

PASSING

While this piece largely conforms to the conventional format of a screenplay, I deviate from its "blueprint" conventions to, for instance, describe thoughts and feelings. At various points, I also insert camera angles, which is generally discouraged in screenwriting.

I would like the piece to be read as though it was intended to be read, and not necessarily as something to be translated to screen. Descriptions of elements such as camera angles, as such, remain a mere directive for the reader's imagination.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A glaring afternoon sun spikes through a BUDDHIST LOTUS PAPER CUT peeling off a window. Its patterned shadow hits Y (14) in the face as he is reading a novel by the window-side table. He squints through the uneven light.

We punch out to see Y sitting on a cushioned couch. He sports a blue fleece jacket, and hides his fingers in its sleeves from the cold. Traffic sounds make their way from below to the ninth-floor apartment. Today is not his day: it is clear he is not having the comfortable reading experience he was looking for on a Sunday afternoon.

The lotus peels off a little more, shifting the position of the shadow as if to purposely irritate him. Enough is enough: he reaches over and peels the entire paper cut off.

RACK FOCUS to the cityscape of an urban SHANGHAI beyond the window confines. The sun is glaring but does little to warm the metallic, winter cold buildings. A look at them sends an icy jolt through his body.

Y stands up and heads over to the heating switch. He bumps up the temperature but it does not function. He hits all the buttons to no avail. We punch out to reveal a modest, wooden-tiled apartment dressed almost entirely with second-hand wooden furniture.

In English:

Y  
(calls to another room)  
Ma?

He waits. No response.

Y (CONT.)  
Ma? We need to get the heating fixed.

The apartment, though modest in size, continues to respond with silence. He makes his way across the living room. As he nears his parents' bedroom, he hears muted sobs and halts in his steps.

Y (CONT.)  
Ma...?

He pushes the door open.

INT. APARTMENT - PARENTS' BEDROOM - DAY

MA (42), stifling her sobs on the phone, is seated on the floor, her back leaning against the wall. Her legs are pulled into a fetal position, making her appear smaller than her otherwise already slight figure.

MA

(to the phone)

I'll let his office know it's  
urgent... We'll call very soon. Let's  
sort this out... Take care, take care.

The call ends. She turns to look at Y and beckons for a hug to save her. Uncertain, he indulges. We punch out to give them space. She speaks to him, but we do not hear.

Then, we close in on them.

Y

Does ba know?

She responds with a muted head shake. They look grimly into separate distances.

INT. APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - EVENING

BA (47) and ma are seated at the dining table. Ba sports an olive sweater atop a formal attire which remains from work. His eyes look a swollen red.

His phone rests on the tabletop. A call is happening on loudspeaker between ba and his six siblings. Y hovers in the opposite corner of the room and remains invisible. This is adult business he knows not to pester.

The many overlapping, distressed voices on the phone make it impossible to distinguish one from the other. They speak in Malaysian Teochew:

VOICE #1

He's not of sound mind to make a  
decision!

VOICE #2

Stop talking about him as though he's  
gone sick in the head. You wanna be  
talking about him like that for what?

VOICE #1

He *has* gone sick in the head! Ma's not

here so he fucks off.

VOICE #3

I say if the coward wants to travel,  
then just let him travel.

VOICE #4

Ta! Who do you think you are? Show  
some respect.

VOICE #3

Like *he's* showing any respect! We're  
on the same side here. If he wants his  
vacation, he can have his fucking  
vacation. But he's not doing it on my  
dime.

VOICE #5

And what then? Is that it? He's gonna  
skip ma's funeral, just like that?

VOICE #4

(about to cry)

Stop! Cut him some slack! It's too  
much for him. It's also not just any  
"*fucking*" vacation. He's been going to  
Angyi's every December with ma and  
maybe he just needs some... some  
normal.

VOICE #1

There *is* no "*normal*"! Leaving's not  
gonna make things normal either! Why  
not we all just take a break, let ma  
rot in her casket while we all go on  
vacation. Ta! Let's all go to China!

VOICE #6

It's really quite simple. This is *ba*  
we're talking about. This is his one  
request and we should honor it, even  
if he's deluded or whatever.

VOICE #1

It's not safe! What about *safety*? He's  
not FIT to travel whether he wants to  
or not!

VOICE #4

One of us could go with him.

VOICE #3

Okay then you go! You pay for his flights too while you're at it.

VOICE #2

You're in rare form today.

VOICE #3

I'm not paying for him to run away from his shit. She's gone. Leaving's not gonna bring her back.

Then, to ba:

VOICE #3 (CONT.)

Angyi, say something. You haven't said a word.

Beat. Ba, the oldest of them all, looks at ma, calculates. We close in on his profile as he speaks, followed by a cutaway of the phone.

BA

If he says he's coming, then he's coming. I'll take the next flight out and bring him over. The funeral processions, let them happen without him.

As he speaks, the cutaway dissolves into a Gaussian blur.

EXT. COMPOUND - DUSK/DAWN

Ba has taken the first flight out of Shanghai. We endure the passing of time through twilight. It is difficult to tell whether it is dusk or dawn.

A strong breeze jostles the leaves of Chinese catalpas. We hear the chirps of leaf warblers against an unusually deep pink sky.

A security guard at the compound entrance, napping in the breeze on a plastic chair.

A woman on an undersized scooter moves along from left to right of the frame.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Y is sitting on the floor by the photo cabinet. In his lap is an old photo album. He flips through the pages of ba's

childhood.

In the background is the chatter of two maintenance technicians: one is propped up on a ladder to fix the air conditioning overhead, and the other is holding him steady from below. Their Shanghainese chatter permeates the background throughout the scene.

Ma approaches Y and sits down next to him. They speak in Chinese:

Y  
There aren't very many pictures of  
her.

He flips to the next page. We punch into various photos of ba and his siblings across a scattered timeline. We catch a shot of ahba in his late-40s: he has a strong build, and poses with three of his children in their early teens, including ba.

MA  
They really only took pictures  
outdoors. And ahma spent a lot of time  
homemaking. What a pity... you know I  
remember when I saw her for the first  
time? She was very beautiful, even way  
past her youth...

Y flips. Again, not a single photo of her. Ma points to a photo of ahba and ba.

MA (CONT.)  
They look alike here.

Y nods as he continues flipping.

Y  
How long will he be staying for?

Beat.

MA  
Till things are settled back home.  
Three days, I don't know. Maybe four.

Y  
There's nothing for him to do here.

MA  
You should talk to him. Be there for

him.

Y  
I don't know what's there to talk  
about.

MA  
I think maybe you'd know if you tried.

Beat. The technicians continue to chatter in the background.

Y  
How long more before they're done?

Ma looks at her watch.

MA  
Hopefully before your ba gets back.

Y flips another page. Finally, a portrait of ahma, who appears almost wrinkle-free. Her most pronounced features are her short, curly hair and chiseled cheekbones; a modest beauty. On her wrist is an ocean blue, hand-threaded bracelet. She poses with an infant in her lap.

Y  
Is that ba?

Ma takes a look.

MA  
No, that's you. I told you she was  
beautiful way past her youth.

Ma stands up and leaves to tend to the technicians. Y remains. We end on a close of ahma.

INT. APARTMENT - Y'S BEDROOM - MORNING

It is the dead of a Friday morning. The bedside clock indicates 05:37 AM. Y lies as still in bed as the city outside the window, but remains wide awake. The sky teeters at daybreak.

A while passes. Then, in the distance, we hear the faint ding of the apartment elevator, followed by the strained drag of suitcases.

Y gets out of bed and puts on his socks and jacket. Outside, we hear keys jingling at the door. He takes a deep breath and heads out into:



## INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Ma just about makes it to the front door when it opens on its own. Enters ba, and behind him, AHBA (81). The air turns stale, heavy, nervous. Y lingers, not too close, not too far either, observing.

Ahba is not the man we saw in the photos. Here he is small-boned, withered; sports a Mickey Mouse beanie and an oversized second-hand winter outfit in which he does not belong. His coat alone looks as though it weighs heavier than himself.

He removes the beanie on his head to reveal ugly, uncombed thinned air. Ma goes around to assist him. She turns to give Y a hard glance, followed by nodding at the luggages.

Y stirs and moves forward to help ba. Ahba keeps his head hunched as though he is afraid to look up at the world. As Y retrieves the luggages, he likewise keeps his head lowered, partly out of respect, but also because eye contact is too difficult to make.

Correction: it is not something he feels he deserves to make. He grew up barely knowing the man, and the man barely knows him. The distance between them makes it inevitable for his look at ahba to be none other than one of judgment, one of pity that he most certainly does not deserve.

Y drags the luggages to the guest room. The distance between him and ahba grows.

## INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NOON

Y is helping ma in the kitchen preparing for lunch. Today's servings: bokchoy, sweet and sour pork. Y sets them onto the plate as ma boils lotus soup in the pot. They share a comfortable silence.

The kitchen door slides open. Enters ahba.

MA

Ba.

She stops stirring the soup and comes to his assistance by the arm, though she really does not quite know to where she is assisting him.

MA (CONT.)

Have you slept well? Let's have you some soup.

He rejects the offer with a small wave of his hand.

BA

Come, let me help some.

MA

No ba, you just sit and wait. We're almost done.

Ahba waves his hand once more. He approaches the bokchoy and Y makes way. He is about to bring the dish to the dining table when ma stops him. She points to the rice cooker...

MA

You can fill the rice bowls, ba.

...and this would become his chore for the coming days. The kitchen returns to a silence, consumed by the throttled hum of bad plumbing that emanates the walls. Ma gives off a nervous air, afraid that ba may catch her letting ahba do housework.

Y steals occasional glances at ahba. Through his POV, we see Ahba scooping the rice from the rice cooker and placing them into the bowls. He does this as though he were a tattered, lonely beggar.

Y takes a deep breathe, sighs, and considers offering to switch roles, but does not make a move.

INT. APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The four sit around the dining table. Ba sits at the head. He has not yet slept since his arrival and looks the part. To his left is ahba. The both of them share hollowed eyes: the former from fatigue, the latter from age, and both from a grief that seems temporarily tamed by a change of place.

Seated next to ahba is ma. Directly opposite ahba is Y. Between the two of them is a wall of rising steam from the pot of lotus soup: an erected, translucent barrier.

The clicking of chopsticks against plates and bowls fill the dining space. Each time ma reaches for food, her chopsticks, it seems, land on ahba's plate instead of hers.

MA

Have some more of the pork, ba. The journey has you weary.

Ma conducts herself as though she knows she shoulders the

burden of moderating the air, its grief, its stale affect — a task, she knows, for which she has been set up to fail.

Her attempts to stir conversation often begin and end with her own sentences. Where she lacks control, she also treats Y more like an infant than usual.

MA (CONT.)

Y, vegetables. You're fourteen. You shouldn't need reminding.

Y does not need the reminder, but obeys and takes more bokchoy anyways. While eating, he cannot help but observe ahba. Through POV closeups, we witness ahba chew his food in the way that one chews with no teeth. A look at his sagging face and its folded, leather texture immediately evokes an image of the way his old skin clings to his bones beneath the oversized coat and pants.

The wrinkles and furrows of age, it seems, make ahba's sadnesses invisible. Ma breaks Y's rumination.

MA (CONT.)

Y, heat up the soup just a tad.

Y stirs the soup in the electric pot with the ladle.

Y

There's not much left.

MA

There's not enough to keep anyways, so just heat it up.

Y does as told. It is only when the soup begins to fill the space with its audible frothing that he catches the real reason for ma's directive.

INT. APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - LATER

Ba is taking a nap in the bedroom, and ma has headed off on a grocery run.

Y sits at the dining table reading his novel. He shifts uncomfortably in the wooden chair, and eyes the cushioned couch where he normally sits in the adjacent but distant:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Ahba is seated on the cushioned couch by the window. The TV is on, and he is watching a Chinese soap opera on the local

channel. The feed connection is bad, but he does not seem to particularly care.

INT. APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Y attempts to continue reading...

But the dining room just doesn't quite work.

He stands up and makes for the bedroom, but then pauses in his step. He turns to look at the living room, takes a breathe, and chooses instead to join ahba.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Y enters. Ahba turns slightly to notice him, turns back. Presence acknowledged.

Y sits down on the adjacent couch. Both watch the TV in silence. It is playing some local Shanghainese remake of the classic Monkey King.

At some point on screen, the Emperor drinks the immortal elixir and chokes. This elicits a chuckle in ahba, who strangely seems fairly engrossed in the opera.

Y glances at him, an almost judgmental glance that suggests he feels this... performance of watching TV is almost too mundane to be appropriate for the prevailing circumstance.

Ahba chuckles yet again, and Y wonders how ahba could possibly be in enough of a mood to chuckle. He shifts in his seat, looking for the right moment to strike up a conversation.

Alas, the right moment never arrives. Each moment that passes is a moment of instant regret of the cowardice that came immediately in the moment before.

A good while passes. At some point, ahba has had enough of the soap opera: he reaches over to the remote and switches the channel.

News. Cartoon. Another soap opera. Pauses to consider. Nah. Another cartoon.

The remote jams, and ahba struggles to change the channel. On screen is a slapstick cartoon of an old woman who is crossing the street on a red light while everything around her crashes and explodes.

Y comes over. In Teochew:

Y  
Here ahba, let me help.

At which point, ahba presses the switch button and the TV turns off. Awkward timing. He waves the same hand he waved to ma, as if to say: it's okay, no need to worry. He places the remote on the window-side table, and stands up to look out the window.

He hides his fingers in his sleeves from the cold. We punch out to see his profile superimposed upon the urban skyline of Shanghai. The sky is an ironic, deep blue - unusual for this city. He stares out the window as though utterly unaware of the emptiness that has now begun to overwhelm the living room space.

Y reaches for the heating switch and turns it up. Thankfully, the heating starts blasting, cushioning the silent space between them with a slow, loud warmth.

But the blasting, it seems, isn't quite enough. Y visibly wants to speak, but does not know what to say to ahba, whose back is turned towards him.

Y walks unsurely over to the piano. Pulls out the stool, lifts the lid. He quickly looks up to check on ahba, expecting him perhaps to be watching, but also somewhat hoping that he is not.

Ahba is not looking.

We close in on Y's fingers as they position themselves. They look colder than the white keys above which they are situated. They do not know where to begin, but they wing it.

DEBUSSY'S "LA PLUS QUE LENTE":

*Dum...*

*Dum...*

*Dum, da da dum...*

The solemn Impressionist piece sounds almost silly. Its lilting melody sounds like therapy music. We close in on Y's profile, positioned to the left third of the frame with a very shallow depth of field. He trudges through the piece, forcing a difficult lightness.

In the blurred background, we make out the vague silhouette of ahba against the window: it is impossible to tell whether he is looking at Y or at the skyline.

This shot lingers as Y plays for a while, a good while, conscious of ahba's eyes watching him even if they are not.

The music continues as we watch the following montage. Diegetic sound is not heard:

#### MONTAGE - VARIOUS

Y, ahba, ma and ba are gathered around the front door. Everyone but ahba is busy donning their winter clothes. Ahba's indoor attire remains the same for the outdoors: he keeps his winter coat on at all times. His head is lowered as he stares into some distance in the ground.

Ma instructs Y to do a final sweep of the house to double-check that all the windows are closed, and that the heating is switched off.

The family gets into car in the basement, an old Mazda that barely fits four adults. Ba helps ahba into the front passenger's seat. Y, lingering behind, tries to help, but ends up disrupting more than assisting.

Ba drives into the city. We see the ever-evolving, distorted reflections of Shanghai's skyscrapers on the car window. The camera racks focus to reveal ahba staring wistfully at the skyscrapers. He squints a little from the glare of the sun, accentuating the wistful wrinkles around his eyes.

From the backseat, Y notices ahba's hand. It is positioned to his side, and his palm is curved as though it is holding someone else's invisible hand.

The piano music fades to an end as the family arrives. The sounds of the diegetic reality flood back.

#### EXT. OLD STREETS - MORNING

The old streets of Cheng Huang district are bustling against the backdrop of ornate traditional Buddhist temples. Rows of clothing lines, suspended above the narrow congested streets, are decorated with bedsheets and undergarments.

Cheng Huang is a tourist attraction for foreigners, but Shanghainese families, the old and the youth, fill the streets. The Malaysian family, ironically, fits perfectly into the crowd. Shops selling food, toys, trinkets,

electronic accessories, flank them on either side.

Ma holds ahba's arm as they walk along. Y and ba follow closely behind. They walk gently to accommodate ahba's pace – he trudges, shuffles, more than walks – each of them independently worried that Cheng Huang might be too much of a sensory overload for him.

In the vicinity, we see that Cheng Huang is a strange amalgam of the traditional and modern, of the public and private:

A pair of grandparents plays with a Totoro toy to their toddler grandchild's inattention.

A teenage boyfriend takes a photo of his girlfriend, posing with a matcha ice cream. After the photo is taken, she immediately breaks from her exaggerated Kawaii pose and comes around to check the shots.

An angry Shanghainese mother whacks her child's bum and screams: *DON'T GO AROUND TOUCHING THINGS THAT WE'RE NOT BUYING!* The child breaks into an ugly cry as the mother drags her along, almost violently. This does not so much as attract a glance.

Y turns to ba. They speak in Chinese:

Y  
Where're we walking to?

Ba trudges along with hands in pocket.

BA  
Where he goes, is where we go. Do you have something in mind?

Y shakes his head. They walk along.

Y  
Ba, something on your mind?

Ba shakes his head. They walk along.

The family follows the turns that ahba takes. For the most part, they flow with the crowd. Other times, ahba trudges forward with a measured certainty that suggests he has some fixed destination in mind – perhaps some shop or food stand that he had discovered the year before.

MA  
Ba, anything you have in mind for

lunch? We can stop somewhere.

Ahba waves his hand, as he does, and trudges onward. Ma briefly looks back at ba, then continues. Filling the air are the scents of spit-ridden tarmac and the unbathed masses; the rubbery, assertive kind of stench that leaks through layers of winter clothing.

INT. FIVE YUAN SHOP - AFTERNOON

A lucky golden cat sits at the front of the shop. Its pendulum arm waves back and forth: normally it waves good luck, but here it beckons customers to enter. It beckons to the beat of the romantic Chinese classic: "Snow is Falling".

The family is scattered around the small shop, which is less crowded than the outside. Y peruses the stationery offerings, while ba and ma are stationed in the DVD section. Ba is on a phone call, presumably with family, and ma accompanies him to absorb his stress.

In the opposite corner, ahba sifts through the toys, trinkets, bracelets, and it seems as though he is keen on maintaining a private distance to himself.

Through the shelves, Y observes ahba picking up and examining a toy phone. He murmurs, as though ahma were next to him, advising his purchases.

Then, he presses the phone's buttons, as they though work. He lifts the phone to his ear, uncertain, and listens.

Y stares.

Ahba holds the phone intently, as though it is ringing.

*Ring ring.*

*Ring ring.*

His eyes grow with hope.

*Ring ring.*

*Ring ring.*

Then, as if suddenly aware of a watcher, he looks up square at Y, and quickly puts down the phone.

Y pulls back. Shit. He pretends to browse the stationery, as though ahba can still see him through the shelf.



The romantic song ends. The festive "New Year, New Start" traditional tune begins to play.

Eventually, Ba finishes his phone call, and all of them congregate. There is a stressed furrow on his forehead that he tries to hide. Ahba's hands are tucked in his pockets, as though hiding from the cold.

MA  
(to ahba)  
Found anything you like?

AHBA  
Bo-lah. There's nothing in here that actually costs five yuan.

He trudges to the exit. leaving no time for the rest to be surprised by his words. They follow suit. As they return to the outdoor bustle, they walk past a sign on the wall that says the following with an erroneous translation:

将执行 放送者: SHOPLIFTERS WILL BE PROSTITUTED

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

It is 10PM and dark out. The rest have gone to bed while Y finishes washing the last of the dishes, his nightly routine.

He turns the tap off, pats his hands with a towel, and turns off the kitchen lights as he heads out.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He makes his way across the living room to his bedroom. On the way, he notices the door of the guest bedroom is ajar. He approaches. He is about to close it, but decides instead to enter and check on ahba.

The curtains are wide open. The moon, almost ripe, casts its light on ahba. He seems to have wriggled free from his blanket, but is curled up in the corner of the bed. He hugs a pillow to his chest. From Y's POV, this looks almost like a theatrically staged tableau.

Y takes a step closer, cautious not to wake him up. He pauses and assesses ahba's breathe.

All good, fast asleep.

Then, Y reaches for the blanket. As he is about to place it over ahba, he notices that the pillow, where ahba's face is

buried, is stained with tears.

He covers them with the blanket. Gently as though ahba is a relic to be carefully preserved. His thinned hair glows silver in the moonlight, and for a vulnerable moment, Y quietly observes; observes as ahba soundly dreams of a distant, tender past.

Wary of intruding anymore, Y steps away and makes for the door. He is about to exit, when suddenly behind him, ahba addresses him by ba's name:

AHBA  
Angyi, is that you?

Y freezes. He does not know how to respond. Then, he musters in Teochew:

Y  
Yes ba. Back to sleep you go.

Beat.

AHBA  
See to it that everything is taken care of tomorrow, yes?

Y  
Yes ba.

Ahba shuffles a satisfied shuffle. Y remains frozen for a long while, not knowing if there is anymore left ahba has to say.

An eternity passes.

Slowly, Y slides out the bedroom, careful not to make a sound. He is about to shut the door when:

AHBA  
Angyi.

Y  
Hm?

AHBA  
Leave the lights on outside. It'll be dark when your ma comes through.

Y acknowledges with silence, and shuts the door. Ahba has no idea what world he is living in, but for Y, this felt like

the closest he has ever gotten to his grandfather.

INT. APARTMENT - Y'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sky is pale white, and it stays that way from dawn through to dusk. Y lies in bed. The air weighs upon his chest like lead. He stares at the ceiling – the cracks, the webs in one corner and stained patches in the other – and all of it feel unusually close. The world has gotten smaller.

Time slows to the pace of grief. Through the walls, he hears ba in the living room making call after call...

To his sisters, brothers.

To the temple people, the funeral people.

At a certain point, Y gets up. He makes it to the door, reaches for the knob, but stops there. He is too much of a coward to leave his confines. He sits on the ground, next to the door, convincing himself that his presence has nothing to offer to the outside.

Time passes, but the world is still.

Grief, somewhere along the way, gets the better of ba. His delicate sobs travel through the fabric of the door. When this happens, ma takes over the calling duties.

At yet another point, Y lowers himself and presses his cheek against the ground. He closes one eye and attempts to peer beneath the door into the living room. He sees only wooden tiles, and vague reflections of wooden furniture on wooden tiles.

We punch out to a wide shot of Y's bedroom, with Y in center frame and pasting himself to the ground. Note: this is the pathetic pose of a coward desperate for the problem of grief to fix itself.

We cut to Y's POV and linger on the crack between the door and the floor for a good while. The shot slowly fades to a Gaussian blur. Then, when the blur is severe, we see the door open. Footsteps walk out the door.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A wide of the living room. The colors have seeped out of the furniture and walls. On the couch is ma, staring into the solemn distance with swollen eyes. Ba's head rests on her lap, evidently passed out from grief. Ma makes eye contact

with Y, and returns to her distant gaze.

Y walks over to the window. The Buddhist lotus papercut that he tore off not too long ago rests on the table. He picks it up and carefully pastes it back onto the window as best as possible.

He steps back, presses his palms together, closes his eyes, and prays to the lotus. We punch out to see his silhouette superimposed upon the pale skyline, and he whispers words that we do not hear.

When he is done, he opens his eyes. It takes a moment to reorient himself to the brightness. He looks out the window and sees, down below, a little figure in the distance, sitting on a playground swing. Its back faces Y, and its head is lowered.

The figure sports an oversized winter coat and a Mickey Mouse beanie. Two hands hold onto the chains of the swing as though for dear life.

The figure's back heaves and trembles. Like a little child. Through the gaps of the papercut, Y watches, hoping that his stare intrudes enough to summon his grandfather's awareness.

He stares for a long, long while. The heaving and trembling only continues.

INT. APARTMENT - Y'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The air is crisp and bitter cold, but Y keeps the window open. Tonight, the moon is full, casting a hard light into the bedroom.

Y sits on his bed against the wall, knees hugged to his chest. He stares at the dust particles that drift about his bedroom beneath the moonlight. We see this through his POV, facing the window, which slowly racks focus from the foreground.

The focus pushes through the dust until it reaches beyond the window, where the dust, it seems, transforms into the winter's first snowfall against the first light of day.

Y realizes this and stands up. He walks over to the window, and reaches his palm out to catch a drop of snow. He watches as the snowfall quickens, and very soon, it grows with the daylight into a heavy shower.

In the faint background, Y hears a door outside open and

shut. Intrigued, he puts on his jacket and socks and heads outside.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is still. Y surveys his surroundings, and notices that the guest bedroom door is ajar. He walks over to check, and ahba is not there.

Y puts on his shoes in a hurry, and heads out the front door.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Y exits the apartment building. The snow is now an almost otherworldly flurry.

Y looks around, and to the right, he watches a long shadow trudging into the distance, along the row of Chinese catalpas. He observes longer and realizes that there is not one, but two of them. The shadows hold each other's hands as they walk together into the morning sun.

The shadows stop in their tracks.

Y looks up. Ahba looks right back at him.

There is an understanding.

It is a new day.