

A NEW ACTION-COMEDY SERIES
FROM THE MAKERS OF *THE UNLISTED*

BORN TO SPY



SYNOPSIS

Siblings Yu Na Park (15) and her brother Min (12) had lives that could be described as textbook dull. But everything changed the day they woke to find that their parents were missing – and all that was left behind was a breakfast spread, \$5.90 and a note saying:

Morning my darlings, we've had to hightail it out of here.

Love you. Keep safe until we get back. Don't trust anyone. Act normal. Don't let ANYONE know we're away.

Love Mum and Dad XX

PS: Please feed the dog.

Everything in Min and Yu Na's life is flipped upside down, as they gradually uncover the truth: their unremarkable parents are in fact high-ranking, international spies, their family business is a sham and their pleasant suburban house harbours a state-of-the-art spy headquarters. To make matters worse, it appears as though their parents might actually be working for the 'wrong' side.

The siblings soon become aware they're being watched by suspicious people everywhere they go. As they begin to understand the life-and-death stakes of the mission their parents have been sent on, they need to step up and pretend that their parents are still around, continue life as usual, fight off baddies with the help of their mismatched ragamuffin bunch of friends, and figure out how to get their parents back – before something seriously bad happens!

A high stakes action-comedy that empowers its characters, *Born to Spy* will continue in the tradition of movies and series that kids have always loved: the *Spy Kids* trilogy, *The Spy Next Door*, *The Umbrella Academy*, *Home Alone* and *My Babysitter's A Vampire*. Yu Na, Min and their friends need to be resourceful and creative in the face of increasingly overwhelming odds, while facing the same challenges as all school aged kids – not least the effort required to just get along!





Born to Spy strikes the perfect and totally awesome balance between comedy and spy-action. Shot in Sydney, and introducing a dynamic, new, culturally diverse cast that speaks directly to our multicultural ABC Me audience, we believe that it will be a massive hit with our audience.

Libbie Doherty
ABC Head of Children's Production



MEDIA

'I spy age-appropriate thrills...pick of the week'

– **The Australian**

'An intriguing premise...dystopian Netflix horror series *Squid Game* may be the Korean craze gripping the primary school set, but there's another, more demographically suitable Korean alternative in ABC's latest series'

– **The Sydney Morning Herald**

'A funny tween adventure'

– **The Sydney Morning Herald**

'The teens put in excellent performances...quirky and will entertain the whole family'

– **Australian Community Media**

'Higher [IMDB] rating than *Squid Game*'

– **The Korean Times**

'These 10 half hours provide laughter and empowerment in equal measure for children just out of school for the holiday break'

– **The Australian**





PRODUCTION COMPANY

AQUARIUS FILMS

Aquarius Films is an award-winning production company founded by Angie Fielder and Polly Stanford, which has built a reputation for high quality, prestige films and television series that are commercially successful and critically acclaimed.

Credits including the Academy Award® and Golden Globe nominated *Lion*, produced in association with See-Saw Films, and starring Dev Patel, Nicole Kidman and Rooney Mara; *Berlin Syndrome*, adapted by Shaun Grant, directed by award-winning filmmaker Cate Shortland and starring Teresa Palmer and Max Riemelt, which premiered at Sundance and Berlinale in 2017; *Dirt Music*, adapted from Tim Winton's much-loved novel by Jack Thorne, directed by Gregor Jordan and starring Garrett Hedlund, Kelly Macdonald and David Wenham and *Wish You Were Here*, starring Joel Edgerton and Teresa Palmer, which

premiered at Sundance and won two Australian Academy of Cinema and TV (AACTA) Awards, including Best Screenplay, and five Film Critics Circle Awards, including Best Film.

Aquarius' mini-series *The Unusual Suspects* starring Miranda Otto and Aina Dumlao is streaming on Hulu and premiered on SBS in June. Their 10 x 30' series for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation *Born To Spy* will premiere later this year, and cameras are currently rolling on *Love Me* starring Hugo Weaving, which Aquarius is producing with Warner Bros. Australia for Foxtel's BINGE. Other credits include *The Other Guy* Seasons 1 & 2, a 6 x 30' comedy-drama, for Stan and Hulu starring Matt Okine, Valene Kane and Harriet Dyer and *The Unlisted*, a 15 x 30' YA sci-fi thriller for Netflix and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

CREATOR, WRITER, DIRECTOR,
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

JUSTINE FLYNN

Justine Flynn is a writer, director, producer and author based in Sydney. Her most recent role was as showrunner on *The Unlisted*, a 15 x 30-minute children's series she created with Aquarius Films and her company Buster Productions for the ABC and Netflix.

Throughout her career, Justine has worked in the independent sector and for broadcasters. She was Manager of Factual and Entertainment Development for the ABC and Acquisition Manager and Executive Producer of long form content at Nickelodeon Australia. Justine has accumulated credits (*The Other Guy*, *Bindi's Bootcamp*, *Me & My Monsters*, *Five Minutes More*, *The Justine Clarke Show*, *HotSpell*, *Blue Water High*) working with the Jim Henson Company, Disney UK, CBBC and ZDF. Justine has recently co-authored three books based on *The Unlisted* for Hachette. Collaborating with great partners and creating fresh film and TV content for both children's and adult audiences is Justine's passion and focus.

KOREAN-AUSTRALIAN CREATIVES

It was very important to Justine Flynn and Aquarius Films that they had a strong team of Korean-Australian writers and directors on board *Born to Spy*, both from a cultural point of view but also to give emerging creatives the chance to step up and get their first TV credits.

As the project came together, *Born to Spy* has included Chase Lee and Hyun Lee in the directing team, and David Park, Hyun Lee, Michelle Lim Davidson, Andrew 'Undi' Lee and Sophia Chung in the writing team – as well as representation across key roles in production, assistant direction, art direction, costume, make-up and others.



HANNAH KIM IS

YU NA PARK

YU NA PARK (15)

Yu Na is the sort of teen who doesn't take grooming seriously. She loves her parents but thinks she outgrew them aged about seven. Yu Na has always had an active imagination and the characters in the books she reads and the movies she watches have much more exciting adventures than her own. She has two passions – freestyle wrestling and punk rock. When she's not rolling around on mats, she is hanging out with her friend, Dutch. Yu Na's bedroom is the testing ground for Dutch's robotic handiwork and the hardware store is a good source of parts for her various creations. Little does she know that her freestyle wrestling and her robotics are going to come in very handy in the not-too-distant future.

HANNAH KIM

In possession of an astute mind with an indomitable creative spirit, Hannah Kim is an Australian actor of Korean heritage who was educated at University of Sydney in Theatre & Performance Studies and Politics. A natural talent, Hannah's first acting role in the series *Social Murderer* garnered her a nomination in the Best Acting category in the 2020 Independent Shorts Awards.



OCEAN LIM IS

MIN PARK

MIN PARK (12)

Min has spent most of his life creating plays and costumes and acting out stories about interesting things that happened to other people in other places. He has the most fabulous costume collection and a full array of costume makeup. He is a loyal friend to his best mates Allegra and Raph. They like to make little movies, and the Parks are polite enough to sit and watch the finished product. Min's other great passion is visual gags. He often uses his talent for make-up to trick others, like the time he pretended he had cut his head off with an axe. Min also absorbed the habit-stacking practice of tidiness and executive function order. He secretly has always wanted a dog...enter Ludwig. But is he a real dog?

OCEAN LIM

Ocean began learning music at the age of 6 and when he turned 8, he began his life on stage in the musical *Godspell* in 2016. As a young member of Australia Korean Theatre Company (AKTC), he performed in various musicals, as well as being cast for the feature film *Working on Air*, as the young version of the protagonist. He is currently in year 8 at the Northmead Performing Arts High School.



ALEX KIS IS

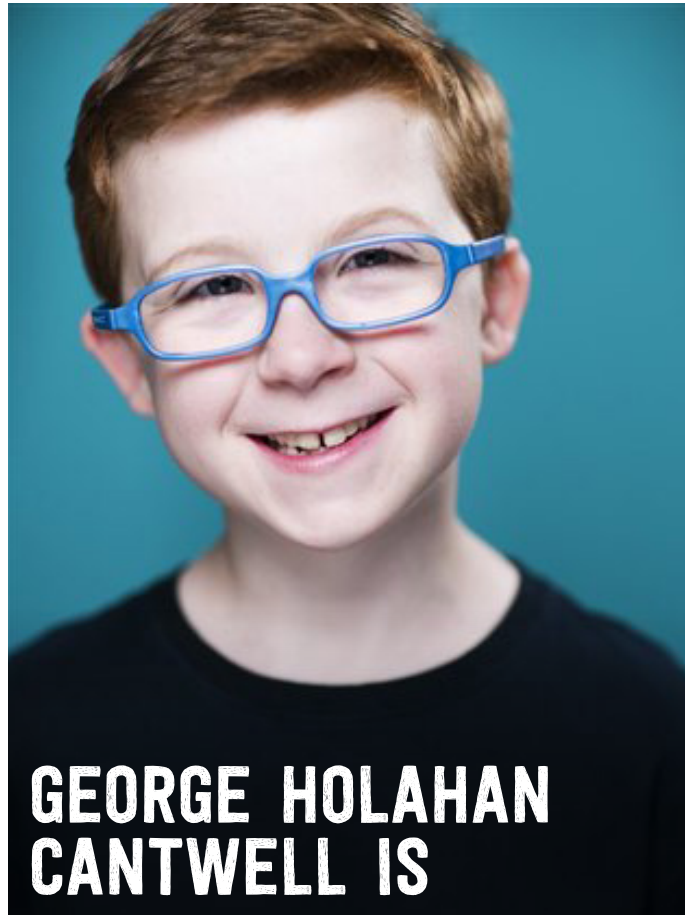
ALLEGRA

ALLEGRA (12)

Allegra is from a large Greek family. She has all the signs of 'middle child syndrome', believing her superpower to be invisibility, as hardly anyone notices her at home and she can apply this great skill to just about every part of her life. Allegra aspires to be a stage technician. She loves creating special effects, building sets, lighting, sound – and thinks the real magic happens offstage. With her friends she is bold and talkative, and she eats faster than any kid Min has ever known. She doesn't always listen well and can sometimes cause chaos by acting on what she thought she was told instead of what she was actually told. But she's a very loyal friend and has Min's back at all times.

Alex kis

Best known for her support role as a young Rebel Wilson in Netflix's feature film *Isn't It Romantic*, Alex is also loved as a series regular on the network comedy *News of the Wild* – appearing in over 72 episodes. Alex has been interviewed many times on *The Morning Show*, and has even guest-hosted an episode where she interviewed international stars Margot Robbie and Elizabeth Debicki.



GEORGE HOLAHAN CANTWELL IS

RALPH

RAPH (12)

Small for his age, Raph has big eyes and could get away with murder (if he were the murdering type). He has a photographic memory and is great at board games and anything that involves strategy. He was often sick as a baby, so he has helicopter parents who make him wear a wrist monitor and often send his older brother Talgat to come find him. That's a bit of a problem, as Talgat and Yu Na are archenemies. Raph might be considered eccentric by some, but his friends think he is tops. He has a super brain and sees the world differently to his friends, which often make his contributions very useful.

GEORGE HOLAHAN CANTWELL

Thirteen-year-old George Holahan-Cantwell is a keen dancer, singer and musician. George made his music theatre debut in *Priscilla* as Benji, followed by the role of Lawrence, the piano playing virtuoso in *School of Rock*. George is a student at Newtown Performing Arts High School, trains with The Actors Division, studies music and singing and enjoys accompanying himself on keyboard.



LULU QUIRKE IS

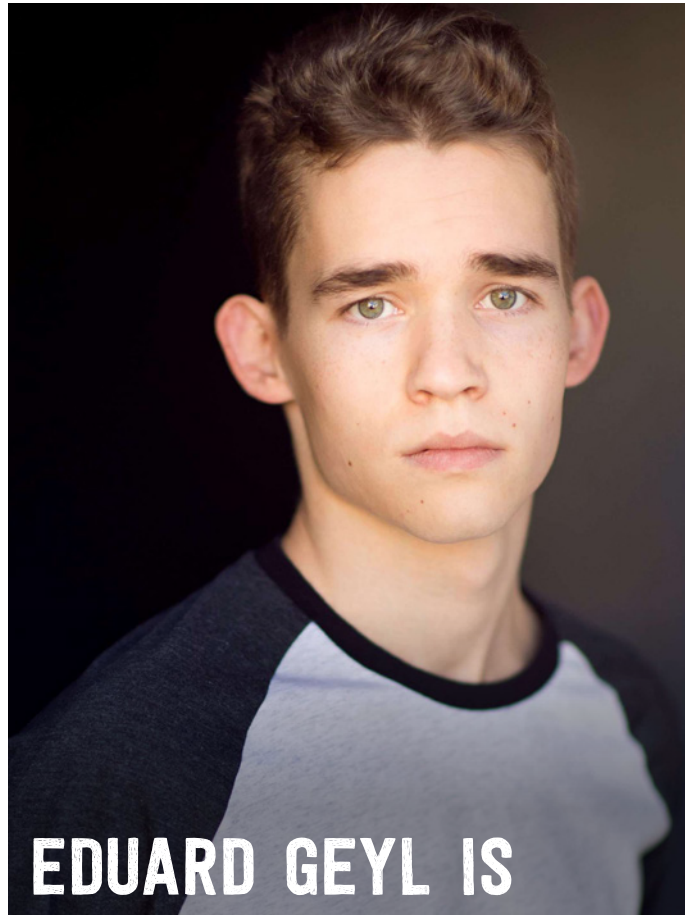
DUTCH

DUTCH (14)

Dutch is the polar opposite of her friend Yu Na but they have been friends forever and they can't imagine life without each other. Dutch is super-bright, obsessed with robotics, and would rather play video games than study. Dutch likes to invent stuff to make life easier; she is lazy, but ironically her laziness drives her to create new things so that she can have a more comfortable life. She loves fashion, and anything that is trending – but also thinks of herself as bit of an eco-warrior. Dutch is very respectful of the Parks' customs, and sometimes she seems more interested in Korean culture than Yu Na. She loves all things K-pop. She went crazy for slime when it was *a thing*.

LULU QUIRKE

Lulu has been performing for over 10 years, beginning her career in the musical theatre world, and going on to study musical theatre full time with Perform Australia. After completing her qualification, Lulu ventured into television, with credits now including *Just A Kid*, *Flyby Fun* and *Frayed*.



EDUARD GEYL IS

TALGAT

TALGAT (15)

Raph's brother Talgat (aka 'Borg') has read everything he can about spy history. Even as a little kid, he would spy on his parents, learning to read lips at an early age. Despite his youth, his natural charisma and ability to manipulate make him a truly dangerous spy. Talgat also takes school seriously and is very competitive. He's salty, always quick with a sharp line. But teachers and parents find him charming. Yu Na doesn't suspect that her wrestling nemesis is actually the biggest threat to her family. And the world. He drives her crazy, but she has no idea of the true danger he poses.

EDUARD GEYL

Eduard was born in Kharkiv, Ukraine and is of Russian/Ukrainian/German ancestry. After attending the Sydney Talent Company and then Screenwise, Australia's leading film and television acting school, Eduard made his television debut in 2016, in the SBS-produced crime drama *Deep Water*. Most recently, he has appeared as the Reverend Hale in a stage production of *The Crucible*.



DANNY KIM IS

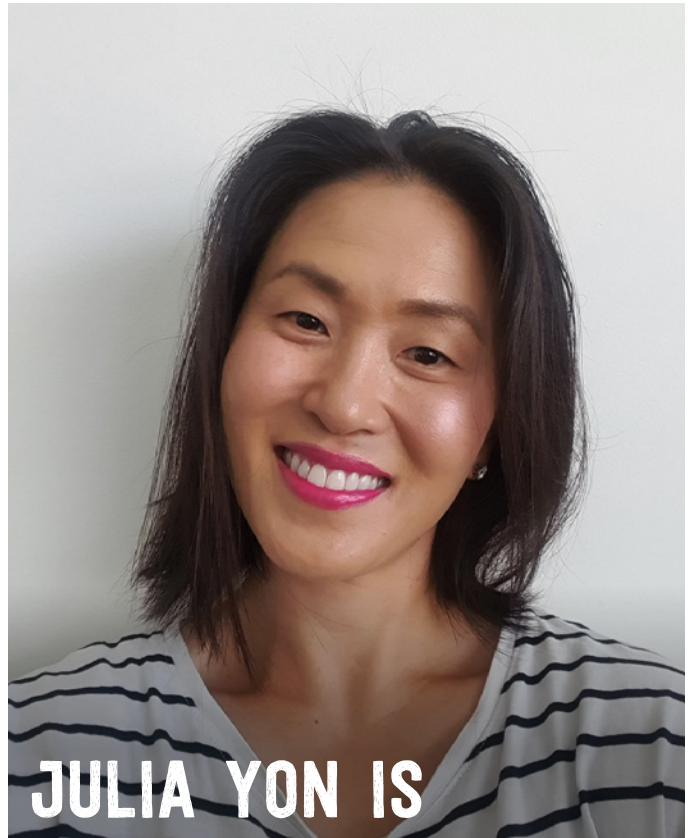
JOON

MR. PARK

Joon Park is always calm and smiling. Prone to making terrible Dad jokes just to get a rise from his kids, he also has a passion for hardware and spends hours talking about new 'nuts and bolts'. He's always encouraged his kids to study hard but is equally supportive of their extracurricular activities, attending all of Yu Na's wrestling matches and Min's drama performances. He often challenges them with obscure activities such as push-up competitions, mimicry or playing statue for hours on end, all of which the kids now realise were just training exercises. He's an active member of the school community, welcoming new members with delicious Korean dishes. There was nothing suspicious about this friendliness before he disappeared, but now his kids are wondering if he was background-checking the neighbours!

HANNAH KIM

In possession of an astute mind with an indomitable creative spirit, Hannah Kim is an Australian actor of Korean heritage who was educated at University of Sydney in Theatre & Performance Studies and Politics. A natural talent, Hannah's first acting role in the series *Social Murderer* garnered her a nomination in the Best Acting category in the 2020 Independent Shorts Awards.



JULIA YON IS

SOO-JIN

Mrs. Park

Soo-jin Park isn't proud of the fact that she's had to hide a lot of information about herself from her children, but she knows it's for the greater good. To the outside world, she is a charming, sweet and gentle woman, albeit very focused on keeping fit. She enjoys watching K-drama but is obsessed with giving scathing critiques of action flicks like *The Bourne Identity* – often yelling at the screen when she perceives something to be unbelievable. Her kids always found this highly amusing. When not working out or at the hardware store, Soo-jin makes time for reading, quilting, cooking and helping her kids with their homework. Min and Yu Na's friends loved to hang at the warm and unremarkable Parks' house. It felt safe and reliable.

OCEAN LIM

Ocean began learning music at the age of 6 and when he turned 8, he began his life on stage in the musical *Godspell* in 2016. As a young member of Australia Korean Theatre Company (AKTC), he performed in various musicals, as well as being cast for the feature film *Working on Air*, as the young version of the protagonist. He is currently in year 8 at the Northmead Performing Arts High School.

DIRECTING TEAM

IN ADDITION TO JUSTINE FLYNN, THE DIRECTING TEAM INCLUDES:

Chase Lee: born in South Korea and raised in Australia, Chase is an actor, writer and director who has directed music videos, commercials and is currently working on his first feature

Hyun Lee: writer and director of *Asian Girls*, a short film that was a recipient of the Screen NSW: Emerging Filmmakers' Fund and went on to premiere at the at South by Southwest Film Festival (SXSW), Hyun also writes and photographs for art and fashion publications in London, Tokyo and Sydney

Darlene Johnson: an accomplished, multi award-winning filmmaker; nominated for an International Emmy Award, and winner of the Inaugural Australian International Screen Scholarship in New York City, which was awarded by the International Screen Forum and the American-Australian Association

Neil Sharma: recently working with Taika Waititi on the Marvel feature, *Thor: Love & Thunder*, Neil has recently jumped to directing, bringing over 25 years' experience as accomplished assistant director on iconic Australian and international productions to the project

Nicholas Verso: Nicholas' first feature *Boys In The Trees* had its world premiere at the Venice International Film Festival, won Best Narrative Feature at the Austin Film Festival and screened at the Toronto and Busan International Film Festivals; his TV credits include directing the Emmy award-winning *Nowhere Boys*, *Grace Beside Me*, *Itch*, and *The Unlisted*



WRITING TEAM

IN ADDITION TO JUSTINE FLYNN, A STELLAR WRITING TEAM HAS BOUGHT *BORN TO SPY TO LIFE*, INCLUDING:

David Park: graduating from the University of Technology, Sydney with a Bachelor of Media Arts Production, David, drawing on his role as Artistic Director of the Korean Film Festival, has advised on Korean productions filmed in Australia including *Single Rider* and *Ongals*, in addition to directing and producing the feature documentary *Passage to Pusan*

Hyun Lee: writer and director of *Asian Girls*, a short film that was a recipient of the Screen NSW: Emerging Filmmakers' Fund and went on to premiere at the at South by Southwest Film Festival (SXSW), Hyun also writes and photographs for art and fashion publications in London, Tokyo and Sydney

Michelle Lim Davidson: an established actress whose credits include *Utopia*, *Top of the Lake: China Doll* and *Doctor, Doctor*, Michelle has also participated in numerous creative developments for companies including the Sydney, Griffin and Belvoir Theatre Companies

Andrew 'Undi' Lee: an exciting emerging writer/director whose short film was nominated for Best Short Film and Best Director at the 2017 Sydney International Film Festival's Dendy Awards

Sophia Chung: Sophia is a writer and teacher whose passions lie in comedy, exploring the intersections of Korean, queer identity and the diaspora, as well as revolutionising the hearts and minds of the future generation

Alice McCredie Dando: an accomplished screenwriter with numerous credits, who has also written on film, television and popular culture for publications including *The Age*, *Junkee* and *Inside Film*

Tiffany Zehnal: with over 20 years' experience, her US, Canadian and Australian credits include *Veronica's Closet*, *The Almighty Johnsons*, *Corn & Peg* and *Sando*

Melissa Lee Speyer: winner of the 2018 Sydney Film Festival Lexus Australia Fellowship, with credits including *The Heights*, Melissa is also a founding member of *The Collective*, an Asian-Australian performing arts group

Tristram Baumber: an experienced television comedy writer whose recent credits include Aquarius Films projects *The Unlisted* and *The Other Guy*



FULL EPISODE SYNOPSIS

EPISODE 1

NOW YOU SEE THEM, NOW YOU DON'T

Min and Yu Na Park think their parents are boringly ordinary, until they wake up one morning to find them missing: leaving only a strange dog named Ludwig and a note warning them not to trust anyone. Enlisting their closest friends Raph, Allegra and Dutch to help them keep their secret, they must make it through the day without raising any suspicion. But with a new, especially nosy guidance counsellor (Ms Waters) and a Suspicious Man intent on following them home, the task proves much more difficult than expected.

The kids are forced to employ a number of different tactics, including an imperfect 'Mrs Park' disguise and some Wrestling moves, to stay safe. At the end of the day, they make a shocking discovery: the parents they thought were so boringly ordinary are, in actual fact, spies!

EPISODE 2

MISSION POSSIBLE

When a mysterious package shows up on the Park family's doorstep containing a bug-sized camera and a note with the address of an enemy agent's house, Min and Yu Na realise this is a spy mission from their parents' top-secret spy organisation, Tenacity. In their parents' absence, they decide to embark on the spy mission themselves – paying a visit to the address while Dutch, Raph and Allegra keep an eye on them via the CCTV footage in their parents' secret spy room.

At the enemy agent's house, Yu Na and Min are in the midst of planting the camera when the enemy spy unexpectedly arrives home. With some quick-thinking, they make a nifty escape and get back home safely, where a suspicious Talgat (Yu Na's wrestling nemesis) is waiting for them with some questions about their new dog.





EPISODE 3 PARENT-TEACHER NIGHT

It's Parent Teacher Night, and Min and Yu Na are in a panic – how are they supposed to get through this with both their parents missing? They pay a visit to their family's hardware store to convince a very reluctant Mr Potts to step in as acting grandfather, and Dutch designs an earpiece for him to wear so they can communicate lines for him to deliver on the night.

However, when a voice interrupts their frequency halfway through Mr Potts's interview with Min's drama teacher about the school play, the kids realise there must be a bad spy present! When a black-out sends the evening into chaos, Yu Na seizes the opportunity to track down the voice, and catches three possible suspects in the school corridor: Mr Turei the janitor, Ms Waters the counsellor, and George – Allegra's dad.

EPISODE 4 LIES, SPIES AND MAINTENANCE GUYS

The kids invite the three Parent Teacher Night suspects over for an afternoon of interrogation – using the help of a small bottle of truth serum found in their parents' spy room, which Raph bakes into a delicious batch of muffins. When the suspects show up, the kids have thirty minutes to get the truth out of them before it wears off – which gets derailed by its various side effects, including speaking in foreign languages and random bursts of emotions.

Still, the kids manage to find a way to ask a direct enough question to find the truth – which is that Mr Turei is a bad spy, working for Turmoil, and he has an upcoming mission at the Botanic Gardens. But once all the suspects are gone, Min and Yu Na discover an uneaten cupcake – which means one of the other suspects was lying!



EPISODE 5

SENIOR SHAKE-UP

The kids organise an excursion to the Botanic Gardens to intercept the Turmoil drop-off mission – but things go astray when, on the day, Halmeoni (their grandmother) shows up out of the blue! They make a lame excuse for their parents' absence before rushing off to the excursion – only to arrive to find her already there with a Seniors Group, much to their surprise.

The kids must divide their efforts between keeping Halmeoni safe from Turmoil activity and throwing Ms Waters off the scent for long enough to intercept Mr Turei's drop-off. But when they finally get to the drop-off point, the package is already gone! Moments later, Halmeoni reveals that she swiped it herself – because she's also a spy! She gives it to them with an instruction to 'protect the Seedling' before disappearing.

EPISODE 6

GOING POTTY

Min and Yu Na are in the middle of inspecting the mysterious device Halmeoni left them with when it starts beeping suddenly – showing that, whatever the 'Seedling' they're supposed to be protecting is, it's at the hardware store. They pay a visit to the store to track the Seedling down, only to realise that it's their very own Mr Potts, who wears the tracker around his neck! But Mr Potts can't leave the store unattended, so while Min takes Mr Potts back to their house, Yu Na takes over running the family business for the day – which proves far more difficult than expected, since the store is having its sale of the year.

Both the house and store descend into chaos as the kids try to stay on top of it all, but with the help of their friends (and Talgat!) they manage to get both jobs done.

EPISODE 7

SIXTEEN SMILES

Yu Na is excited for her sixteenth birthday, until it becomes clear that everyone else has forgotten. Min is pre-occupied with a science project he'd forgotten about for the notorious Mr Cranky Pants's class, and with Allegra's help, he steals a device called The SmileMaker from the spy room to hand in. The presentation goes well until he pushes the device to its limits, causing the whole class severe migraines.

To make matters worse, use of the device has attracted the attention of Turmoil, and Mr Turei shows up while the kids are in sick bay. Min asks Yu Na to break into the classroom and destroy the device, which she does – earning herself a detention. After a very bad day, she returns home from school to find everyone waiting to surprise her with a birthday party, and all is forgiven.

EPISODE 8

FLY FLY BIRDIE

Min's rehearsals for the upcoming play are interrupted by a phone call from Yu Na to say that Ludwig is missing. Raph and Allegra cover for Min at school and Dutch stays home to keep an eye on Mr Potts while the Park siblings go looking. On their search, Min and Yu Na visit a local council, where Min dresses up as their father to register a Missing Pet notice – shortly after which, they run into a very emotional Ms Waters, who tells them she is keen to help them with their hunt.

While spending time with them, Ms Waters reveals that she knows their parents are spies – and that she is too, sent by Tenacity to look out for them. They find Ludwig at the bad spy's house (from Episode 2) and rescue him in time to be back for the play. But little do they know, at home, Mr Potts has gone missing...



EPISODE 9

COMICBOOKFEST

When Min notices Mr Potts is missing from his cubby, he agrees to take Raph and Allegra to go find him while Yu Na focuses on getting ready for formal. The three kids pay a visit to ComicBookFest, where Mr Potts's note says he is, but Min struggles to get in, and is let down by his friends half-hearted efforts to help him. Tensions come to a head when Raph sees Mr Potts's note and reveals that it's actually Talgat's handwriting.

The three kids arrive at formal just in time to interrupt Yu Na and Talgat's slow dance, and Yu Na is shocked to learn the truth about her crush. Ms Waters takes them home, and they find the house ransacked in their absence – only to learn that Ms Waters is a bad spy too, and has been using them to gain information about the whereabouts of a top-secret vault.

EPISODE 10

STRONGER TOGETHER

Aware that the top-secret vault contains seeds critical to the world's food supply, Min and Yu Na urgently round up their friends to stop Turmoil's mission. Min, Raph and Allegra track Mr Potts to a warehouse where he is being held hostage by Talgat while Yu Na and Dutch make their way to the vault – where they find the Park parents trapped by Ms Waters!

When Min narrowly escapes capture at the warehouse and runs to get help, he and Yu Na are caught and thrown into the now-empty vault with their parents – and a bomb! By using all their new skills, they defuse the bomb and manage to get out. Meanwhile, Talgat has a change of heart and helps Raph, Allegra and Dutch escape Turmoil's clutches. Together, the Tenacity squad chase the baddies to the harbour to stop them making their escape.



