

Shut-Out

By

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INT. OTAKU ROOM - DAY

Dark room, strong light rays permeate the walls of the room through cracks in the drawn curtains. Loud Japanese pop music blasts in the background as a voice sings along in the wrong key.

James (male, 26), is seen engaging in heavy online gaming, table strewn with last night's food and empty packet drinks. With one leg on the chair, he screams at the poor newbies through his gaming headset that he puts on one ear.

JAMES

Quit dota you shitstains! One job.
One job!!!!

He screams and throws down his headset in frustration.

JAMES

Frigging noobs. Unreal. Wew!!!
(Filipino gaming slang for noob)

Pause. Feeling a little parched, he searches for a drink among the empty packets.

JAMES

Ma! Drinks! Finish already!

MOTHER

Can take yourself? How old already?
Get a job!

JAMES

I ask for drinks. Don't have, shut
up lah!

Footsteps come closer to the door. James continues rummaging about the table. Knock on door.

MOTHER

I'm your mother. Don't talk to me
like that. How long are you
planning to live like that?

JAMES

Shut up. Leave me alone.
(beat)

MOTHER

I going market. Drinks on your
floor.

(CONTINUED)

The main door slams shut in the background, gate lock latches. He picks up a 6 pack from the floor and adds the straw wrapper to the pile on the table side.

Another knock, a muffled one from the wall. Ignored. Knock knock. Ignored. Loud thump. Damien flares up. He rams the space bar to mute his loud Jpop music.

JAMES

Oh god shut up!!! Bloody hell!
Seriously?!

Silence. James turns back to his desk.

Three rapid thumps in succession. James goes into a rage frenzy and rams the wall repeatedly, replying in a barrage of wall hammering. He stops, panting.

JAMES

Seriously! What the hell is your
problem.

Silence.

UNKNOWN VOICE

Help... help, please...

James stares at the wall. Beat.

JAMES

Help your face!

He puts on his headphones on one side and resumes his Jpop anthem.

After about 20 seconds, he stops the music and turns to look at the wall. Beat. Yanking off his headphones, he stumbles to the wall.

Putting one ear on the wall. Nothing. He knocks 3 times and waits for a reply. Nothing.

JAMES

Tsk.

WEAK UNKNOWN VOICE

Help... help...

James immediately connects his ear to the wall.

JAMES

Yeah? What you want. Make so much
noise.

WEAK UNKNOWN VOICE
Help... I'm dying... please...

James strains to hear.

JAMES
Hello? Hello!? What shit you
talking. Dying?

WEAK UNKNOWN VOICE
Help, please. I don't want to
die... Save me...

James leans back, confused. He grabs his phone and leaves the room, yanking the charger out forcefully in the process. He punches in a number. Beat.

MOM (V.O)
What is it?

JAMES
Hello? Something wrong with the
neighbour. Can come back? He ask me
to help him, say don't know what,
dying all. I don't know what to do.

MOM (V.O)
Go see what he want lah! These type
also need me say? Don't know then
call police loh. I busy lah!

The phone goes silent abruptly. James takes awhile to understand the situation.

JAMES
Cheh. What the hell. Keys...

James looks around. Starts going around the house, looking for the house keys. Checks the mess on the table, checks the many pants hanging by the door. Checks the sofa. Checks his bag.

He stops, not sure where else he could have left it. Runs his hand through his hair in frustration. He goes back to his table and finds it by accident under his computer keyboard.

EXT. CORRIDOR - DAY

James tries with much difficulty to open the gate with the keys.

JAMES

What kind of shit lock is this. So hard to open.

He scans the area before leaving the comfort of his house. He drags his feet sheepishly to his neighbour's house, armed with his cellphone.

INT. NEIGHBOUR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

James opens the neighbour's gate and knocks on the door, only to realise that the door moves to reveal a gap.

JAMES

Hello? Come in ah?

(No reply.)

Oie! Where are you? Don't waste my time.

He pushes his way through the door annoyed, scanning the foreign house.

JAMES

Oie! Where are you!?

WEAK UNKNOWN VOICE

Here... toilet...

James tries to find the toilet with the direction of the voice and finally finds it.

INT. NEIGHBOUR'S TOILET - DAY

A man, Jeremy (late 30s), sits slumped beside the sink, hot water raining over him from the shower head. Puddles of water mixed with blood blotch the floor. A new pack of razors lie beside the sink, a blood-stained one outside. Blood is quickly oozing from the wounds in both forearms, aided by the water flowing down his body. He looks at James helplessly, mustering up his strength to force a smile.

JAMES

What. The. Hell.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY
Turn off the tap...

James takes awhile to compose himself before the gruesome scene. He hesitates to enter the room. Jeremy's lips quiver.

JEREMY
Quick... No time.

James drops his phone on the floor and skips over to the tap and turns it off. He looks around and grabs a bundle of toilet paper, stuffing them on the wounds in a bid to stop the flow.

JAMES
Your house got plaster anot?

JEREMY
Kitchen. Upper cupboard.

James turns to get the med box.

JEREMY
Very cold, blanket also.

James takes another look at him (beat) before rushing off to get the med box.

INT. NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE - DAY

He picks up the phone on the way to the kitchen and dials the ambulance as he rummages for the supplies. He speaks to the operator as he grabs the entire med kit and drags the blanket to the bathroom.

JAMES
Hello? Need ambulance. Suicide but
still alive. Clementi Ave 6, Blk
553 #09-18.

INT. NEIGHBOUR'S TOILET - DAY

Jeremy looks pale and ghostly. James quickly wraps the blanket around him and rummages through the first aid kit. He takes out the bandage.

JAMES
Eh lift up your hands. Faster.

Jeremy just stares at him and shakes his head. James lifts Jeremy's hand in frustration and starts trying to bandage awkwardly. The wounds look very deep.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

Cannot. Cut too deep, cut my
Tendon. Cannot move fingers. Just
now use head knock wall.

James shakes his head in disbelief while continueing to wrap the bandage around his other hand.

JAMES

Want suicide, ask help for what.
Just die lah! Cut until so deep.
Jump down also less pain.

Jeremy manages a slight embarrassed grin through the pain.

JEREMY

Really very painful. Sit here so
long still never die. Suddenly very
cold. Dunno heater still on anot.

James finishes tieing up the bandage in a haphazard knot and sits at the door step. He glances at his phone and dials his mother. He puts it to his ear.

JAMES

Yeah water just now warm one.
(Phone connects)
Eh neighbour want suicide cut
wrist, where are you! Ask you come
back where are you? Faster can?

Jeremy slowly starts to drift into sleep. James notices and puts down his phone, shaking him awake.

JAMES

Eh! Don't sleep. Oie! Sleep die
already!

Jeremy stirs back into consciousness.

JAMES

Basket, you sleep you die you know
anot? Ambulance coming already.

JEREMY

I think, I won't make it. Thanks
for trying.

JAMES

Eh siao eh, don't die leh. Please.

Through quivering lips, Jeremy talks while closing his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

I... starting wanted to die. Son die, got cancer. Money, all give already. Wife cannot take it, zao also (Dialect for leave). Got depression, very pain. Cannot work. No one can tell. No one understand. No money see psychiatrist.

JAMES

Got so suay meh. Like TV show sia.

JEREMY

Thought cut wrist... not so pain. Cut already, still not enough. Cannot take it, cut deeper, hope I accidentally die.

JAMES

Siao eh, you crazy ah. Got problem just dong lah! (Endure in dialect) Got so serious need die meh.

JEREMY

On hot water still take so long to die.

(beat)

You... life good ah. Everyday music so loud. Call mother, call so loud... mother always help you do. Dont appreciate her.

James has nothing to say. He lets out an annoyed sigh at the nagging.

JAMES

Then... why suddenly change mind, sit here so long almost die already.

JEREMY

Scared. Dark. Suddenly very cold. Scared to die. Don't know die go where, like worse. No hope. Don't know how explain...

Jeremy starts to get unresponsive.

JAMES

Oie. Oie! Ambulance coming already. Don't die leh, please!

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY

What...ou...am...

Jeremy seems to be murmuring a few words. James quickly goes near to hear what he says.

JAMES

Huh?! Say again?

JEREMY

What your name?

JAMES

James! James!! I am James!!

(Jeremy's consciousness fades)

Eh! Oie! What's your name oie!

Jeremy's consciousness slow drifts away slowly and becomes unresponsive. James shakes the cold body exasperatedly, tears welling in his eyes as medics rush into the house behind him.