

KIMCHI RHINESTONE

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SUPER: "It wasn't God who made honky tonk angels - Kitty Wells."

INCHON, SOUTH KOREA. 1996

EXT. BUPYEONG STREET - 2:00 A.M.

A YOUNG KOREAN WOMAN (early 20's) kneels at a weathered guitar case. Chokes down sobs. Shoulders quake.

Steady now.

She's popping each latch slowly, patiently, *shhh*. Lifts out a beat up ACOUSTIC GUITAR. Lays it gently on the sidewalk, but even still:

TWANG! Out-of-tune strings snap the silence. UMPH. She muffles them instantly, eyes darting. Coast still clear.

She unties a traditional Korean papoose strapped to her back. In it:

A sleeping INFANT.

She tenderly nestles her newborn into the guitar case. Quivering lips press to the tiny forehead. *Please forgive me.*

Tucked into the swaddling: a JADE TURTLE NECKLACE.

FIVE FEET UP

A rusty sign on a rustier gate. In Korean and English it reads: "ST. ALOUICIOUS' HOME FOR AMERASIAN ORPHANS. INCHON, KOREA."

BLAAAAAAG! A grating, shrill gate buzzer. The baby wakes, wails. Kid's got some pipes.

The Young Korean Woman's rapid footstrikes fade as she sprints away. The infant won't be alone for long as...

...windows -- some broken and covered with *The Korea Herald* -- light up inside the orphanage. First one, then many.

EXT. NAMDAEMUN MARKET - SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA - (PRESENT) DAY

Manic urban chaos. Hectic haggling over food cart fare, designer knockoffs, pirated movies and music. Cases of blackmarket booze.

In the midst, the AMERASIAN ORPHAN GIRL (now a scrappy 18) shreds a twelve bar blues intro.

EXT. NAMDAEMUN MARKET - STREET CORNER - CONTINUOUS

Her filthy fingers work the fretboard of a tinderbox guitar. She belts righteous, oh-my-soul delta boogie.

Her voice? Grade A brass-n-sass.

THE ORPHAN

(crooning)

"How my mama met my daddy I don't know/ She was a Korean girl, he was a G.I. Joe..."

The Orphan's exquisite jade turtle necklace clashes against her ratty t-shirt. Too much tomboy to be a beauty. Too hungry to care. She plays to an audience of none, until:

An off-duty U.S. ARMY SERGEANT (30's) struts by. *Whoa. What the...?*

THE ORPHAN (CONT'D)

"...Nine months later and full of disgrace/ I was dumped at the orphanage in his guitar case..."

His head bobs along. Groovin. Whips out an iPhone:

YOUTUBE APP. Click.

RECORD:

THE ORPHAN (CONT'D)

"...half-breed blues, nobody wants you around/ even though you're taller, people always look down/ Half-breed blues, every door is shut/ to a symbol of shame, yankee-gook mutt."

UPLOAD VIDEO. Click.

In the "Title" field he types:

"Kimchi Rhinestone - A Seoul Miner's Daughter"

SHARE.

The Sergeant drops a five into her guitar case -- the same one she was abandoned in years ago.

SERGEANT
(in clunky Korean)
Kam-sa-hab-ni-da.

THE ORPHAN
(bowing)
Thanks, man. You, too.

He winks with a playful two-finger salute.

SERGEANT
"Half Breed Blues," huh? That's a
honky tonk hit if I ever heard one.

EMCEE (O.S. PRELAP)
By a vote of nearly One! Hundred!
Million! America's new Honky Tonk
Angel is...

INT. AMERICA'S HONKY TONK ANGEL STAGE - NASHVILLE, TN - NIGHT

A center stage spotlight shines on two barely legal BLONDE SOUTHERN BELLES. They cross fingers. Hold hands. Fidget. Left foot. Right foot. Please God, please.

EMCEE
...going...

Every mini rip into the envelope an eternity.

EMCEE (CONT'D)
...to...

Sweet torture.

EMCEE (CONT'D)
...be...

The Emcee flashes a salesman smile.

EMCEE (CONT'D)
...announced after this message
from Honky Tonk Angel creator, J.
Randall Hays!