

## = You Are the Apple of My Eye =

You Are the Apple of My Eye ( Chinese : 那些年 , literally " Those Years , The Girl We Went After Together " ) is a 2011 Taiwanese Romance film . It is based on the semi @-@ autobiographical novel of the same name by Taiwanese author Giddens Ko , who also made his directorial debut with the film . The film stars Ko Chen @-@ tung as Ko Ching @-@ teng , a prankster and a mischievous student who eventually becomes a writer . Michelle Chen stars as Shen Chia @-@ yi , an honor student who is very popular amongst the boys in her class .

You Are the Apple of My Eye was filmed almost entirely on location in Changhua County , including at the high school which Giddens attended . The lyrics of " Those Years " , the film 's main theme , were written by Giddens . The song , which was well received by the public , was nominated for Best Original Film Song at the 48th Golden Horse Awards .

The film 's world premiere was at the 13th Taipei Film Festival on 25 June 2011 , and it was subsequently released in Taiwanese cinemas on 19 August . Well received by film critics , the movie set box @-@ office records in Taiwan , Hong Kong , and Singapore . Ko Chen @-@ tung won the Best Newcomer award at the Golden Horse Awards for his role in the film .

## = = Plot = =

The story begins in 1994 . An outstanding student , Shen Chia @-@ yi is popular among her teachers and classmates . Ko Ching @-@ teng , mischievous and a poor student , claims that he has no interest in her , despite being her classmate since junior high school . One day , Ching @-@ teng is caught masturbating during class , and the principal reseats him , placing him in front of Chia @-@ yi .

One day , Chia @-@ yi forgets her English textbook . Ching @-@ teng slips her his own book and tells their teacher he forgot his own textbook ; he then endures a long lecture and is punished . Chia @-@ yi , touched by Ching @-@ teng 's generosity , prepares a practice exam for him in return , to encourage him to study . She also convinces him to stay after school to study with her . Their relationship grows , and Ching @-@ teng 's grades gradually improve .

On graduation , Ching @-@ teng enrolls at the National Chiao Tung University . Chia @-@ Yi , who did not do well on the admission exam because she was ill on that day , only manages to enter the National Taipei University of Education with her mediocre test results . Depressed and upset , she is consoled by Ching @-@ teng , who calls her long @-@ distance almost every night from university . During the winter holiday season that year , the two go on their first " date " , during which Ching @-@ teng asks Chia @-@ yi if she loves him . However , fearing she would say no , he decides that he would rather not hear her answer ( it is revealed later that her reply would have been " yes " ) . Ching @-@ teng later organizes a fight night and invites Chia @-@ yi to watch , hoping to impress her with his " strength " . On the contrary , Chia @-@ yi finds it childish for Ching @-@ teng to injure himself for no reason . This upsets Ching @-@ teng , sparking a quarrel that causes the two to break up .

During the two years after their breakup , Ching @-@ teng has no contact with Chia @-@ yi . He qualifies for a graduate research course at Tunghai University , where he begins writing stories online . Ching @-@ teng only regains contact with Chia @-@ yi after the 921 earthquake , when he calls to see if she is okay . During their long conversation with each other , they both lament the fact that they were not fated to become a couple .

Years later , in 2005 , Chia @-@ yi suddenly calls Ching @-@ teng to tell him that she is getting married . All of her old friends gather at the wedding , making jokes and trying to embarrass her somewhat @-@ older husband . They are surprised that their past emotions have transformed into deep friendship and serenity . Ching @-@ teng begins to work on a web novel about his experiences with Chia @-@ yi .

Later , when they gather to congratulate the bride and groom , the friends joke that they should be able to kiss the bride . The husband says that anybody who wants to kiss the bride has to kiss him like that first . Ching @-@ teng grabs the groom and pushes him onto the table , kissing him like he

would kiss Chia @-@ yi . During their kiss , he remembers how he regrets their fight from years ago , and what could have happened had he apologized for being childish .

= = Cast = =

Ko Chen @-@ tung as Ko Ching @-@ teng ( nicknamed " Ko @-@ teng " ) , a mischievous schoolboy who later becomes a writer ( Ko Ching @-@ teng is the real name of the director , Giddens ) .

Michelle Chen as Shen Chia @-@ yi , an outgoing student who consistently scores well in tests . Although she disdains boys less intelligent than herself , she decides to help Ching @-@ teng improve his grades . In the process , she falls in love with him .

Owodog as Tsao Kuo @-@ sheng ( nicknamed " Lao Tsao " ) , one of Ching @-@ teng 's friends . He had a crush on Chia @-@ yi , and once asked Ching @-@ teng to deliver a love letter he had written for her .

Steven Hao as Hsieh Ming @-@ ho ( nicknamed " A @-@ he " ) , one of Ching @-@ teng 's friends . He loves to eat , and is the butt of his friends ' jokes due to this . He is the only person in the group who has dated Chia @-@ yi .

Tsai Chang @-@ hsien as Liao Ying @-@ hung , one of Ching @-@ teng 's best friends . He likes to crack jokes and perform magic tricks , and later becomes a librarian .

Yen Sheng @-@ yu as Hsu Bo @-@ chun ( nicknamed " Boner " ) , one of Ching @-@ teng 's friends

Wan Wan as Hu Chia @-@ wei , Chia @-@ yi 's best friend . She likes to draw pictures , and after graduating from school becomes a manga artist known as " The Queen of Blogs " ( ????? ) .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

You Are the Apple of My Eye is based on Giddens ' semi @-@ autobiographical novel of the same name . He changed some details of the story to make the film more dramatic ; for example , Ching @-@ teng and Chia @-@ yi 's fight actually took place over the phone , not in the rain as depicted . Giddens said , " although some of the reasons for the events in the film were changed , the main storyline remained unchanged " . Asked if he was pressured by the recent success of Taiwanese films at the box office , he replied " No , I am more pressured by whether the film is nice to watch , whether it will succeed in the box office , and whether it will become an embarrassment for me . Also , if the film is not nice , it will be a letdown to Chen @-@ tung and Michelle , who have been working so hard " .

At first , the film was on a tight budget ; Giddens used his entire savings and mortgaged his house to raise money , saying that he did it to impress ex @-@ girlfriend , who provided the inspiration for this film 's female protagonist , Shen Chia @-@ yi . Executive producer Angie Chai also played a key role in raising money for the film .

= = = Casting = = =

Michelle Chen was the first cast member confirmed by the director . Mypaper reported that Giddens was attracted to her during their first meeting , saying that she resembled the real Shen Chia @-@ yi . Chen had previously starred in Taiwanese television drama series such as Why Why Love and Miss No Good , although she was better known for her 2009 film Hear Me . Chen went on a diet to lose weight for the role , saying she wished to " not disappoint the director " . Giddens later used her as a basis to select the other cast members . The selection process for the male lead was the longest , and a series of auditions attracted several celebrities . Giddens chose first @-@ time actor Ko Chen @-@ tung because he felt he showed great improvement in his acting skills in each

successive audition . Giddens liked his attitude , having seen Ko Chen @-@ tung hiding in a corner , frantically studying the script just before his audition .

The director chose Ao @-@ chuan , Yen Sheng @-@ yu , Hao Shao @-@ wen , and Tsai Chang @-@ hsien to play the roles of his high school friends . He described Hao Shao @-@ wen as being a persuasive speaker , Tsai Chang @-@ hsien as being a very good prankster , and Ao @-@ chuan as self @-@ confident . Hu Chia @-@ wei played herself as a teenager . Giddens describes the two of them as " the Jay Chou and Jolin Tsai of the [ Chinese ] publishing world " .

Giddens ' mother told him that she would like either Lotus Wang or Phoebe Huang to play her in the film . In the end , Giddens settled on Lotus Wang , because she did not have any other work commitments at that time . Ko Chen @-@ tung 's real father plays the father in the film .

= = = Filming = = =

You Are the Apple of My Eye was primarily filmed at Ching Cheng High School ( ???? ) , the school Giddens and Shen Chia @-@ yi attended . The director said he chose the school because " he wanted so badly to see Ko Chen @-@ tung and Michelle Chen in the school uniform that he remembered vividly " . The filming of the school scenes could only be done during the Taiwanese school holidays . Because the main location was at the school , it was decided to film the remainder of the film on location throughout Changhua County . The filming had a reported budget of NT \$ 50 million ( approx . US \$ 1.67M in January 2012 ) .

= = = Theme song = = =

" Childish " ( ??? ) , a song from the film , was written and sung by Michelle Chen . Giddens was so touched by the song that he shed tears " on the spot " after first hearing it ; in particular , he liked the song 's lyrics . He also praised Michelle 's dedication to her role , saying " I believe that the reason that she managed to get inspiration to write this song is because she likes her role [ in this film ] " .

Giddens was also involved in some of this film 's theme songs , including " Those Years " ( ??? ) . At first Giddens could not decide on the closing theme for this film ; however , after hearing one of Japanese composer Mitsutoshi Kimura 's new compositions he chose it and added lyrics . " The Lonely Caffeine " ( ?????? ) had been composed by Giddens for Shen Chia @-@ Yi when the two were in a relationship . He asked the male lead actor to sing the song in the film , because he felt this would convey the song 's original meaning .

" Those Years " was an instant hit . The music video on YouTube logged its ten millionth viewer on 11 November 2011 , leading Giddens to note that the song " broke every notable viewership record set by a Chinese @-@ language video on Youtube " . In the Taiwanese KKBOX singles daily charts , " Those Years " remained at the top for 64 consecutive days , from 22 August to 22 October 2011 , breaking the previous record of 45 consecutive days . The song was nominated for the Best Original Film Soundtrack award at the 48th Golden Horse Awards .

= = = Editing = = =

You Are the Apple of My Eye was edited over for its various releases due to its controversial content . In Taiwan , the film was initially given a " Restricted " film classification . Giddens was extremely upset by this , and even personally went to Government Information Office to appeal . The film had to be edited 4 times in order to lower its classification . In the end , the film received a " Guidance " classification , meaning that children above 12 are able to watch it . In Malaysia , the scene where the students masturbated in the classroom was deleted . In Singapore , the film remained unedited , but it received a NC @-@ 16 rating , thus restricting the film to viewers above 16 .

The film was heavily edited for its Mainland China release . The scene where a flag @-@ raising ceremony was taking place was edited away , as were the scenes involving masturbation . In total , six scenes involving " negative sexual and pro @-@ Taiwan content " were either edited away or

changed . The director also had to add new scenes in order to make the story flow more smoothly after editing .

= = Soundtrack = =

The original soundtrack album for *You Are the Apple of My Eye* was released by Sony Music Entertainment Taiwan on 5 August 2011 . It contains six songs with vocals and nine instrumental pieces that were used in this film .

= = Release = =

*You Are the Apple of My Eye* made its debut in competition at the 13th Taipei Film Festival on 25 June 2011 . The film made its international debut as the opening film for the sixth Summer International Film Festival in Hong Kong . It then had its general release in Taiwan on 19 August 2011 .

The film was screened at the 24th Tokyo International Film Festival on 24 October 2011 , where the director and cast were present . It was well @-@ received , with audiences reportedly squeezing into the cinema to the extent that people had to sit in the aisles . Internationally , the film was released in Hong Kong and Macau on 20 October and in Singapore and Malaysia on 10 November 2011 .

On 21 December , Giddens announced on his blog that the film passed the censorship board in China and would debut in that country on 6 January 2012 . Giddens had previously expressed a wish for the film to be screened in China so Shen Chia @-@ Yi , for whom he had made the film , could see it and comment . Giddens was unhappy when Chinese censors cut much of the film 's " negative sexual and pro @-@ Taiwan content " . He apologized to viewers in China for being unable to deliver on his promise to show the full story , saying that he " blamed only himself " . He added that he " did not think that the China 's version was better [ than the other overseas versions ] . "

Giddens revealed that negotiations were ongoing for the film 's release in Europe and the United States . The film subsequently made its North American debut at the New York Asian Film Festival on 2 July 2012 . It was later screened at the 2012 Fantasia Film Festival in Montreal . Giddens also announced that a sequel will be produced ; it will begin production in 2013 , and is expected to be released in cinemas in 2014 .

*You Are the Apple of My Eye* was first aired on television on 24 March 2012 on the STAR Chinese Movies network . It became the most @-@ watched film on television in Taiwan , having attracted an audience of almost 3 million people . In the 15 to 44 years old audience , it had an average rating of 7 @.@ 14 , with the rating peaking at 9 @.@ 27 during the screening . It was also the most @-@ watched television program on both cable and free @-@ to @-@ air networks in Taiwan . STAR Chinese Movies reportedly purchased the rights to this film at a hefty price of NT \$ 2 million ( approx . US \$ 69 @,@ 000 ) .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critics = = =

Maggie Lee of *The Hollywood Reporter* described the film as a " larky retro coming @-@ of @-@ age confection " . She praised the film , saying that it " injects a fresh , tart edge to the genre with a constantly self @-@ mocking boys ' angle " , which she described as an " alternative to Asian teen movies that tend to be syrupy " . She said that " the youthful cast has a limited register but offer enough self @-@ conscious blasé posing . " She described the film 's texture as " slightly over @-@ bright " . Russell Edwards , reviewing for *Variety* , criticized the second part of this film , which he says is " unable to maintain the outlandish phallocentric humor of its first hour " . He further criticized the last quarter of the film , which Edwards says " sees Giddens overestimating the charm of his

own story ". Edwards praised the film 's cast which , he said , were the film 's " greatest asset " . He also praised the film as " a much more robust production than many similar youth @-@ skewing Taiwanese romancers over the past decade " .

Serene Lim , a reviewer for Today , labelled the film a " gentle tale of a teenage romance " . She said that " Ko 's talents as a novelist are evident " , although his " attention to detail can get indulgently long @-@ winded at times " . Lim singled out Ko Chen @-@ tung for praise , saying that " [ he ] thoroughly deserves his Golden Horse nomination for Best Newcomer , given his turn as the impetuous rebel made good " ; overall , she gave the film a rating of 3 @. @ 5 out of 5 . Yong Shu Hoong , writing for Singapore @-@ based Mypaper , said that the " flashback sequences can reek of oversentimentality " , although the reviewer added that " the thrills , rivalries and heartbreak associated with high school romance are well depicted with nostalgia and humour " and gave it a rating of 3 out of 5 . The film was rated by Mtimes Movies as the " 2nd Best Chinese Film of 2011 " .

Film Business Asia gave the film a rating of 7 / 10 , with Derek Elley describing it as " a confident feature " and " slickly packaged in every department " , the latter making it " easy to miss the fact there 's nothing at all original here " . He praised the cast as " well @-@ chosen individually and relaxed as an ensemble " . He added , " apart from a slightly draggy second half , the material sustains itself at almost two hours , with generally trim editing by co @-@ executive director Liao . " He concluded by summarizing the film 's plot as a " simple teenage rom @-@ com , a will @-@ they / won 't @-@ they between two opposites , but capped by a neat finale that does deliver some real emotion " .

= = = Box office = = =

You Are the Apple of My Eye grossed more than NT \$ \$ 20 million at the Taiwanese box office during its soft launch . This makes it the first Taiwanese film to gross over NT \$ \$ 20 million before its official release date . The film crossed the NT \$ 200 million mark ten days after its official opening . In total , the film earned over NT \$ 420 million at the Taiwanese box office , making it the third @-@ highest @-@ grossing film of 2011 in Taiwan .

In Hong Kong , You Are the Apple of My Eye grossed a total of HK \$ 1 @, @ 397 @, @ 571 during its premiere ( representing 50 @. @ 6 percent of Hong Kong box @-@ office earnings ) on 20 October 2011 . Four days after its release the film had earned a total of HK \$ 11 @, @ 525 @, @ 621 , breaking the record for the highest @-@ grossing film debuting in the month of October . It also set a record for the highest @-@ grossing opening weekend for a Taiwanese film at the Hong Kong box office , previously held by Lust , Caution in 2007 with a gross of \$ 11 @, @ 441 @, @ 946 . The film recorded the highest Hong Kong opening @-@ four @-@ day attendance in 2011 with 211 @, @ 163 attending , breaking 3D Sex and Zen : Extreme Ecstasy 's previous record of 143 @, @ 222 . The film also has the highest four @-@ day gross of a 2D film in 2011 , and remained the highest @-@ grossing film in Hong Kong cinemas for four consecutive weekends . During the final hours of 2011 , it was announced that You Are the Apple of My Eye had grossed over HK \$ 61 @. @ 28 million , making it the all @-@ time highest @-@ grossing Taiwanese film at the Hong Kong box office . At the Macau box office , You Are the Apple of My Eye earned more than HK \$ 100 @, @ 000 in its opening weekend , with nearly 100 @-@ percent attendance .

In Singapore You Are the Apple of My Eye earned a total of SGD \$ 675 @, @ 000 , making it the second @-@ highest @-@ grossing film in Singapore that weekend despite the film 's NC @-@ 16 rating ( which meant that only viewers over age 16 were admitted ) ; this surprised the film 's distributor , 20th Century Fox . The film broke the record for highest opening weekend for a Taiwanese film in Singapore , previously held by the 2007 film Secret . It surpassed the performance of other Taiwanese films such as Monga , Cape No. 7 and Lust , Caution . You Are the Apple of My Eye was the highest @-@ grossing Asian film of 2011 at the Singapore box office , with earnings of SGD \$ 2 @. @ 93 million .

At China box office , You Are the Apple of My Eye became the most popular Taiwanese film , surpassing the previous record set by Cape No. 7 in 2008 . It was the third @-@ highest @-@ earning film on its debut weekend , grossing about 27 million yuan . The film subsequently crossed

the 50 @-@ million @-@ yuan @-@ gross mark on 13 January 2012 .

= = = Accolades = = =