. My mother packed for me... Before I left... today....

Haikal breaks down.

Haikal: My mother...

Estelle takes the bread.

Estelle: Let's just go home then.

Beat.

Estelle: Since no one will come... Let's just go home.

Beat.

Estelle: You'll get a raise Haikal. Enough to help your mother recover. I promise you.

Beat.

Estelle: Get up. You look pathetic, grovelling about like that. Get up.

Haikal slowly stands up, tries to compose himself.

Estelle: Let's go.

Suddenly, the phone rings.

Haikal and Estelle look at each other, conflicted.

Estelle goes back to her chair, asks Haikal to answer it.

Haikal: Hello? Hello?

Dolores Tang: Hi? Is Estelle there? She called me!

Haikal: Who is this?

Dolores Tang: Dolores Tang.

Haikal: Mrs... Mrs Ong... It's Doris Tang.

Estelle: Dolores? Dolores!

Dolores Tang: Hey Esti! So sorry, was just at M's, my eyelids are sagging so much...

Estelle: Dolores. Please, I need your help. My driver –

Dolores Tang: The new guy? Yes rather rude just now wasn't he, on the phone –

Estelle: He's kidnapped me Dolores! Oh god I've been stuck in some abandoned warehouse all night!

Dolores Tang: Oh Esti! Esti where are you? Goodness I'll come immediately.

Estelle: You... You'll come?

Dolores Tang: Of course Esti, oh goodness, quickly will you just tell me where you are? Oh the nerve of that man...

Estelle: But but... It's not so simple. He... He wants five hundred thousand dollars. In exchange for me.

Dolores Tang: Esti. You know money is not a damn issue. What matters is your safety... Esti, put him on the line will you?

Estelle: It... Oh Dolores. Thank you. Thank you!

Haikal: Hello.

Dolores Tang: Hi, where are you?

Haikal: Give me the money first. Send me proof that you have done it. And I will give you the location.

Dolores Tang: Alright. Just don't hurt her.

Haikal: I didn't.

Dolores Tang: Five hundred thousand dollars?

Haikal: Yes.

Dolores Tang: Consider it done.

Dolores Tang hangs up.

Haikal: Okay Mrs Ong. Looks like someone will come. Are you happy now?

Estelle: Oh... Dolores... Dolores....

Haikal: Now, we just wait.

Estelle: You know... I always thought our friendship was doomed. But it looks like, there's hope. There's hope.

Beat.

Estelle: You see, someone does care for me. The money and all that, it didn't matter at all to them. Someone cares. Right Haikal? Someone just put down everything, risked everything, and did this all for me...

Beat.

Estelle: The person you think you can count on the least just turns around and surprises you... This is why Haikal, keep your friends close. Friends, they come in the most unlikely places!

Beat.

Estelle: To think I even wanted to hurt myself! I'm... I'm wanted. I'm loved. I'm being rescued. I'm being rescued!

The phone buzzes.

Haikal: I have the money.

Estelle: Wonderful. Wonderful. Now we all get what we want.

Haikal: Good bye, Mrs Ong.

Estelle: Yes, good riddance to you, if you think I'm going to keep you on after all this, you should be happy I'm not reporting you to the authorities –

Haikal: I'm not taking that risk Mrs Ong.

Estelle: What?

Haikal: You won't make it to the authorities, Mrs Ong.

Estelle: Oh save it. You don't have it in you to kill me, you idiot.

Haikal: I don't, Mrs Ong. That's why, I just take orders.

Estelle: What?

Haikal: Doris Tang will come and get you Mrs Ong. And so will Lauren Grant, Dr. Murdoch, and Miss Madeleine.

Beat.

Estelle: They... They weren't coming. They said they were busy.

Haikal: I don't know what you did to them Mrs Ong. But you are the worst boss I ever had. I feel sorry for you, but, my family is more important to me.

Estelle: What is the meaning of this, Haikal?

Haikal: You're strong, Mrs Ong, but I think by now you are tired... And any little thing...

Haikal takes out the pills in Estelle's hand bag.

Haikal: Will cause you to react... And you haven't taken your medication.

Estelle: Give it here. Give it here you piece of shit!

Haikal: Your daughter wants all the money from the will, Mrs Ong. She told me. And it turns out, everyone wants a piece of it too, so everyone chipped in.

Estelle: No... No...

Haikal: You are worth a lot of money Mrs Ong, I don't know how you got the money, and what you did, but all that money, like you told me... I'm sure it didn't fall into your lap, just like that.

Estelle is weakened, she is having difficulty breathing.

Haikal: You must have... Done what you also needed to... To get where you wanted... I don't know. I don't want to know.

The sound of an approaching car.

Haikal: And they will all come to collect you... They said it will be suicide... Because you didn't take your medication...

Estelle is unable to speak at this point.

Haikal: I promise they will give you a proper funeral... A decent one.. I can promise you that....

Estelle chokes, sputters.

Estelle: Go... To... Hell....

Haikal: I think I will. But I will do all that, for my mom and kids.

Beat.

Haikal: The plan was to just get you weaker, and weaker... And I didn't lay a hand on you, Mrs Ong. I didn't at all.

Beat.

Haikal: It was they who did it. You understand? They couldn't even care to see you... live well....

Estelle goes into cardiac arrest.

Haikal: I don't know what you did Mrs Ong. And I will never know.

Sound of people getting out of the car. Estelle slowly dies on the spot.

Haikal: I am just doing my job.

END

This play was produced as part of the *Radical Transparency* Open Call Residency programme produced by *Jalan Besar Salon* from 20th April 2020 - 1st June 2020.

About Euginia Tan

Singaporean writer Euginia Tan writes poetry, creative non-fiction and plays.

Her third poetry collection, ***Phedra*** (*Ethos Books*) was nominated for the *2018 Singapore Literature Prize*. Her play-writing credits include ***Holidays*** (under mentorship of Joel Tan), ***Tuition*** (*Twenty Something Theatre Festival*) and ***Modest Travels*** (produced by Tan Kheng Hua for *Uniqlo*). She is currently an Artist in Residence for Gateway Theatre (mentored by Jean Tay) and has written a play on addiction scheduled for 2021.

She also pens curatorial essays and contributions for visual artists in Singapore.

Euginia can be contacted through email at: eugtan@hotmail.com

View Euginia's work during the residency: [Artist in Residence](#)

About the Radical Transparency Residency Programme (20 April - 20 August 2020)

We are limited by the physical confines of bodies and boundaries, our ways to create and digest culture and knowledge is changing with the rapid acceleration of digital migration and the new realities of social distancing.

Radical Transparency emerged out of our collective pursuit for a flatter structure and more equal ways to distribute knowledge and information. This increasing demand to change the way institutions operate, to adopt a more transparent system that champions accessibility, clarity and accountability; are what is needed for communities to communicate, co-exist and co-create.

How do we mitigate such distance created in the process? When technology is brought in to mediate social distance, what do we stand to gain or lose?

Jalan Besar Salon invites you to participate in the process of Radical Transparency, to forge open discussion and communication.

Find out more about the residency here: [OPEN CALL 2020](#)

About Jalan Besar Salon

Conceptualised by *EOMM Emporium of The Modern Man*, the annual *Jalan Besar Salon* popup seeks to provide a platform for learning and communication.

The Salon serves to act as a catalyst for the hotbeds of creativity and progressive ideas in the fields of urban management, psychology, intimacy and socio-environmental topics through the means of art, design and philosophy.

Against the decline of face-to-face human contact in our digital age, our workshops, programmes and exhibitions aim to provide a platform for people to come together and hone their tastes through passionate conversation and the exchange of ideas.

To learn more about *Jalan Besar Salon* and our programmes, visit us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) or at www.jalanbesarsalon.space.