NM3222 Project Proposal

# Story Description

Live the life of a dementia-ridden old lady as she fumbles through her daily life. As she struggles to remember the people around her and attempt to complete tasks that were once simple and routine in her life, experience her world and peek at the facets of her life as she remembers it.

Shedding light on the life of a caregiver and her ward, this story was written referencing true stories and personal experiences in hopes of creating greater awareness about living with dementia.

# Premise of the story

## Characters

* Law Chun Sum (affectionately called as Ah Ma)

A 79-year-old woman plagued with many health conditions, including dementia. She is currently staying with her daughter and her family in a HDB flat. She can understand bits of Mandarin but can only communicate in Cantonese. She has been living in Hong Kong for majority of her life and had joined her daughter and her family in Singapore decades ago.

* Lam Teng Yan (affectionately called Ah Lui, Cantonese for daughter)

Ah Ma’s elder daughter and her primary caregiver. She currently works nine-to-five in the office. She has been taking care of her mother for over 2 decades. She has two children, Stephanie and Shawn, who are currently pursuing their studies.

* Stephanie Lee (affectionately called Ah Cheh, Cantonese for older sister)

Teng Yan’s daughter, who has a young sibling Shawn. She is currently studying in the university. She is one of Ah Ma’s caregivers.

* Shawn Lee (affectionately known as Ah Zai, Cantonese for son)

Teng Yan’s son, who is currently studying in secondary school. Seeing the daily interactions between the caregivers and Ah Ma, he prefers to avoid the situation altogether by staying in his room with the doors closed whenever he is home.

* Dina (known as Ban Mui, Cantonese short form for Filipino maid)

A Filipino maid who was recently employed at a maid agency. Her primary duties are to take care of Ah Ma.

## Setting

Majority of the events occurs in a small 3-room HDB flat located in one of the few mature estates of Singapore. Some of the events occur beyond her home, such as hospital stays, going to the day care centre, travelling to Hong Kong to attend a funeral of a close relative and disputes in the maid agency.

## Plot

This story would be told in a first-person POV. You will play the role of Ah Ma and experience her life as a dementia-ridden old woman.

Main events that occurs in this story includes:

1. Disputes and arguments that happen at home

Friction between the family members and subsequently the addition of the maid, Diana, causes nightly arguments within the family. Other issues that the family faces are also brought to light from these arguments.

1. Occasional visits and phone calls by Ah Ma’s other children

Ah Ma has another son and daughter who are living in Hong Kong. As she reveals more about these children through the occasionally phone calls, the truth behind how Ah Ma came to live with Teng Yan is revealed.

1. Hospital stays

Accidents happen but is it because of negligence? Frequent falls lands Ah Ma back into the hospitals in a seemingly never-ending cycle. With each hospital stay, Ah Ma’s condition deteriorates. The family has no choice but to hope for the best in these trying times.

1. Day care centre

Hoping to engage Ah Ma in more activities that would enable her to make friends and expand her social circle, the family introduces Ah Ma to a day care centre nearby. With all the application procedure close to completion, complications happen. More struggles that the family faces are revealed.

1. A funeral of a close relative in Hong Kong

Living to the ripe old age of 79, people often congratulate her, mulling that she is so lucky to be able to spend so much time with her grandchildren and children. But watching her many friends and relatives pass onto the other life, her closest friends and relatives of her age can be counted on one hand. As she struggles with her emotions and loss, trials come her way that would threaten the family’s peace once more.

1. The maid agency

The prolong demands and struggles builds up and the family is at the end of their tether. Seeking no better alternatives, Teng Yan employs a maid that would help share the burden that she bears. However, things don’t go the way she expected.

Requirements

Requirement 1: The story must incorporate at least 3 sets of dialogue choices, which will impact the reader’s understanding of the main character.

(A set of dialogue choice includes at least 2 levels of choices, meaning to say that there are 2 instances where the player needs to select an option, both of which when combined would make up one set of dialogue choices)

Requirement 2: The choices in each dialogue choices should depend in some way on the choices made in at least one of the previous sets of dialogue choices

Requirement 3: Facts should be used to keep track of the reader’s choices. The facts should model some aspect of the main character’s personality and motivations.

Requirement 4: Choose an appropriate representation for the dialogues choices. Some examples of this includes Sentence Selection and Dialogue options.

Requirement 5: The reader should experience a feeling of agency (agency of choice? Emotional agency?) when reading the story, using any of the various definitions of agency as discussed in the module.

Addressing the Requirements in relation to the story

The story is told in first-person POV. (Requirement 5) The intended effect of the daily arguments is to induce emotional agency such that the player would feel the unfairness and depressing feelings that the old woman has to live through day by day.

(Requirement 5) To allow the players to feel that their choices have an impact on the story, choices that the player makes mostly fall into 2 categories, to build up their character and false choices, which are used to bring the subsequent events into the story.

(Requirement 4) Selections in this story is mostly represented either as verbal dialogue or specific actions. (Requirement 3) Of which, there are 2 main personalities that the player can adopt, an aggressive old woman who is vicious and often fights back, or a submissive woman who rarely complains and takes abuses.

(Requirement 2) As per Ah Ma’s personality, if she were to adopt a majority aggressive behaviour, the family and the maid would interact in a much more aggressive level in retaliation. If she were to adopt a submissive personality, the family and the maid would interact with her in a slightly different manner (i.e. the maid might bully her).

(Requirement 1) An example is given below.

The maid retorts, “Ah Ma always ANGRY ANGRY! ANGRY ANGRY very HAPPY? Also not I make you ANGRY one!”

“Whole day SCOLD ME only! You BLACK-hearted woman! I pay money to get scolded by YOU ah? Your kids so poor thing got this kind of mother! If I am your kid, I rather DIE!”

“Sorry sorry. Don’t angry. At most I don’t say anything anymore.”

The maid mutters and grudgingly takes the potty off the commode and walks out of the room. As you slowly make your way back to your bed, you hear someone talking on the phone outside. Suddenly, your stomach grumbles a little as you recall that you haven’t had lunch yet.

Open the door a little to hear

Get your hidden stash of food

IF Open the door a little to hear:

Hobbling to the door, you silently inch the door open to let in a small crack.

“… This grandma … terrible … no money…. Useless! … always scolds me…”

Minutes later, you hear footsteps by the door. Quietly, you quickly hobble your way back into bed.

ELSE Get your hidden stash of food:

Hobbling as fast as your useless feet can carry you, you pull open the cabinet hidden behind the door and rummage under a pile of mooncake tins and cloth bags. You push your hand in further to until you hear the crinkling sounds of a little red plastic bag. Dragging the bag out full of triumph, you peel a small piece from the bread and put the rest back into the bag. Savouring the taste of bread on your lips, you lose yourself in this little moment of heavenly bliss.

Minutes later, you hear footsteps by the door. Shoving the plastic bag back into the cupboard, you quickly hobble your way back into bed.