

Screenplay

EXT. PARK - DAY (FLASHBACK: 16 YEARS AGO)

A montage of shots show AARON as a 5 year old child playing with his FATHER and MOTHER at a park happily, enjoying his childhood. He plays with a Yo-yo as well.

INT. AARON'S ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

AARON, 21, is seen wearing headphones and playing video games on his computer intensely. He communicates with players online through his headphone mic. Incessant clicking of the mouse can be heard. Also on the tabletop is the same Yo-yo from his childhood.

AARON
(intensely, into his mic)
I told you he behind you, right?
Why you never see? Don't blur leh!

AARON (V.O. NARRATION)
(in mandarin)
I'm not using games as a form of
escape. A week ago, my mother
passed away in an accident.

A frame of his mother's picture placed beside his late father's picture on an altar in the hall is seen.

AARON is still engrossed in his game as the narration continues.

AARON (V.O. NARRATION)
(in mandarin)
I didn't shed a tear for her. But
I'm not surprised.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

AARON, 12, returns from school and timidly enters the hall, suspiciously hiding his report book behind him from his mother, but she notices.

MOTHER
(in mandarin)
Let me see your report card.

AARON, looking down, seemingly afraid, shakes his head slightly while still hiding his report book.

She sternly opens her palm in front of him, in a gesture ready to receive his report book.

(CONTINUED)

AARON hesitantly hands it to her, which she promptly opens to see his mid-year results. She glares at him.

MOTHER
(scolding exasperatedly, in
mandarin)
B,C,C,F!? How can you fail your
English!? We gave you so much
tuition!

AARON is speechless due to his fear of his mother.

MOTHER
(disappointed and worried, in
mandarin)
Why are you so stupid? Your PSLE is
in less than 3 months time! How?

INT. AARON'S ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

Still intensely playing his computer game.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY (FLASHBACK: 1 YEAR AGO)

MOTHER is bringing simple dishes out from the kitchen to the dining table in the hall. AARON's siblings, ADRIAN, 16, and AMELIA, 13, are helping to set the table. AARON's room door is closed.

MOTHER
(to Adrian, in mandarin)
Go call the useless one to come out
and eat. All he knows is to play,
play, play.

ADRIAN walks over and knocks AARON's room door loudly, showing his lack of respect for his brother.

ADRIAN
(rudely in a raised voice)
Oi, come out and eat!

AARON does not reply because he is wearing his headphones. ADRIAN waits for a while, slightly shakes his head and returns to the table.

MOTHER
(laments, in mandarin)
Hopeless... let's eat first.
Luckily I still have both of you. I
don't understand why he couldn't
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER (cont'd)
study when both of you can.. You
need a good education to earn
money. And he's the oldest.

MOTHER, ADRIAN and AMELIA start to eat. A moment later,
AARON comes out from his room to join them.

MOTHER
(in mandarin)
Adrian, do you have anything that
you want?

ADRIAN gives a puzzled look to his mother.

ADRIAN
(shaking his head with a
puzzled expression, in
mandarin)
Uhhh, no. Why?

AMELIA thinks for awhile and bursts out in excitement after
realizing.

AMELIA
(excitedly in mandarin)
It's your birthday next week!

ADRIAN
(in mandarin)
Ma, I don't need a present. We
don't have much money.

MOTHER
(smiling and insisting, in
mandarin)
It's your birthday so no matter how
poor, we are still going to get you
something.

Amidst the joyous interactions as they discuss what to get
for his brother, AARON continues eating as if he is
excluded.

AARON (V.O. NARRATION)
(in mandarin)
She never forgets my brother's and
sister's birthdays. But when it
comes to mine, she doesn't even
care.

He finishes his meal very quickly and brings his bowl to the
kitchen, leaving them to their discussion.

INT. AARON'S ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

AARON loses the game, takes off his headphones in frustration and drops onto his bed, heaving a deep exasperated sigh as he stares at the ceiling.

The house door bell rings.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY (PRESENT)

AARON, ADRIAN, AMELIA and their AUNT are seated on the sofa in a discussion about their financial status. They are still in a solemn mood since the loss of their mother.

AUNT

After the cost of the funeral,
there is not much money remaining.
I will be providing a monthly sum,
but it won't be a lot - only enough
to cover the bare necessities.

ADRIAN

No, auntie, it's okay. You still
have to take care of Emily, we feel
bad for troubling you.

AUNT

We are close family, it is what I
should do.

ADRIAN

(slightly sarcastically)
Family should help each other
out... unlike someone who spent all
his NS allowance on games and
haven't worked after his ORD a year
ago.

AARON

(retorts nonchalantly)
That's my own money. I can spend it
on whatever I want.

AUNT turns to face AARON.

AUNT

Actually, the reason I came is to
ask you to consider to look for
work, Aaron. As the oldest, you
have to take care of the family.

AARON gets visibly upset.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
(exclaims with reluctance)
Why me?!

AUNT
Both of them are still studying...

AARON
(exasperated)
So it's because I can't study that I have to work? No. I'm not going to work. When mother was still alive, they get everything they want. And I? I get nothing but beatings and scoldings. Now she's gone, and I have to provide for them?

ADRIAN, agitated, stands up aggressively.

ADRIAN
(angrily)
What have you done for this family other than wasting your life away in your room?!

AUNT holds pulls his arm and holds him back. ADRIAN looks at her and sits back down as he controls his anger.

AUNT
Aaron, you're the elder brother here. I know it's hard, but if you don't work, they won't be able to concentrate on studying.

AARON shakes his head and leaves for his room upon hearing how absurdly unfair the idea is.

INT. AARON'S ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

AARON sits himself in front of his computer and reaches for his headphones.

The next day, AARON wakes up. The clock shows 3pm. In his dishevelled hair and messy clothes he exits his room.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (PRESENT)

AARON stops as he is about to enter the kitchen. He overhears a conversation between ADRIAN and AMELIA. AMELIA is in her school uniform and is holding onto a calculator.

AMELIA

My calculator is spoiled. I have a mathematics test next week.

AMELIA hands ADRIAN the calculator and he checks it.

ADRIAN

How much to get a new one?

AMELIA

It's about \$30...

ADRIAN puts the calculator down and considers for a moment.

ADRIAN

Tell you what.

He opens his wallet, takes out \$30 and offers it to AMELIA.

AMELIA

(concerned)

That's your own money, right? Will you have enough money for the month?

ADRIAN

(with a smile)

Don't worry I'll find a way. Maybe I'll eat a little lesser everyday. Anyway I also need to lose some weight. Take it.

ADRIAN pats his belly to show her how big it is. AMELIA smiles and takes the money from ADRIAN's hands.

ADRIAN

Your test is more important for now. You can treat me to a bigger meal when you saved up more money.

AARON's face shows that his mind is occupied with thoughts. He walks into the kitchen. ADRIAN stares at him as he nonchalantly walks past the both of them toward the bathroom as if they weren't there. AMELIA looks worried for her brothers' relationship. No words were exchanged and AARON closes the bathroom door.

INT. AARON'S ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

AARON returns to his room and sits in front of the computer. As he is about to grab his headphone, he sees his childhood yo-yo and picks it up.

He thinks for a while, puts it back down and then types on the keyboard of this computer.

MONTAGE OF SEVERAL SCENES

A montage shows the following:

- AARON waking up early and leaving house.
- ADRIAN and AMELIA becoming increasingly puzzled at where AARON went.
- He is working at different places - at a convenience store, a fast food restaurant, as a waiter and a flyer distributor.
- He is enduring many difficulties and being scolded due to the mistakes he make at work.
- He eats cup noodles in a hurry during his breaks.
- He arrives home exhausted every night and lie onto his bed.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY (PRESENT)

It is in the morning before work. AARON takes out four pieces of \$50 and place them on the dining table. Then he writes on a piece of paper a note which he also leaves on the table before exiting the house.

Both ADRIAN and AMELIA come out from their room curiously, like they have been waiting for him to leave house.

They see the money on the table. Written on the piece of paper are their names with arrows pointing to the respective money.

ADRIAN and AMELIA look at each other in pleasant disbelief. They finally know what he has been doing.

EXT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

AARON walks along the corridor toward his home. Upon reaching the gate, he takes out the keys and unlock it.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - NIGHT (PRESENT)

AARON is surprised right after he unlocks the door.

AMELIA is holding a slice of cake with a lit candle on top and ADRIAN is standing beside her.

ADRIAN & AMELIA
(with a smile)
Happy Birthday Kor!

AARON is visibly overwhelmed by surprise, not knowing how to react as he had forgotten his own birthday, but his siblings remember.

AMELIA
(excitedly)
Quick! Blow the candles! It's
melting already!

AARON suddenly dashes past them into his room and closes the door.

INT. AARON'S ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Inside, AARON sobs uncontrollably on his bed.