

The Last Meal

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SYNOPSIS

Lin, a young girl, loves her mom's parathas and so does everyone in her class. However, one day she discovers that her lunchbox has been stolen. Distraught for more than one reason, she sets out to do whatever she can to find her most prized possession.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Young kids enter the hallway with its bright, colorful walls. Out of all of them, one girl with her dark hair tied in a neat braid stands out. This is LIN (F,10). Walking next to her, holding a small purple backpack is MOM (F,35).

MOM
How about french toast?

Lin shakes her head. No.

MOM (cont'd)
Poha?

Lin shakes her head harder. NO.

MOM (cont'd)
So only parathas. Again?

Lin nods.

MOM (cont'd)
You will land up hating them.

LIN
No! Never! They're the best. Even
Cheeto agrees.

Mom laughs and pats Lin on the head.

MOM
Bye. I love you.

LIN
Love you too.

Mom hands her the bag and Lin runs ahead.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Lin enters the crowded primary school class. MISS SUNSHINE (F, 30), tall, bespectacled, stern, steps in front of Lin.

MISS SUNSHINE
Lin! You were almost late!

LIN
Sorry ma'am.

Miss Sunshine leans close and inspects Lin's hair. There are three strands standing up.

MISS SUNSHINE
And your hair is a mess! Fix it!

LIN
Yes ma'am!

Lin scurries away.

MISS SUNSHINE (O.C.)
Bobby your shirt isn't tucked!

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Lin sits at her desk, looking bored. She eyes her bag. Eyes Miss Sunshine who is writing math problems on the board.

MISS SUNSHINE
Note this down, it will be in the
test next week.

Lin eyes the bag. Then checks the large monotone wall clock, it is only 11am. Lin sighs.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

The bell finally rings. Lin shoots out of her chair, grabs her bag and goes to the back of her class. There is a small glass case with plants and rocks. Resting amidst it all is a small tortoise.

LIN
Hey Cheeto. Ready for lunch?

Lin opens her bag. There is matching pink lunchbox in there. She opens it. PARATHAS. Lin BITES in. With a full mouth she offers a little flake to Cheeto.

Cheeto snaps at the bread with his small mouth.

TINA (O.C.)
Hey, can I have some?

TINA (F, 10) ponytails, tall.

Lin looks down at her meal. She only has one paratha left.

LIN
I guess you can have a bite. My
mom makes the best parathas.

Lin offers her the box. Tina takes the paratha and has a HUGE bite.

TINA
(mouth full)
These are great!

Lin looks devastated at what's left of the paratha.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Lin arrives at school. Backpack slung on her shoulders. Her hair a mess. No one accompanies her.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lin enters. Miss Sunshine steps in front of her.

MISS SUNSHINE
Lin...you're back...

LIN
Good Morning ma'am.

Miss Sunshine leans forward, looks at the messy hair and adjusts it kindly.

MISS SUNSHINE
Go take your seat.

Lin shuffles away.

MISS SUNSHINE (O.C.)
Bobby how many times must I tell
you to tuck your shirt in!

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Lin is at her desk. Eyes distant. Miss Sunshine approaches her.

MISS SUNSHINE
This is the test you missed last
week. You can try do it at home...
for practice...Okay?

Lin doesn't seem to respond. Miss Sunshine walks away. Lin notices her bag. Her eyes shine a little.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

The bell rings. Lin grabs her bag and walks over to Cheeto the tortoise.

LIN
(as she opens her bag)
Hey Cheeto, this one is our last-

Lin gasps. The bag falls from her hand. It hits the floor.

Lin kneels and shuffles through it. The bag is tiny and there is obviously no lunchbox there.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tina is talking to chubby BOBBY (M, 10) when Lin interrupts.

LIN
Give me my lunch box back!

TINA
What?

LIN
Give it back you thief!

TINA
I'm not a thief!

LIN
You are. I saw how much you love
my mom's parathas!

BOBBY
They are good parathas, mmm.

LIN
So you helped her steal it! I've
seen you eat three meals in one
go!

TINA
Don't be mean!

Bobby starts sniffing.

TINA (cont'd)
Miss Sunshine, Lin made Bobby cry!

LIN
HE STOLE MY LUNCHBOX!

BOBBY
I didn't!

Miss Sunshine runs over.

MISS SUNSHINE
What's wrong Lin? Can't you find
your lunch?

LIN
No, because someone stole it!

MISS SUNSHINE
Are you sure you got it to school
today?

LIN
Of course I did, my mom made me
parathas...They're always in my
bag.

A beat.

MISS SUNSHINE
Okay maybe it just fell out. Lets
look together okay?

LIN
But-

MISS SUNSHINE
Lin...

Lin comes along.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lin and Miss Sunshine are looking in cabinets and drawers.
Nothing.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miss Sunshine is on the floor, looking under her desk.
Nothing. She gets back up.

LIN
Nothing?

MISS SUNSHINE
Sorry Lin.

LIN
But that must mean someone took
it!

MISS SUNSHINE
Lin-

LIN
Everyone wants my mom's parathas.
They must have. Can't you at least
check their bags!

Miss Sunshine looks at her with sympathy.

MISS SUNSHINE
Alright. Everyone! Listen up!

The class, in the middle of having lunch and playing games,
does not look up.

MISS SUNSHINE (cont'd)

KIDS!

Now they look up.

MISS SUNSHINE (cont'd)

Lin's lunch has gone missing. Now
if one of you...took it...by
mistake, that's okay.

Lin scowls.

MISS SUNSHINE (cont'd)

We will all step outside and I
will leave my drawer unlocked. You
will all come in, one by one, and
then come back out.
Whoever has taken the lunch box,
can leave it in the drawer and no
one will know. Lin just wants her
mom's parathas okay? Let's help
her.

All the kids let out a collective moan of frustration.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

All the kids are crowded outside. Annoyed. It's hot. The
corridor is too narrow. Some kids push each other. Tina
walks up to Lin who is sitting hugging her backpack.

TINA

I bet your mom didn't pack you
anything and you just want the
attention.

LIN

No! You'll see. It will be there
in the drawer.

BOBBY

I hate you.

MISS SUNSHINE

Okay that's the last one. Let's go
see!

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

They all enter. Miss Sunshine opens the drawer...

It's empty. A beat.

Lin runs away.

MISS SUNSHINE

Lin!

Miss Sunshine runs after her.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Lin is crying by the basin, Miss Sunshine is comforting her.

MISS SUNSHINE

Honey, its okay.

LIN

It's not! Those were the last
parathas she made...before...the
car-

MISS SUNSHINE

I know...

She hugs her.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tina is listening at the door as this unfolds. Eyes wide.
She runs back to the kids.

INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lin and Miss Sunshine enter, the kids are all conducting a
search.

MISS SUNSHINE

What's going on?

TINA

We thought we had a better chance
of finding the parathas if
everyone looked.

Bobby walks up to Lin.

BOBBY

You can have my lunch till then. I
haven't had my third meal yet!

TINA

Don't worry Lin, we will find your
parathas. Your mom makes the best
ones.

Lin looks up at the two of them.

LIN

I'm sorry I was mean to you both.

TINA
That's okay! You want to see if
the janitor took the lunchbox by
mistake?

Lin nods.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Everyone is sitting around Lin. Sharing meals. Miss Sunshine
could not be prouder.

The sound of running feet. The classroom door swings open. A
tall thin man stands there, out of breath.

LIN
Dad?

DAD (M, 45) walks over.

DAD
Hey honey, I forgot to put your
lunch in the bag. I'm so sorry.

He hands her the lunch. Lin smiles.

DAD (cont'd)
Are you okay?

Lin nods earnestly.

FADE TO BLACK.