

Working Title: *Ang Madadaldal*

Author: Manuel Tinio

Storyline:

A Japanese-English-Filipino Interpreter named Aoi is unable to find a bridesmaid for her wedding. In her profession which deals with overseas transactions, she is always the only person who can speak to everyone in the room yet she has difficulty articulating and expressing her own thoughts and feelings. Aoi overhears Aki, her colleague, express her shock that Aoi had asked her to be her bridesmaid because Aki never thought them to be close.

Tsuki, Aoi's mother, often speaks to Aoi in Tagalog, English, and Nihonggo all at once in mundane conversations. Tsuki is suffering from cancer, and Aoi fears nothing more than losing her mother. They hardly ever converse about death, instead Tsuki is fixated on becoming a grandmother and seeing her daughter secure.

On his way to picking her up, Andro, Aoi's fiance, listens to audiobooks on the techniques of entrepreneurship. Andro is an ambitious wedding videographer, and he, on the other hand, has talent for spinning words to get what he wants. To him, Aoi is the prettiest girl he's laid eyes on. His Instagram would prove this to you. Aoi, on the other hand, would never dare register an account. Aoi loves him for his bright future. He loves her for her beauty.

Andro takes her to a restaurant to celebrate her birthday. She smiles and nods at his insights on business. Earlier at work, Aoi, unusually, could not make sense of what her clients had been saying. She could make out the words but put together they had no meaning. At her birthday, the same thing happened with Andro for a slight bit. Aoi wants to tell Andro and Tsuki of this strange occurrence, but cannot articulate it.

. As the wedding approaches, Aoi's melancholia deepens, she tries to express this to her fiance and mother as they fit dresses, pick flowers, and send invitations. Her fiance sells her the idea that married life is the solution. Her mother passively aggressively manipulates her, Aoi gets fed up and argues with her mother. In their trilingual argument, Aoi and Tsuki begin to misunderstand each other completely. They each understand the words that the other is saying but they only hear incoherently formed sentences that have no meaning.

There's nothing neurologically wrong with them because everyone else around them can understand them. They continue to prepare, rehearse and set the wedding. Andro acts as an interpreter between the miscommunicating mother and daughter who cannot make the smallest decisions together. Their labour pays off as they are close to a dream wedding despite the language barrier.

A week before the wedding, Tsuki is rushed to the hospital and passes away. Aoi makes no sense of her mother's final words. The nurses and doctors taking care of her mother speak

words but Aoi can make no sense of them. She rushes out of the hospital, she hears words in Filipino, English, and Japanese but they have no meaning even those from her fiancé. She ceases to understand everyone.

At her wedding is a sea of happy faces, the day she and her mother have dreamed of is here, but all she can hear is meaningless word vomit. A cloud of melancholia envelops her.

A few months later and Aoi's nightmare continues. She and Andro have redecorated Tsuki's house in an attempt to move forward but Aoi is unable to converse, or understand anyone even her own husband. Andro has fits of breaking down himself as he has brought her to different experts and they find nothing wrong with her. He attempts to carry on normally and treats his wife to dates and gifts thinking that cheering her up may help solve things, but it instead frustrates him even more.

Aoi's reality sometimes drifts into a nightmare. Visiting her bank can evoke the darkest of despair distorting her hearing and sight, chopping vegetables to her can feel like the end of the world, and her therapist is a maddeningly senseless chatterbox. Aoi senses that it is only a matter of time before Andro leaves her. She has set out to please him elaborately in bed, seeing that this is the best she can offer him. Their sex becomes more risqué and exciting. Aoi performs acts in bed that do not please her, but does so out of a fear of abandonment. However, simple exchanges over passing the salt or Aoi not wanting the television or radio turned on because all she is to hear is meaningless chatter creates tension and frustration between the two.

They are still able to bond over music. They share wordless dancing and love can exist. Andro is able to land a celebrity wedding which is a big step forward for his company. He comes home happy and takes Aoi out to dinner and the movies. They are both happy even if Aoi does not know what is going on but the familiarity of a date like they used to have brings her much joy as they sit in the movie house, Aoi's nightmare resumes as a cacophony booming from the movie screen creates a maddening experience for her. Andro sinks into frustration as he knows not how to help her. At home, Andro falls from the staircase as he, too, is not emotionally right, Aoi goes out to try and seek help for her husband but cannot communicate with anyone.

Andro decides to leave Aoi, but Aoi reveals that she is pregnant. He stays.

Aoi feels joy in the first five years of her son's life whose name she does not know. At this point, they are able to connect without words.

At six years old, however, he seeks to be able to speak to people, a need his mother cannot provide. Andro's hopes and dreams of becoming a successful videographer have not been working out. They still stay at Aoi and Tsuki's apartment although Andro wants to move out. Their unfulfilling relationship has hindered him from becoming the best that he had hoped for. Aoi desperately clings onto her son and husband.