

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON - RAIN

YEN (18) walks to the front door, soaked and hesitant.

She glances at her phone.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN:

"You can always stay with me. My family loves you."

She exhales, mutters to herself-

YEN (to herself)

Just...go in. Grab your things and go.

She reluctantly steps to the door like it might bite. Opens it.

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Yen removes her shoes. She notices the kitchen lights are on.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The kitchen is dimly lit. The smell of grilled pork lingers.

DUYÊN (40s), Yen's mother, stands stiffly at the stove, tending meat that's already cooked - just keeping her hands busy.

DUYÊN

You're home.

YEN

Yeah. I was just going to pack more clothes and leave.

A moment of silence.

DUYÊN

It's not easy for me, you know.

YEN

I never thought it was.

DUYÊN

I don't know how to be okay with...who you are.

Yen quietly sits at the kitchen table, eyes averted.

YEN

You just need to love me. Is that so hard?

Duyên doesn't respond – but she doesn't turn away either.

She assembles a serving of *bún thịt nướng*: noodles, fish sauce, grilled pork—but she leaves out the pickled vegetables, just as Yen likes them.

She gently sets the bowl in front of Yen.
Lays down a pair of chopsticks.

DUYÊN

Eat. It's bún thịt nướng, your favorite.

Yen's eyes well up with tears. She stares at the food. A long pause. She looks up.

YEN

How'd you know I'd be home today?

DUYÊN

I've been making it every night in case you did.

Yen slowly rises.
Both of them tear up.

They lean in. Foreheads touch – gently. Eyes closed. Silently sobbing.

DUYÊN (softly)

I could never stop loving you.

Rain drums softly on the windows. A mother and her daughter meet halfway on a bridge of noodles.

FADE OUT.