

The Home Song Stories



based on the true story

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Developed with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission

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1 INT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 1
ADULT TOM.

On a computer screen, we see the following words typed:

"Last week, the most amazing thing happened."

Cut to ADULT TOM, a Chinese Australian man in his early forties, writing on his computer. He is in his study. Lined with book shelves, it is the office of a professional writer.

ADULT TOM (VO)
I met Uncle Joe again, for the
first time in thirty years...

2 EXT. STORE (PRESENT) DAY 2
ADULT TOM, OLD JOE, BACKGROUNDS.

We see an old Chinese man turning towards us. This is OLD JOE. His face lights up.

OLD JOE
Ai ya! Look at you! Big man now!

ADULT TOM is incredulous.

ADULT TOM
Uncle Joe?

ADULT TOM awkwardly shakes his hand, not knowing whether an embrace is appropriate. UNCLE JOE is all smiles.

OLD JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You used to be so small! Now look
at you! A giant!

3 INT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 3
ADULT TOM.

ADULT TOM, at his computer, smiles to himself.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Seeing Uncle Joe brought back long
forgotten memories of my childhood.

Then his expression becomes serious. *

ADULT TOM (VO)
And my mother, the nightclub
singer. *

4	DELETED	4
5	DELETED	5
6	DELETED	6 *

*

7 INT. DELETED 7 *

8 INT. NIGHTCLUB- HONG KONG (1964) NIGHT 8 *
ROSE, BILL, MICHAEL, YOUNG TOM, YOUNG MAY, HOSTESSES X 8-10, BACKGROUND AMERICAN SAILORS X 3, 3 PIECE BAND, BACKGROUND PEOPLE X 15.

The opening refrain continues. We are in a down market, dilapidated Hong Kong nightclub. We track past CHINESE "HOSTESSES" entertaining HONG KONG BUSINESS MEN. We end on stage. ROSE, dressed in a sequined cheung sam, begins to sing. Her voice is as seductive as she is.

TWO AUSTRALIAN SAILORS are drinking and laughing, entertained by a HOSTESS. The shyer sailor, a chief petty officer in his early thirties, BILL, watches ROSE, fascinated by her. His mate, MICHAEL, ribs him.

ROSE notices and sings to him.

At the side of the club, through the curtain separating the main room from the change rooms, YOUNG TOM and YOUNG MAY watch their mother sing.

9 INT. NIGHTCLUB- HONG KONG (1964) NIGHT 9 *
ROSE, BILL, MICHAEL, HOSTESSES X 2, BARMAN, BACKGROUND x 4.

The song continues. ROSE is sitting with BILL and MICHAEL. ROSE drinks scotch, smokes and tells a bawdy joke which has the SAILORS in stitches. There's something brilliantly flirtatious in her smile. She touches BILL on the knee. He is pleased.

10 EXT. OCEAN LINER (1964) DAY 10
ROSE, YOUNG TOM, YOUNG MAY.

The song continues. ROSE is on an ocean liner. At her side are her two children, YOUNG MAY and YOUNG TOM. She places her arms around them, protectively.

ADULT TOM (VO)
In 1964, my mother followed an Australian sailor from Hong Kong to Australia.

Ahead of her, the horizon bobs up and down in gentle undulations. In the dazzling white of the afternoon sun, the coast line of Australia can be seen.

11 INT. REGISTRY OFFICE (1964) DAY 11
ROSE HAND DOUBLE (?)

The song continues. A wedding certificate is signed. The signature is a pained, child like, barely legible scrawl which reads "Hong Mei Gwei".

12 EXT. REGISTRY OFFICE (1964) DAY 12
ROSE, BILL, YOUNG TOM, YOUNG MAY, MICHAEL.

The song continues. Outside the Registry office, YOUNG TOM and YOUNG MAY are in their best clothes, YOUNG TOM squirming uncomfortably. He watches ROSE and BILL, also dressed in their finest, posing for a photograph taken by Bill's sailor mate, MICHAEL. ROSE smiles brilliantly.

ADULT TOM (VO)
A week later, we left.

Close on ROSE

ADULT TOM (VO)
I never understood why.

13 INT. SYDNEY CHINESE RESTAURANT (1964) DAY 13
ROSE, UNCLE YUNG, YOUNG TOM, YOUNG MAY, BACKGROUND WHITE RESTAURANT PATRONS X 6.

The song continues. In slow motion- dressed in a cheung sam, ROSE is the epitome of exotic glamour as she walks confidently through the dining area of a popular Chinese restaurant. Around her, SEVERAL WHITE AUSTRALIAN PATRONS gawk. Following in her trail are YOUNG TOM and YOUNG MAY.

In real time- ROSE greets UNCLE YUNG, a wealthy Chinese restaurant owner in his early fifties. YOUNG TOM observes UNCLE YUNG as he welcomes his mother effusively.

YUNG
(IN CANTONESE)
Aiya! Hong Mei Gwei! What are you
doing in Sydney?

ROSE
(FLIRTATIIOUSLY/IN
CANTONESE)
Come to see you, Uncle Yung.

YOUNG TOM watches as UNCLE YUNG places his hand on ROSE's back. ROSE catches his eye and gives him a reassuring nod, "everything is going to be alright".

14 INT. VARIOUS CHINESE RESTAURANTS (1964-1971) DAY/NIGHT 14
ROSE, UNCLE YUNG, BACKGROUND CHINESE MEN X 3.

The song continues. ROSE sits amidst a circle of ADMIRING CHINESE MEN. She is the centre of attention and clearly enjoying it. UNCLE YUNG places a possessive arm around ROSE. She grabs a cigarette off him and lights it.

ADULT TOM (VO)
I don't know why things didn't work
out with Uncle Yung.

14A INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT (1965) NIGHT 14A
ROSE, CHINESE MAN.

Jump cut to another image of ROSE, lighting another cigarette. She's in a different restaurant, with a different UNCLE.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Or any of the other uncles.

14B INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT (1968) NIGHT 14B
ROSE, CHINESE MAN, BACKGROUND CHINESE MEN X 3.

Another jump cut. ROSE lights another cigarette, again in a different Chinese restaurant with a different CHINESE MAN.

14C INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT (1971) NIGHT 14C
ROSE, SLICK CHINESE MAN.

Another jump cut. ROSE lights yet another cigarette, this time next to a SLICK LOOKING CHINESE MAN. She appears older, harder, frayed at the edges. For a moment, a glimmer of sadness. Then she smiles again. The song ends.

15 INT. STOREROOM- CHINESE RESTAURANT (1971) DAY 15
ROSE, TOM, MAY, SLICK CHINESE MAN.

Seven years have passed. A young boy's hand is unwrapping a newspaper parcel, revealing a little porcelain bird. Its wing is broken.

TOM, now a ten year old boy, puts the bird on a bookshelf with a collection of porcelain birds. We pan along this row of birds, each with bits broken or missing.

TOM unpacks the rest of the family possessions. Around him, boxes of take away containers, plastic knives and forks, crates of Coca Cola and Fanta bottles.

ROSE and MAY lug in ROSE's silver trunk. MAY is now a pretty fifteen year old girl.

At the door, the SLICK LOOKING CHINESE MAN watches them struggle, without attempting to help.

SLICK LOOKING CHINESE MAN
(IN CANTONESE)
You can stay here until you find a
place.

He looks at ROSE lasciviously. ROSE nods gratefully.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Thank you.

16 INT. SYDNEY CHINESE RESTAURANT STOREROOM (1971) DAY 16
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

Early morning. A light is turned on. TOM is waking himself. He's in a makeshift camp bed. MAY is asleep in an adjoining camp bed. ROSE's silver trunk is open, clothes strewn everywhere.

ADULT TOM (VO)
One morning our mother told us we
were moving again.

In an elegant dress, ROSE looks as though she's been awake all night. Her makeup is smudged, her eyes red and swollen. She's ranting and raving to someone off screen, but we don't hear what she says.

TOM and MAY are bleary eyed witnesses to their mother's tirade. They look at each other, both understanding something.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Back to Melbourne...

17 INT/EXT. TRAIN/COUNTRYSIDE (1971) DAY 17
ROSE, TOM, MAY, BACKGROUND PASSENGERS X 4.

From inside the train, we see the passing landscape. TOM's reflection can be seen in the window as he watches the countryside go by.

ADULT TOM (VO)
...Where we would meet Uncle Joe and
our lives would change forever.

Title: The Home Song Stories.

Behind him, ROSE plays with TOM's hair. He shrugs her off, grumpily. In the opposite seat, MAY is writing in a blue diary.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN/TO TOM)
Why such a long face?

TOM
Why do we have to move all the
time?

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
This is a new life. You should be
happy.

MAY glances at TOM with a scolding expression. TOM
acquiesces.

TOM
Yes, ma.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Not "yes ma, no ma". You should be
happy!

She tickles him. In spite of his dark mood, TOM succumbs to
his mother's playfulness. He squeals.

TOM
Don't...

ROSE
Happy!

MAY watches.

18

EXT. TRAIN STATION (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, BILL, BACKGROUND PASSENGERS X 30.

18

TOM struggles to lug a heavy brown faux crocodile skin
suitcase through the crowded train station up a pedestrian
bridge. He trails ROSE and MAY, both equally burdened with
luggage. They are halfway up the bridge.

ROSE is on the look out for BILL amidst the confusion of
white faces.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Ai-ya! Where is he?

MAY also scans the crowd.

MAY
There he is.

On the the other side of the bridge, they see BILL, who is
scanning the crowd as well. BILL's eyes light up when he
sees ROSE and her children. He approaches them.

BILL
(AWKWARD)
I wasn't sure if...

He changes his mind, deciding that this isn't the right thing to say.

ROSE
Thank you.

BILL
Everything go ok? No problems?

ROSE
No problem.

BILL
Good.

BILL drinks in the sight of ROSE, still clearly infatuated.

BILL
I'm glad you made it.

ROSE smiles. She prompts MAY and TOM forward, TOM somewhat reluctant.

MAY AND TOM
Hello Uncle Bill.

ROSE
Not uncle. Father. He you father.

Embarrassed, MAY forces herself to obey.

MAY
Hello... father. (REHEARSED) Thank
you for letting us to stay with
you.

ROSE nods approvingly, then looks expectantly at TOM.

ROSE
Dede!

TOM regards BILL suspiciously.

TOM
Thanks.

19 INT/EXT. BILL'S CAR (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, BILL.

19

BILL drives a utility. In the front seat ROSE, MAY and TOM are all squeezed in tightly.

The physical confinement makes everyone uncomfortable.
(Luggage, including a large silver trunk, is piled in the tray.)

*

BILL
You must be tired.

ROSE
Thank you.

BILL
(AWKWARD)
I didn't get a chance to tell you.
There's someone else living there
as well. It's only temporary.
For a short time.

ROSE
You have girlfriend?

ROSE is not fazed by this.

BILL
(EMBARRASSED)
No, no, nothing like that... No... I'm
away so much with the Navy. I
needed someone to look after the
place.

20 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE (1971) DAY

20

ROSE, TOM, MAY, BILL, NORMA.

BILL (OS)
So my mum moved in.

Awaiting the new arrivals, her arms folded across her chest,
is a hard faced Caucasian woman in her late fifties. This is
BILL's mother, NORMA.

The ute pulls into the front yard of a neat red brick
suburban house. The ute door opens and TOM tumbles out of
the overcrowded front seat onto the ground.

TOM
Ow!

MAY and ROSE make more gracious exits. ROSE flattens out her
dress and puts on a big fake smile. NORMA stares at her new
house mates, not happy with this situation either. Her smile
could freeze blood.

21 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE- BACKYARD (1971) DAY 21
ROSE, BILL, NORMA.

ROSE and BILL lug ROSE's silver trunk through the backyard into the garage, where NORMA is wheeling out a cot bed. They squeeze past each other. NORMA has a bad hip and walks stiffly. BILL tries to catch NORMA's eye. She avoids his. ROSE smiles politely.

ROSE
Thank you for take care of us, ma.

NORMA nods stiffly.

22 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- TOM AND MAY'S BEDROOM (1971) DAY 22
TOM, MAY, NORMA.

NORMA sets up two cot beds in her sewing room. TOM and MAY put their suitcases in the corner of the room and look around uncomfortably. Two dummies, with dresses pinned to them, are squeezed bizarrely into the corner.

NORMA
You let me know if there's anything
you need.

TOM
Thank you, Aunty Norma.

MAY corrects him.

MAY
Grandma. (TO NORMA) Thank you
grandma.

NORMA tenses again. She exits. TOM pulls a face.

TOM
It smells like pee in here.

MAY
Yeah, old lady's pee.

MAY
Golden Princess attacks the Jade
Warrior.

It's an old game of theirs. They do a mock slow motion "kung fu" fight, picking up improvised weapons, making sound effects as they do.

TOM
Hai! Hai! Hai!

MAY
Hai! Hai! Hai!

23

INT. BILL'S - HALLWAY/BILL'S BEDROOM (1971) DAY
TOM, ROSE, BILL.

23

We see the ceiling through a small round hand mirror and beneath this, two out-of-focus feet. TOM is entertaining himself with a hand mirror by pretending that he's walking on the ceiling.

He wanders through the house and ends up outside BILL's bedroom. He angles the mirror downwards and sees his mother speaking with BILL.

BILL
Everything ok?

ROSE
Thank you.

BILL
Make yourself at home. Anything you need... This is your place now.

ROSE looks around the room and sees the evidence of his travels through Asia and the Pacific- a Chinese lantern from Hong Kong, a mask from New Guinea. On the dresser, ROSE and BILL's wedding photograph.

BILL
(SMILES)
I reckon we can work things out.

ROSE
You mother not like us.

BILL
She just takes a while to get used to things.

ROSE looks doubtful.

ROSE
She not want us here.

BILL
Don't worry. It's not your problem.

He puts his arms around her. She is comforted by him.

BILL
You look good.

ROSE
You are good man. You take care of
us.

BILL stares into ROSE's eyes. ROSE kisses BILL. He responds passionately.

TOM watches, upside down through his hand mirror. A drop of blood unexpectedly hits the image, then another. TOM tilts the mirror up until he can see his own face reflected. Blood drips down his nose, over his lips.

TOM
Ma!

24 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- BATHROOM (1971) DAY 24
TOM, ROSE, BILL.

TOM leans over the bathroom sink, blood flowing freely from his nose. ROSE washes a flannel towel in cold water, and places it on the back of his neck.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Blood too hot.
(IN ENGLISH)
Have to make cool.

Through the bathroom mirror, TOM sees BILL at the bathroom door, hovering and uncertain. TOM looks down at the white porcelain of the sink. Drop after drop of blood.

25 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- TOM AND MAY'S BEDROOM (1971) DAY 25
TOM, MAY.

Norma's sewing room is now Tom and May's bedroom. TOM lies in his bed, reading a Junior Encyclopaedia. He is at volume "A", reading about aardvarks. He eats a salted plum, the flannel towel now on his forehead. On the wall, TOM has crookedly stuck a Chinese sword fighting film poster as decoration.

TOM
I've decided to read the whole
encyclopaedia. So when I finish,
I'll know everything.

MAY sits on her bed, writing in her diary. She looks at him with a frown.

MAY
What planet do you come from?

He tries to look into her diary. She closes it.

26 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- GARAGE (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM.

26

ROSE opens the silver trunk which is stored in the garage. Inside, there are her cheung sams, a rolled up scroll, an old record, many pairs of shoes. She unwraps a blue glass bead curtain from a silken cloth.

ROSE
We make this place pretty, eh,
little man?

27 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- DINING ROOM (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, NORMA.

27

ROSE stands on a chair and struggles to lift the heavy glass bead curtain, trying to hang it in the doorway between the kitchen and dining room. MAY is on a chair on the other side, buckling under the weight.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Lift!

MAY
It's too heavy.

ROSE
(SCOLDING/IN MANDARIN)
Don't be so weak! Come on, lift!

TOM enters from the kitchen with nails and a rolling pin.

TOM
Hey ma, I found these.

ROSE
Clever boy.

MAY glances at TOM, jealously.

ROSE bangs the nails into the door jamb with the rolling pin, making "hooks" to hang the glass bead curtain from. It's a messy job.

NORMA enters. She is sweaty and parched from her gardening. She stares at the crooked bead curtain. The blue glass is startlingly out of place in the drab room. ROSE, still standing on the chair, is pleased with herself.

ROSE
From China. Very expensive.

NORMA brushes through the curtain angrily as she makes her way into the kitchen and pours herself a glass of water, leaving a hostile swish of beads in her wake.

28

INT. BILL'S HOUSE- DINING ROOM (1971) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY, BILL, NORMA.

28

The glass bead curtain is nowhere to be seen. Instead, we see the gouges and chips in the door jamb when NORMA brings the dinner plates to the dining room from the kitchen.

She serves BILL, ROSE, MAY and TOM overcooked ham steaks with pineapple rings. TOM takes a bite and immediately goes to spit it out. ROSE warns him.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Dede!

NORMA sits next to BILL.

NORMA
There's a letter for you on the dresser. From the Department.

BILL
Thanks.

NORMA
That door jamb needs fixing.
You'll have to get some wood putty.

BILL
(SULLEN)
You didn't have to...

He stops, not wanting the confrontation.

BILL
(TO ROSE) How's dinner?

ROSE and MAY have barely touched their food. TOM eats a long piece of lettuce. ROSE puts on the artifice of politeness.

ROSE
(TO BILL)
Very nice. (TO MAY/IN MANDARIN)
Tell the old cow the food is good.

In spite of having to eat the ham steak, TOM giggles.

MAY
This food is delicious, grandma.

TOM giggles again.

TOM

Yeah.

He giggles once more. NORMA realises that something is amiss. ROSE smiles with impertinent sweetness. NORMA glances at BILL. He doesn't buy into it.

ROSE indicates a framed photograph of a YOUNGER NORMA arm in arm with a SOLDIER.

ROSE

(TO NORMA)

You husband?

NORMA nods. ROSE smiles approvingly.

ROSE

Very handsome.

NORMA

He was killed in the war...

ROSE

Sorry.

NORMA

...by the Japs.

BILL

Mum!

BILL shakes his head.

BILL

He had a heart attack.

On NORMA, an imperceptible smile.

29

INT. BILL'S HOUSE- TOM AND MAY'S BEDROOM (1971) NIGHT 29
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

ROSE lies on TOM's single bed. TOM and MAY squeeze in next to her on either side.

ROSE

Tomorrow we get real food. No more eat old cow food.

TOM

How long are we staying?

ROSE

Always stay. This our home now.

TOM
Yeah, but that's what you always
say.

ROSE chides him.

ROSE
Ai ya! Cheeky boy. You naughty
tonight.

ROSE kisses him.

ROSE
When old cow go, you two can have
your own room, eh? Be like
Australian.

She holds her children.

ROSE
Your mother make everything good,
eh?

30 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- BILL'S BEDROOM (1971) NIGHT 30
ROSE, BILL.

BILL is on top of ROSE. They are fucking. BILL is very
excited, enflamed with passion. ROSE lies uncomfortably
beneath him.

31 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE (1971) NIGHT 31

Bill's house at night. Cicadas buzz loudly.

32 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD (1970) DAY 32
TOM, NORMA.

TOM sits on the back porch, eating a piece of watermelon. He
is watching..

NORMA trimming a hedge, making it perfect. It's hot,
laborious work.

33 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - BILL'S BEDROOM (1971) DAY 33
ROSE, BILL.

BILL is packing freshly laundered and neatly ironed shirts
and trousers into his duffle bag. He is dressed in his naval
uniform.

ROSE sits at the dresser, watching him. She is anxious.

ROSE
How long you go for?

BILL
Four months tops.

ROSE nods, stonily. BILL packs his wedding photograph into his duffle. He looks at her apologetically.

BILL
It'll go quickly.

ROSE
You mother stay?

BILL
I know it's not what we planned,
but it'll work out. I promise.

ROSE nods, but she is not pleased. BILL reaches into his wallet. He pulls out all of his cash. A twenty dollar note, two tens, a five, and a few twos and ones.

BILL
I'll send more as soon as I can.

ROSE takes the money, gratefully. But part of her also feels shame. BILL kisses her goodbye, then leaves the room. ROSE sits for a moment, then her anger erupts and she knocks a clock off the bedside table.

34 EXT. SUBURBAN SHOPPING STREET (1971) DAY 34
ROSE, BACKGROUND WHITE SHOPPERS X 8.

Shading herself with an umbrella, an embroidered hand bag over her arm, and dressed in one of her fabulous cheung sams, ROSE strolls through a suburban strip of shops. OTHER SHOPPERS can't help but stare at this glamorous, incongruous sight.

35 INT. CHUNG ON RESTAURANT (1971) DAY 35
ROSE, KIM, BACKGROUND WHITE BUSINESSMEN X 2.

ROSE strides through a suburban Chinese restaurant, the Chung On. She is moving in slow motion, poised and beautiful. TWO BUSINESSMEN watch her pass.

The Chinese waitress, KIM, is folding napkins.

KIM
Do you need a menu?

ROSE ignores her and walks straight past the counter into the kitchen.

36 INT. CHUNG ON - KITCHEN (1971) DAY 36
ROSE, WINNIE, JOE, KIM.

A hard faced Chinese woman in her mid forties, WINNIE, is cleaving into a roast duck as ROSE enters.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Hello, how are you?

WINNIE
(SUSPICIOUS/IN CANTONESE)
You have to order with the
waitress.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I don't want what you serve to the
Australians, I want to see what
real food you have.

ROSE pokes around the kitchen. She notices the apprentice
cook, JOE, a handsome Chinese man in his mid twenties. A
cigarette behind his ear.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Is this tofu fresh?

JOE smiles at her audacity.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You have to try it.

ROSE grabs some chopsticks and takes a piece. She smiles and
nods. It is good. He smiles back. Intrigued by her.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Who are you?

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I've just moved here from Hong
Kong.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
You don't sound like you come from
Hong Kong.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
My Cantonese is not good. I'm from
Shanghai originally.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Yes, you have a Shanghai accent.

KIM enters from the restaurant and places an order in front of JOE.

KIM
(IN CANTONESE)
Table five. They're in a hurry.

JOE nods and gets to work. KIM glances at ROSE suspiciously as she exits.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
You're from Hong Kong, aren't you?
Where did you live?

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Kowloon.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Ai ya! I used to live in Kowloon.
Whereabouts?

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Tsim Sha Tsui.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
We are practically neighbours. I
lived in Hau Fook St.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE/PLEASED)
Hau Fook St? My friends lived
there. The flats on the corner.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I know those flats!

ROSE has won WINNIE over.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
My name is Hong Mei Gwei.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Jing Be. (IN ENGLISH) Australians
call me Winnie.

ROSE glances over at JOE who has been watching them as he cooks.

JOE
Joe. My name is Joe.

37 INT/EXT. BILL'S HOUSE- LOUNGE/BACKYARD (1971) DAY 37
ROSE, TOM, MAY, NORMA.

ROSE has turned Bill's lounge into her own. TOM is shovelling rice and barbequed pork into his mouth. His plate is piled high. MAY is eating with a little more decorum.

Before them is spread a feast of Chinese delicacies.

ROSE
Good food, eh?

TOM and MAY nod.

ROSE
Special discount. Half price.

ROSE watches her children eat, then opens her handbag, pulling out the rest of her money, which she places back on the dresser. She counts what she has. It's not much.

For a moment, she seems concerned. Then pulls out a pair of new sunglasses and shows them off.

ROSE
You like?

MAY and TOM, their mouths full, nod in agreement.

MAY AND TOM
Yes ma.

ROSE smiles and lights a cigarette.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Shao wah, you write to the gwei lo today. Tell him he has to send more money. How can we live on what he left us?

ROSE thinks about this. ROSE is restless as she looks through the back window.

NORMA is mowing the back lawn with a hand mower.

As he eats, TOM watches ROSE. She is like a lioness, caged but dangerous.

38 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE- BACKYARD (1971) DAY 38
ROSE, TOM, NORMA.

TOM is bouncing a ball against a brick wall.

ROSE is also in the backyard, hanging up her freshly washed cheung sams on the hills hoist. NORMA passes. ROSE's face clouds.

TOM sees the glittering cheung sams, sparkling in the afternoon sunlight.

39 EXT. SUBURBAN SHOPPING STREET (1971) NIGHT 39
ROSE, TOM, MAY, BACKGROUND WHITE X ?

Night. ROSE, in one of her brilliant cheung sams walks along the empty suburban shopping street with her neatly dressed children.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Come on, hurry up.

TOM
(TO MAY)
Where are we going?

MAY
(SULKING)
How would I know?

TOM suddenly adopts a "kung fu" pose.

TOM
Jade Warrior attacks Golden
Princess.

He pretends to attack her.

TOM
Hai!

MAY is self conscious, but smiles anyway.

MAY
Dag.

TOM
Hai! Hai!

INT. CHUNG ON (1971) NIGHT
**ROSE, TOM, MAY, WINNIE, BING, BACKGROUND WHITE MALE COUPLE
 LEAVING.**

WINNIE is clearing a table when she sees ROSE entering with MAY and TOM following behind.

WINNIE
 (IN CANTONESE)
 Ai ya! Look at you! So beautiful.

ROSE
 (IN CANTONESE)
 I brought my children to eat your delicious food. Their favourite.

WINNIE
 (IN CANTONESE)
 You came at a good time. We're about to eat.

WINNIE ushers ROSE, TOM and MAY to the round staff table at the back of the restaurant where a man in his late forties sits with a large brandy glass, an account book and an abacus.

WINNIE
 (IN CANTONESE)
 This is the restaurant owner, Mr Bing Guo.
 (TO BING)
 This is Hong Mei Gwei, the famous singer I told you about!

BING
 (IN CANTONESE)
 An honour to meet you! A star in our restaurant!

WINNIE
 Come, join us.

ROSE
 (IN CANTONESE)
 We don't want to be any trouble. We'll take a table over there.

BING
 (IN CANTONESE)
 Don't be silly, there's plenty of room. Come, be my guests. I insist!

ROSE smiles brilliantly.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Thank you, Uncle.

TOM and MAY chime in automatically.

TOM AND MAY
(IN CANTONESE)
Thank you, Uncle.

BING nods appreciatively.

BING
(IN CANTONESE)
Good children. Good manners.
Whatever you want to eat, it's my
treat. Everything is good!

41 INT. CHUNG ON (1971) NIGHT 41
ROSE, TOM, MAY, WINNIE, BING, CHAN, KIM, JOE, WING.

A lazy susan filled with simple but delicious Chinese food whirled around. Chopsticks attack its contents like a flock of pecking birds.

ROSE, TOM and MAY are seated at the circular staff table with WINNIE next to ROSE.

Then there's BING, CHAN the cook (in his fifties), WING the kitchen hand (thirties) and KIM, the waitress (mid twenties). WINNIE is halfway through the introductions.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Chan used to cook at the Golden
Goose in Kowloon.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
One of my favourite restaurants.
That's where all the night club
singers used to go.

TOM glances at MAY- he's never heard of that restaurant.
MAY silences him with a look.

CHAN
(PROUDLY/IN CANTONESE)
Frances Yip loved my salty chicken.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Kim is originally from Tai Shan
province.

KIM
Hello Aunty.

ROSE smiles as she piles TOM's plate with food.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
A village girl. Just like my
grandmother.

KIM's smile could be a grimace. WING gives a comic book to TOM with a wink. ROSE looks up expectantly as JOE enters from the kitchen. He brings a large platter with a steaming fish.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Here comes our apprentice cook with
his specialty. Whole ginger fish.

JOE puts the dish makes a point of speaking in halting English.

JOE
Nice to see you Rose.

ROSE
Nice see you, Joe.

She smiles seductively at JOE, taking the packet of cigarettes from the top pocket of his shirt. She helps herself to one, screwing the cigarette into her ivory cigarette holder. JOE takes a flashy lighter out of his back pocket and lights ROSE's cigarette. She takes a drag. The smoke curls around her face and wafts towards him.

42

INT. CHUNG ON (1971) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY, WINNIE, BING, WING, CHAN, JOE, KIM.

42

A popular Mandarin song is being played. ROSE is sitting with the men- BING, CHAN, WING, and JOE, holding court.

ROSE
I sing this song at Phoenix
Nightclub. Everyone come see me.
(IN CANTONESE) Businessmen. Army.
Navy. Five hundred people every
night. Guaranteed!

TOM glances at MAY. She "shushes" him with a look. CHAN eagerly refills ROSE's brandy.

CHAN
(IN CANTONESE)
I would pay \$500 to see your show!

WING
(IN CANTONESE)
I would pay more!

BING
(IN CANTONESE)
I would buy all the tickets to your
show!

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Wow, you would give me so much
face...

JOE emerges from the toilet, having changed out of his kitchen clothes and combed back his hair. He sits back, smoking his cigarette, observing. He has considerably more style than the others.

ROSE starts to sing along to the recording, her voice fine and spirited. The men applaud her. She sings louder, overpowering the voice on the tape and performing to her audience. The men clap along. ROSE makes eye contact with JOE.

The women - KIM and WINNIE - clear plates into the kitchen. WINNIE smiles at her new friend's performance. KIM is less thrilled.

TOM and MAY watch their mother. ROSE is happy and her high spirits are contagious. She plays up to TOM, flirting with him almost as if he was an adult. MAY sneaks a drink from a nearby glass of wine.

JOE watches ROSE like a hawk.

43 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE (1971) NIGHT 43
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

ROSE hums to herself as she walks up the driveway. She's pretty tipsy. MAY and TOM are beside her, helping her to balance. They are also in bright spirits.

ROSE pretends to overbalance, swaying the children precariously from one direction to another. The children squeal with delight.

44 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- LOUNGE/HALLWAY (1971) NIGHT 44
ROSE, TOM, MAY, NORMA.

As ROSE stumbles in, she knocks over the hat stand in the front hallway. It's a noisy operation.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Sh!!! Don't wake up the turtle's
mother

ROSE continues to hum. In the lounge room, she checks the liquor cabinet. Swaying on her feet, ROSE finds a bottle of Marsala.

MAY
(IN MANDARIN)
Come on, ma, you have to go to bed
now.

TOM checks out the rest of the liquor cabinet contents.

As ROSE opens the marsala, the living room light switches on.
NORMA enters, in her nightie. She glares at ROSE then TOM
and MAY.

All three of them freeze, guiltily.

NORMA goes into the kitchen, pours herself a glass of water
then turns out the light again as she leaves. She says
nothing.

45 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- DINING ROOM (1971) NIGHT 45
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

ROSE sits at the dining table, deflated. An empty glass of
marsala in front of her. She looks up to see TOM and MAY
watching her.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Get to bed. Go!

They leave.

ROSE summons up her energy and drunkenly stumbles out.

45A INT. BILL'S HOUSE - GARAGE (1971) NIGHT 45A
ROSE

ROSE unfurls a rolled up scroll, yellowing and torn at the
edges. It is a pencil drawing of a young Chinese woman.
ROSE stares at the portrait, then pulls away, as if it's too
painful to look at. We hear the sound of a Mandarin love
ballad.

46 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1971) DAY 46
ROSE, TOM.

On a tiny portable record player, the ballad is playing.
ROSE is getting dressed. She is wearing a black lacy bra and
knickers, stockings and suspenders. Her cheong sams and
other Chinese embroideries decorate the walls, slowly staking
a claim on Bill's room.

TOM is on his mother's bed, reading the comic book WING gave
him.

TOM
Why can't I come with you?

ROSE
You don't want to come. Too boring. Go to park. Play with friends.

TOM
I don't have any friends.

ROSE powders her face.

ROSE
Ai-ya! The air in this country is too dry. Make you skin like paper. Look at me, old and ugly.

TOM looks at her, appraisingly. He says nothing. ROSE stares at her face in the mirror, noticing the lines around her eyes.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN/SERIOUS)
When a woman gets old, no one wants her anymore. She is useless. Like a dog with three legs. (IN ENGLISH) Hit on head with shovel.

ROSE laughs, then steps into a pretty dress which lightens her mood. She indicates for TOM to help her with the zip.

ROSE
Come on, help!

TOM struggles with the zip. It's a tight fit. ROSE checks herself a final time in the mirror.

ROSE
You mother beautiful?

TOM
Yes mama.

ROSE smothers TOM in butterfly kisses, pressing him against her chest.

ROSE
My little man!
(IN MANDARIN)
Don't worry. I'll be your friend.

TOM
Yeah, but you're my mother...

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
You have to grow up big and strong,
so you can take care of your poor
mother! Look after her when she's
ugly and old.

TOM watches ROSE slip into her stilettos, catching a glimpse of her suspender and thigh as she leans. There's something tantalising in this moment.

47 EXT. BUSH LAND (1971) DAY 47
ROSE, JOE.

The Holden is parked in a dirt track in some bushland. As we draw closer to it, we realise that two people are making love inside.

48 INT/EXT. CAR/BUSHLAND (1971) DAY 48
ROSE, JOE.

ROSE is passionate and powerful. JOE is excited, out of his skin. This is the most intense climax of his life.

49 EXT. BUSH LAND (1971) DAY 49
ROSE, JOE.

ROSE is in her dress, applying her lipstick. JOE is in his trousers but shirtless. They are lying on the bonnet of the car, sunning themselves. JOE passes ROSE a bottle of whisky. JOE puts on his brand new sunglasses, a gift from ROSE.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
You like?

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I like it.
(IN ENGLISH)
It's cool.

JOE looks serious.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
There was a raid at my hostel last
night. Immigration came and took
two men away.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
What will happen to them?

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
Deported. I was lucky.
(MORE)

JOE (cont'd)
I was playing Mah Jong with Bing.
But I can't stay there anymore.
It's too dangerous.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Where will you go?

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I don't know. Maybe Sydney. Bing
says he will help me find work
there.

ROSE
(DISAPPOINTED/IN
CANTONESE)
Are you leaving me?

JOE looks at her, strokes her neck tenderly.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
If Immigration find me, they'll
send me back to Hong Kong. I won't
ever come back. It's different for
you. You have citizenship.

ROSE ponders this for a moment.

50 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL/LIVING ROOM (1971) DAY 50
ROSE, TOM, MAY, NORMA, JOE.

TOM is watching "It's Academic" on television. He is
answering the questions before the kids in the show do. MAY
is next to him, writing in her diary. They hear the front
door open.

The front door opens. JOE enters, dressed in pressed shirt
and neat slacks, his hair plastered down and holding a
suitcase. ROSE stands beside him. NORMA comes to the door
from her bedroom, curious about the new arrival.

ROSE
This is Joe. My aunty... son.
Cousin. Just move here from Hong
Kong. He has nowhere to stay.

JOE
(TO NORMA)
Hello Aunty.

ROSE
Only stay here a few day.

NORMA stares, stony-faced. TOM watches from the living room watching television.

ROSE
He sleep in back ... I write my
husband. He say OK.

NORMA
Bill hasn't said anything to me.

ROSE
(BLUFFING)
I show you letter, you don't
believe me.

*

For a moment, NORMA looks as though she will call ROSE's bluff, then she shakes her head.

NORMA
It's not my house. I'm just his
mother.

She walks off. ROSE smiles at JOE. TOM stares at this new presence. He is immediately suspicious.

50A EXT. BILL'S HOUSE (1971) DAY 50A
CHILDREN x 4, MAN

Establishing shot of street. Children are playing cricket. A man is mowing his front lawn.

51 INT/EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM (1971) DAY 51
ROSE, TOM, MAY, NORMA, JOE, LADY BOWLERS X 3.

ROSE, JOE, TOM and MAY are all noisily eating sugar cane. It's a hot afternoon. JOE and TOM are wearing singlets. ROSE and JOE are both smoking. Raw sugar cane is peeled as TOM chews the juicy core noisily.

ON the television, they are watching an episode of "The Partridge Family" is on television. We hear the theme tune, "Come On Get Happy".

With the sound of eating and the singing from the television, it's quite a cacophony. ROSE sings along.

ROSE
"Come on, get happy."

NORMA enters, dressed in a lawn bowls outfit. She passes the four of them with a barely concealed expression of disgust. It's as if an Asian market has taken over her living room.

ROSE spits out a wad of sugar cane onto a plate and bites into another bit.

ROSE
You like? Sugar cane. Very nice.

NORMA
No thank you.

ROSE
I cook for you tonight? Nice
Chinese food.

NORMA
I sent a letter to Bill. I've
asked him to ring me.

ROSE
(SMILING)
Hard to ring from boat.

NORMA realises that ROSE is goading her. Before she can
reply, the doorbell rings. NORMA answers, and finds THREE
LADY LAWN BOWLERS at the door step.

LADY LAWN BOWLERS
Here we are!

They try to peer in, curiously, but NORMA ushers them out.

NORMA
Come on, let's get out of here.

Once the door is closed, ROSE smiles knowingly at her family.

ROSE
She go soon. (TO JOE) This place
is better than boarding house, eh?

She sings...

ROSE
"Come on get happy!"

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You're a crazy woman.

JOE winks at TOM. TOM glances at JOE, not sure of what to
make of him.

51A EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - GARAGE (1971) DAY
ROSE, JOE, TOM (optional)

51A

ROSE sets up a makeshift bed for JOE.

52

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - GARAGE (1971) NIGHT
JOE.

52

In the garage, JOE lies awake on a makeshift bed.

53 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1971) NIGHT 53
TOM, MAY, JOE.

TOM is reading a comic book by the light of a torch. MAY sleeps next to him. In the background, we see a shadow pass by his window.

TOM reads the panels of the comic book "Jade Warrior", his eyes heavy with sleep. He turns off the torch and closes his eyes. The sound of swords clashing, a fight going on...

54 INT. STUDIO (1971) DAY 54
TOM, NORMA.

In his dream, we see TOM dressed a young martial arts warrior, JADE WARRIOR. He is in a hokey set with a pagoda and fake painted background of mountains. He brandishes a fancy sword. He strikes a pose, facing off against an unseen enemy.

JADE WARRIOR
You cannot escape my jade sword,
Stinky Pearl.

We see JADE WARRIOR'S enemy, STINKY PEARL. It is NORMA, dressed as a female martial arts warrior.

NORMA
Ha, Jade Warrior, your jade sword
means nothing against my deadly
ivory fans.

NORMA brandishes two white fans, and waves them like a fan dancer. Brandishing his sword, JADE WARRIOR springs into the air and attacks. They fight, a choreographed wire routine, like old Chinese sword fighting movies.

JADE WARRIOR
Hai! Hai!

NORMA
Hai! Hai! Hai!

He takes a swipe, cuts STINKY PEARL's arm off!

55 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1971) MORNING 55
TOM, MAY, NORMA (O/S)

TOM is asleep. He is woken by the sound of voices outside.
In particular, a loud female voice.

NORMA (OS)
Get out of here, you filth! You...
Chinese. Get out!

TOM wakes, startled. MAY is already awake, packing her
suitcase.

NORMA (OS)
After everything he's done for you,
this is how you pay him back?

TOM
What's happening?

MAY
Hurry up and get dressed.

56 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1971) DAY 56
ROSE, NORMA.

ROSE is packing her suitcase. NORMA is at the door, shouting
angrily.

NORMA
Ungrateful, that's what you are.
He should never have taken you
back. I warned him. Ungrateful.
Ungrateful!

ROSE packs calmly and methodically. She doesn't look at
NORMA.

NORMA
This is going to break his heart.

ROSE closes her suitcase. NORMA becomes increasingly angry.

NORMA
Haven't you got anything to say for
yourself? I know you understand
me! What have you got to say? Eh?

ROSE carries her suitcase out of the room, avoiding eye
contact with NORMA.

57 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, NORMA, JOE.

57

TOM, MAY and JOE are struggling to load the heavy silver trunk into the boot of JOE's car. TOM is perplexed.

TOM
Why are we leaving?

MAY
You work it out.

NORMA is in the front yard, her arms folded across her chest. ROSE is the last to leave the house, carrying an armful of clothes. She passes NORMA and this time, returns her gaze with an expression of proud contempt.

TOM looks from NORMA to ROSE to JOE.

58 INT/EXT. JOE'S CAR/DOWN MARKET (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

58

ROSE and JOE are in the front seat of the car. ROSE turns to MAY, who is writing in her blue diary, and TOM, who is sulking. He glimpses some of what MAY is writing.

ROSE
Hey, little man.
(IN CANTONESE)
Are you hungry?

TOM
I didn't even get my breakfast.

ROSE
Come on. We go somewhere eat.
Don't have to eat old cow food.

ROSE turns ahead, towards the future.

ROSE
Then we find good place to live.

TOM
But you said we were staying...

ROSE looks at JOE accusingly. JOE looks back and smiles sheepishly. In spite of her annoyance ROSE can't help but smile as well. Ignored, TOM watches the interaction from the back seat. Confused. Resentful. He pouts.

58A EXT. STREET (1971) DAY 58A

Establishing shot. POV travelling to duplex.

59 EXT. DUPLEX (1971) DAY 59
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE, BING.

Two cars pull into the driveway of a rundown duplex. The first is BING's car. Then JOE's green Holden.

BING exits his car. Then JOE, ROSE, TOM and MAY follow suit. ROSE puts on a brave front as she regards the rundown duplex. The front porch is piled with rubbish- broken bits of furniture, beer bottles.

TOM looks at their new dwelling suspiciously. He glances to MAY and pulls a "yuck" face. She nods in agreement.

60 INT. DUPLEX (1971) DAY 60
ROSE, JOE, BING.

BING leads ROSE and JOE through the duplex. The previous occupants must have been derelicts because the place is in terrible condition- rotting carpet, rubbish everywhere, rising damp on the walls.

BING
(IN CANTONESE)
Ai ya, we rented this to gwei los
before. Don't know how to look
after the place.

ROSE screws up her nose.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
What's that smell?

BING
(IN CANTONESE)
Just need to open a few windows.

BING opens the window.

BING
(IN CANTONESE)
Give me two weeks rent, and you can
have it right now.

ROSE prevaricates.

BING
(IN CANTONESE)
You try to rent a house from the
Australians, you need passports,
and references, and bond money.
You're lucky you have friends!

ROSE looks at JOE. He isn't happy but nods his assent. He pulls a wad of twenty dollar notes out of his pocket and peels off one hundred and twenty dollars.

61 EXT. DUPLEX (1971) DAY 61
TOM, MAY, JOE.

TOM lugs a suitcase inside. JOE and MAY carry the big silver trunk into the new house. It's heavy and MAY struggles. JOE tries to compensate for her. She nods appreciatively.

62 INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM/TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1971) DAY 62
ROSE, TOM, JOE.

ROSE and JOE hang the blue glass bead curtain in the hallway. ROSE tries to be optimistic.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
We'll make this place look good.
Our new home.

Through the open door, ROSE notices TOM on his bed, reading one of his Junior Encyclopaedias. ROSE nods at JOE, then enters TOM's room.

ROSE sits on the bed next to him.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Why do you have such a long face?

TOM
(DARKLY)
I don't have a long face!

ROSE
Joe is good man.

TOM
That's what you said about Uncle
Bill.

ROSE shakes her head with a sigh.

ROSE
Ai ya! Cheeky boy! (SERIOUS)
Uncle Bill is not Chinese.

ROSE puts her arms around TOM.

ROSE
You mother try her best. Not easy
for her.

TOM looks up from his encyclopaedia. His expression softens.
He shows her the page on Dentistry.

TOM
I think I want to be a dentist.

ROSE smiles.

63

INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

63

The duplex is in the midst of being transformed into a home.
ROSE with a Santa Claus hat on, sings a song by the Partridge
Family, "Come on Get Happy" in a heavy Chinese accent. She
stands in front of a large object covered with a sheet.

ROSE
"Come on, get happy!"

TOM and MAY, in their pyjamas, watch their mother's
performance. JOE sits behind them, smoking a cigarette,
tapping along with the performance.

At the end of the first verse, ROSE pulls away the sheet,
revealing a Hammond Electric Organ. She turns it onto
automatic and presses play. A "cha cha" rhythm blurts out.

ROSE
"Come on, get happy!"

She hands MAY another gift - a guitar. MAY, in particular,
is excited. TOM is more baffled than anything else.

MAY
(GASPS)
Thank you!

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Thank your uncle for this.

TOM and MAY both smile at JOE.

TOM AND MAY
(IN CANTONESE)
Thank you, Uncle Joe.

JOE nods, pleased.

ROSE smiles at her children.

ROSE
See. We are family now.

64 EXT. OUTER SUBURBS (1971) DAY 64
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

JOE's car is driving through the suburbs, to the strains of the Partridge family.

65 INT/EXT. JOE'S CAR/COUNTRY (1971) DAY 65
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

ROSE casts flirtatious glances in JOE'S direction. He is dressed up and handsome, wearing sunglasses. He stares ahead at the road, occasionally looking at her and smiling. He lights a cigarette and offers her the packet. She meticulously screws hers into her ivory cigarette holder before lighting it. She is wearing sunglasses as well.

TOM and MAY are in the back seat. They both wear sunglasses as well. TOM is reading a comic book, MAY is writing in her blue diary. She stops and stares out the window.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
Where are we?

ROSE opens a street map but has no idea of how to read the map.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I don't know. Just drive.

In the back seat, TOM tries to read MAY's diary. She kicks him away, annoyed. TOM watches ROSE and JOE flirting. He takes his sunglasses off.

TOM
I'm hot.

MAY
Open the window.

TOM
Ma, I'm hot!

EXT. BEACH (1971) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

TOM and JOE are both in their underpants. TOM is awkward and tentative. JOE holds his hand, protectively. TOM squeals with delight as he is splashed in the face by a wave. He clings to JOE's chest.

TOM
 Take me deeper!

JOE walks further out into the waves, holding TOM.

TOM
 Don't let go!

JOE
 (IN CANTONESE)
 Don't be frightened, little man.
 Hold onto me.

TOM hugs JOE tightly, enjoying the contact. JOE takes him further. They are submerged by another wave. TOM squeals happily. He looks to the shore and sees ROSE and MAY watching them.

On the sand, ROSE watches JOE and TOM. She turns to MAY, who has a lock of hair across her face. ROSE brushes it off, affectionately.

ROSE
 (IN MANDARIN)
 When I was a girl in Peking, I used
 to brush my mother's hair every
 morning for her. Those were the
 happiest times for me.

ROSE pauses, remembering the past. She feels an overwhelming sadness. She reaches into her purse and brings out a hair brush.

ROSE
 (IN MANDARIN)
 Here, let me brush your hair for
 you.

ROSE brushes her daughter's hair. MAY closes her eyes, luxuriating in her mother's touch.

ROSE
 (IN MANDARIN)
 You are growing up. Be a woman
 soon.

MAY takes this as a compliment, but for ROSE it is a serious matter.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
You have to learn. Not make same
mistake as mother. Go to school.
Study hard. Look after your dede...

ROSE sees JOE and TOM coming towards them out of the water.

68 DELETED 68

69 INT/EXT. JOE'S CAR/COUNTRY (1971) EVENING 69
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

Leaning against the car, TOM stares into the bushes. In the twilight, they have a creepy, almost threatening quality. He thinks he hears something.

The family have parked by the side of the road. JOE is tired and irritated.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
What do we do now?

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE - HOLDING
MAP)
You must have taken the wrong turn.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You were the one who made us come
this far.

ROSE looks around, perplexed.

ROSE
Ai-ya!

TOM stares into the bushes again, listening for sounds.

70 INT/EXT. JOE'S CAR/COUNTRY (1971) NIGHT 70
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

We see MAY and TOM asleep, curled up uncomfortably on the back seat of the car. The door is flung open to accommodate their legs.

In the front, ROSE and JOE are sleeping, sprawled even more awkwardly across the front seat. JOE wakes and disentangles himself.

71 INT/EXT. ROAD SIDE/COUNTRY (1971) NIGHT 71
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

JOE is in out in the bushes, having a piss. He returns to the car and watches the sleepers.

72 INT/EXT. CAR/COUNTRY (1971) NIGHT 72
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

In the front seat, ROSE remains fast asleep. In the back, TOM is wriggling about at one end. Then MAY, whose face is illuminated by a beam of moonlight.

JOE stares at her, almost as though he's seeing her for the first time. As if sensing this, MAY opens her eyes and sees JOE looking at her. Caught out, JOE nods, then returns to the front seat. MAY closes her eyes again.

73 EXT. DUPLEX (1972) DAY 73

We hear jaunty Mandarin pop music emanate from ROSE's duplex. They are completely at home now. The front is cleared of rubbish. Even a few potted plants decorate the door.

74 INT. DUPLEX- KITCHEN (1972) DAY 74
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

The jaunty music continues as a meat cleaver slices through a sprig of spring onion. ROSE is in the kitchen. She is making gow gee. She hums along to the song as she cooks.

ROSE chops mince meat, onion, and spices into a meat mixture. Beside her, TOM makes little men out of dough. MAY is chopping ginger and garlic together. ROSE grabs a handful of this mixture, sniffs it, sprinkles soy sauce into it, then puts MAY'S contribution into the meat mix.

ROSE rolls out the pastry using a milk bottle as an improvised rolling pin, her fingers flying deftly to create perfect little circles out of lumps of dough. ROSE swings her hips in time to the music, as she does. MAY joins in. Then TOM. It's a happy moment.

ROSE fills the little pastry circles with mince meat, dabs her fingers in a glass of water, then seals the pastry to make dumplings. She arranges them onto a tray, waiting to be cooked.

INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

In a pretty new dress, ROSE places a plate of baked dumplings before JOE, who is at the head of the table in a grubby white singlet, for once not looking his usual stylish self. There's a bottle of brandy beside him. TOM and MAY are seated on either side.

ROSE
For you birthday.

JOE appears tired. He wolfs down a dumpling. ROSE looks at him expectantly.

ROSE
You like?

JOE
Good.

ROSE beams. She nods to TOM and MAY, giving them permission to eat. TOM tucks into his food with relish.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I have to pay the electricity bill tomorrow.

JOE pulls out a small wad of notes from his pocket, made up of ten dollar notes, a few fives, but mainly twos and ones. He peels fifty dollars for ROSE. He's left with five one dollar notes for himself. ROSE doesn't say anything.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I thought we could go to the movies tonight. Celebrate.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I said I'd play mah jong with Bing and some of his friends.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
You played mah jong two nights ago.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
That's why I have to play tonight.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
How much did you lose?

MAY looks from ROSE to JOE, anxiously. JOE doesn't answer.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
We can't afford for you to lose at
mah jong every night.

JOE still doesn't speak.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Why don't you stay here with us?
You always going out.

JOE finally gets angry.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
Because I have to work! Who pays
for the food? For this house? For
these children. I never asked for
that.

TOM and MAY look down at their plates, ashamed. ROSE tries
to pacify JOE.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I'll ring Bing, tell him you can't
make it. Stay with us... Stay with
me. Please...

JOE doesn't respond. ROSE suddenly snaps, slamming her hand
on the table.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Stay!

JOE is startled. TOM and MAY look down, fearfully. ROSE
glares at JOE. It's a stand off. Then JOE stands up and
leaves. We hear him exit. MAY and TOM peep up from their
meals.

TOM points at his meal, trying to please his mother.

TOM
Look ma, I've finished my food.

ROSE rubs his head. Then she pours herself a brandy.

76 INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) DAY 76
ROSE.

It is dawn. On a tiny record player, Lulu sings "Let's Pretend". ROSE is at the dining table, surrounded by the left over dumplings, smoking a cigarette and playing solitaire. She's been awake all night. Beside her, a full ashtray and an empty bottle of brandy. We hear the sound of a car pulling into the driveway. ROSE turns.

*

77 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) DAY 77
TOM, MAY.

The song continues. In bed, TOM is awake, reading a Chinese sword fighting comic book. We see the frames of graphic action, hearing the sound effects in TOM's head.

In her bed, MAY has propped herself up with pillows and struggles not to fall asleep. She nods off, then wakes again in a panic. She looks at TOM.

78 INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) DAY 78
ROSE, JOE.

The song continues. JOE enters, glances at ROSE, then goes to the bedroom. ROSE follows. She doesn't notice that the door to TOM and MAY's room is ajar.

79 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S BEDROOM (1972) DAY 79
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

The song continues. TOM is peeping through the door as his mother and JOE go into their room. He is wired with exhaustion. He looks to MAY, who is almost asleep. She closes her eyes, relieved.

TOM goes back to his bed. He's so tired he can't sleep. He looks up at the ceiling.

We hear the clang of swords clashing.

80 INT. STUDIO (1972) DAY 80
TOM.

The song continues. JADE WARRIOR flies through the air, sword aloft.

81	DELETED	81	
82	DELETED	82	
83	EXT. CHUNG ON (1972) NIGHT The Chung On Restaurant at night.	83	*
84	INT. CHUNG ON- KITCHEN (1972) NIGHT ROSE, TOM, MAY. At the back of the kitchen, TOM and MAY are playing a makeshift game of checkers. The "board" is drawn in pencil on a piece of waxed paper. Instead of red and black checkers, they are using Fanta and Coke bottle tops. TOM is excited because he's winning. MAY makes an indifferent move.	84	

TOM
Don't do that. Move that one over
there.

He points out the move she should make.

MAY
Where?

TOM
(MOVING PIECE)
Here.

Meanwhile, ROSE is scrubbing pots. It's the end of the night, and she's the last one in the kitchen. She folds her apron, and walks towards the back of the restaurant.

85

INT. CHUNG ON - (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE, BING, WING, CHAN.

85

The clatter of mah jong tiles. A wall is built out of pink and white tiles. In the empty restaurant, JOE has started a mah jong game with BING, WING and CHAN.

ROSE hovers in the background with TOM and MAY behind her.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Are you coming?

JOE is immersed in the mah jong.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Do you want me to stay with you?

JOE glances at the OTHER MEN, who are embarrassed on his behalf.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You take the children. I'll be
home soon.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
We can all wait.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
No.

ROSE waivers, unsure whether to relent or stubbornly stands her ground.

BING
(TO JOE/IN CANTONESE)
It's your turn.

JOE picks up a tile, rubbing it with his thumb before turning it over. It's no use to him. He throws it back into the pool.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
My luck is gone.

JOE avoids looking at ROSE. Finally ROSE leaves, taking her children with her. After she is gone, JOE looks up. The other MEN are watching him.

86

INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, JOE.

86

JOE is packing his suitcase. ROSE sits on the bed. There is something desperate in her tone.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I can talk to Winnie. She can help us.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I owe too much money.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
She's our friend. She can lend us money.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
If I take this job in the country, I can pay my gambling debts in three months. If I stay here, I won't save a cent.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
What about me? What about my children? How will they eat?

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I'll send you everything I can.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
You won't come back! You'll find somebody else!

87

INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT
TOM, MAY, ROSE (O/S), JOE (O/S).

87

TOM sits up in bed, reading volume "H" of his encyclopaedia. "Helium". ROSE's voice can be heard through the thin walls.

ROSE (OS)
(IN CANTONESE)
What are you doing to me? You give
me hope, then you take it away...
What do you want me to do? Eh?
Do you want me to kill myself?

JOE (OS)
(IN CANTONESE)
Don't!

TOM hears JOE pacing, jiggling his keys in agitation. He glances at MAY. She is awake as well.

ROSE (OS)
(IN CANTONESE)
I kill myself if you go. You don't
believe me? I'll do it! I'll kill
myself!

TOM gets out of his bed and into bed with MAY. She puts her arms around him, holding him tightly. They listen to JOE walking out of the house. ROSE has reached a hysterical pitch.

ROSE (OS)
(IN CANTONESE)
Where are you going? Come back
here, you bastard! Come back!
I'll kill myself! I kill myself!

88

INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT
TOM, MAY.

88

TOM wakes with a start. He's still in MAY's bed. He looks at the bedside clock. It reads 4am.

TOM notices the sound of the water running. It makes him want to pee. He disentangles himself from his sister's arms. He follows the sound.

89

INT. DUPLEX- HALL/BATHROOM (1972) NIGHT
TOM.

89

The bathroom light is on. Water is seeping out of the door of the bathroom into the hallway.

TOM approaches apprehensively, his stomach knotting up. He dreads what he will find.

Inside the bathroom, the tap is still running and water streams over the edge of the overflowing bath. TOM turns it off, relieved. He puts a couple of towels down to soak up the excess water.

90 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) NIGHT 90
ROSE, TOM.

TOM checks ROSE's bedroom. The bedside lamp is still on, a scarf draped over it to soften the light. ROSE is on her back, slumped uncomfortably over the edge of the bed.

TOM
Ma, you forgot to turn off the bath!

TOM tries to wake her.

TOM
Ma! Wake up!

He pulls the scarf off the lamp, making the room brighter. ROSE's face has a yellow/green pallor. Dried foaming saliva hangs on the edges of her lips.

91 EXT. DUPLEX (1972) NIGHT 91
ROSE, TOM, MAY, PARAMEDICS X 2.

A gurney is wheeled out of the duplex into an open ambulance parked in the driveway. ROSE lies on it, motionless, an oxygen mask over her face, attended by TWO PARAMEDICS. MAY follows, in casual wear. She is in tears.

MAY nods. TOM, in his pyjamas, follows a moment later. He is numb. The paramedics hoist ROSE into the ambulance. MAY joins them.

TOM
Where are you going?

MAY
To the hospital. Come on.

TOM shakes his head.

TOM
I don't want to.

MAY
Don't be stupid, Tom, you have to.

TOM
I don't want to! I want you to
stay.

The PARAMEDIC waits to close the back of the ambulance.

MAY
We have to go.

TOM
(HYSTERICAL)
Stay!

MAY
Get in the car, now!

MAY is urgent. TOM hasn't moved. The PARAMEDIC looks at
MAY.

PARAMEDIC
We have to go, love.

MAY climbs into the ambulance.

MAY
I'll ring you from the hospital.

TOM
Stay!

The ambulance door closes. TOM watches as it drives off. He
is alone.

92 EXT/INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) NIGHT 92
TOM.

TOM returns to the duplex past the bathroom which is still
leaking water. He stares at the open door to his mother's
room. Then he sits in the living room, waiting for the
telephone to ring. He brings the phone to his lap for
comfort. He waits.

From above, a drop of blood on the telephone. TOM has a nose
bleed. He tries to stop it, blocking his nose with his
handkerchief.

93 INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD (1972) DAY 93
ROSE.

ROSE is unconscious, hooked up to life support. There is a
drip on her arm and an oxygen mask on her face. Her
breathing is slow and laboured.

94 INT. HOSPITAL WARD (1972) DAY 94
MAY, DOCTOR.

MAY is sitting opposite a young DOCTOR. The DOCTOR is mechanical, hiding behind a veneer of professionalism. He avoids eye contact as he speaks. MAY is distraught, holding back the tears.

DOCTOR
Has she tried to do this before?

MAY nods. The DOCTOR writes this into a file. He avoids looking at MAY.

DOCTOR
Always with pills?

MAY nods.

MAY
She just... She...

The DOCTOR pauses as MAY struggles for words. Silence.

95 INT. BUS (1972) NIGHT 95
MAY, BUS DRIVER, PASSENGERS X 4.

MAY sits slumped on the bus, exhausted.

96 INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) NIGHT 96
TOM, MAY.

TOM is asleep on the sofa. The telephone is curled on his lap. The blood soaked hankie held to his nose.

MAY picks up the telephone, and puts it on the table next to him. She tries to wake him up.

MAY
Go to bed now.

TOM is roused, but still more asleep than awake. MAY takes his arm and guides him up. He holds the hankie to his nose.

97 EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL (1972) DAY 97
NURSE, OLD MAN, WHITE BACKGROUND X 6.

Establishing shot of psychiatric hospital.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL (1972) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY & AS IN SC 97.

TOM and MAY walk through the gardens of a psychiatric institution. It is surprisingly serene and peaceful. A NURSE, wheeling an OLD MAN, smiles at them. TOM stares at the OLD MAN who stares at TOM.

Their mother is waiting, wearing an apricot dressing gown, her hair in a pale blue scarf. She appears older but is surprisingly calm. MAY is excited and runs to ROSE. TOM holds back.

ROSE takes MAY and TOM on a tour through the gardens of the psychiatric hospital. She walks in shaky, short steps.

ROSE

You know, sometimes your mother is sick in the head. Do things she not mean to do.

MAY takes her mother's hand, reassuringly. TOM hangs back. ROSE notices.

ROSE

(IN MANDARIN)

You two are the only things that matter to me now. You are my life.

ROSE turns to TOM, who stares coldly at his mother.

ROSE

You love your mother. Look after her. Help her be strong.

ROSE opens her arms. MAY encourages TOM forward.

ROSE

(IN MANDARIN)

Next time, you tell me, "You're being a bad mother" Then I promise, I will never do this again. Never!

ROSE looks at TOM, beseechingly. Finally, TOM accepts his mother's embrace. ROSE holds him. TOM closes his eyes. He holds his mother tightly, giving in to both her needs and her love.

ROSE

The doctors will fix me.

EXT. DUPLEX (1972) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE, TAXI DRIVER.

We hear the jaunty Mandarin pop song which ROSE was singing to at the restaurant. A frail ROSE returns home in a taxi.

ROSE (VO)
 ...They have special machine. Use
 electricity. Make my brain better.

MAY opens the taxi door for ROSE who is paying the TAXI DRIVER. TOM is at the boot, struggling with ROSE's overnight bag. ROSE climbs shakily out of the taxi with her daughter's assistance.

The front door opens. JOE comes out, wearing his cooking apron. He smiles. ROSE's face lights up when she sees him. Carrying the overnight bag, TOM watches his mother and JOE. Then he looks across to MAY, who is also watching.

EXT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

ROSE is shovelling rice into her mouth. JOE serves a steaming dish of whole flounder alongside the many other delicacies on the table.

TOM pulls out a story he's written for ROSE.

TOM
 Ma, I got the best mark in the
 class for my story.

He holds up the story, which has a child's drawing of a rabbit on the front. It is called "The Carrot Crunching Adventures of Detective Bunny".

ROSE nods, benignly. Not quite there. MAY cuts the head off the flounder.

MAY
 (IN MANDARIN)
 Your favourite, ma.

She uses chopsticks to place the fish head on ROSE's bowl. ROSE nods appreciatively. MAY glances at JOE, pleased with their work.

JOE
 (IN CANTONESE)
 I spoke to Bing. He says you can
 come back to the restaurant to
 work.

(MORE)

JOE (cont'd)
(IN ENGLISH) Work day time this
time with Winnie. It's more easy.

ROSE eats the fish head, sucking out the brains, drinks from
the glass of brandy. Her hand is shaking.

101 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) DAY 101
ROSE.

A new day. ROSE shuffles to her dresser, wearing her apricot
dressing gown. She sighs as she sees herself in the mirror.
Then, closing her eyes and summoning up her energy, she puts
her makeup on. A transformation begins.

102 INT. DUPLEX- KITCHEN (1972) DAY 102
TOM, MAY, JOE.

TOM is pouring a soft boiled egg onto a piece of toast with
vegemite. Next to him, in singlet and shorts, JOE is
drinking coffee at the kitchen table, reading a Chinese
newspaper. MAY enters hurriedly, the ribbon around her pony
tail askew.

MAY
Hurry up, Tom. We'll miss the
bus.

TOM
One sec.

TOM wants to finish his breakfast, but MAY pulls him away.

MAY
Come on.

JOE watches them, bemused.

103 EXT. STREET (1972) DAY 103
TOM, MAY, JOE, BUS DRIVER.

TOM and MAY rush to the bus, which is pulling away from the
bus stop. They are too late.

MAY
No!

MAY sits, disconsolately, at the bus stop. She opens her
school bag and grabs her diary. Over MAY's shoulder, TOM
glimpses her writing: "I hate this city. I hate this
house... I hate my life."

The sound of a car horn distracts her. MAY stops. A green Holden pulls up at the bus stop. The passenger door opens. It is JOE.

104 INT/EXT. CAR (1972) DAY 104
TOM, MAY, JOE.

JOE's car pulls up at the traffic lights.

TOM sits in the back seat, reading his encyclopaedia, watching JOE flirt with MAY. The radio is on - a fluffy 1972 pop song. JOE nods along.

JOE
Rock music, eh? You like?

MAY
It's alright.

JOE
Good music for young people.

MAY
I guess so.

JOE
You, me. We are young people.

JOE smiles at MAY. Watching from the back seat, TOM sees MAY glance flirtatiously at JOE.

JOE
Drive you to school, make it more easy for you.

MAY
Thank you, Uncle Joe.

JOE
Not Uncle Joe. Just Joe...

MAY
Thank you... Joe.

She looks down shyly, then back up again. From the back seat, TOM sees everything.

105 EXT. PRIMARY SCHOOL - (1972) DAY 105
TOM, MAY, JOE, JOHN C, JOHN'S MOTHER, KEVIN, GRAHAM, GIRLS X 2, BOYS X 4

TOM gets out of the car, waving at JOE and MAY in the car.

TOM
Thanks Joe.

He watches JOE drive off. JOE and MAY are speaking in animated manner.

TOM turns and faces his school. A boy his age is dropped off by his NORMAL LOOKING MOTHER. The boy, JOHN CUNNINGHAM, joins his two other friends, KEVIN and GRAHAM. They laugh and joke, entering the school together.

TOM walks in alone.

106

EXT. DUPLEX- BACK YARD (1972) DAY
ROSE, JOE.

106

ROSE is wearing a drab blue uniform, her hair up in a scarf. She is hanging up the washing in the neglected and overgrown back yard when JOE comes out from the back door.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Where have you been?

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I took your children to school.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
You don't have to do that.

JOE sits on the back porch, and opens a Chinese newspaper. ROSE looks at him. He is handsome in the morning light.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Maybe I could take today off? We
could do something special
together.

She leaves her chores, and goes to him, kissing him amorously. JOE at first reciprocates, but then pulls away.

JOE
You have to go to work. Cannot
afford you lose your job.

ROSE pulls herself together.

107

EXT. FOOTBALL GROUND (1972) DAY
TOM, COACH, JOHN C, KEVIN, FOOTY BOYS X 18.

107

On the football field, TOM is in his sports gear but nowhere near the football.

In the distance, a PACK OF BOYS swarm around the football.

TOM has no interest in the game. Nearby are two other disinterested nerds. One is KEVIN, who sits on the grass, lazily. The other is JOHN CUNNINGHAM. TOM smiles at JOHN optimistically.

Upfield, someone kicks the ball a huge distance. It heads towards TOM and the OTHER TWO. On the sideline, the COACH yells out.

COACH

Mark it!

TOM is surprised to see the ball spiralling towards him. KEVIN moves away. JOHN CUNNINGHAM stands next to TOM, sticks his hands up in the air and closes his eyes. TOM closes his eyes as well, and puts his hands up at the last minute to protect his face. Improbably, the ball sticks.

108

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL (1972) DAY
MAY, JOE, AMANDA, BLONDE GIRLS X 3, SCHOOL GIRLS X 3

108

A gang of GIRLS with long straight blonde hair, carrying hockey sticks, are congregated around the outside of the school yard, smoking cigarettes and acting tough. A moment later, MAY leaves school, also carrying a hockey stick.

MAY passes the BLONDE GIRLS. One in particular, AMANDA, looks at her darkly. She gossips with her girlfriends. MAY walks proudly past her.

MAY sees JOE, standing by his car, waiting for her. He is dressed slickly. She approaches him, darkly. He sees that she's in a bad mood. She gets in the car and slams the door. JOE opens the door and gets in.

JOE

What's wrong?

MAY

She said I tripped her, and I said,
"No, I didn't, i just got there
first."

JOE

She jealous. You faster. Stronger.
Like...warrior.

MAY

I wish I had a sword to cut her
arms and legs off. Hai!
(MAKES SWORD MOVEMENT)
Take that, you stupid bitch!

JOE

(LAUGHS)
You funny!

JOE starts the car. Then he stops. He looks at her. MAY smiles, almost but not quite knowingly. She grabs the cigarettes from his top pocket.

JOE

Hey!

She pulls out a cigarette and pretends to smoke. JOE smiles at her impertinence.

JOE

Come on, let's go for a drive.

The car pulls off.

109

DELETED

109

110 DELETED 110

111 EXT. BEACH (1972) DAY 111
MAY, JOE.

JOE leads MAY to a beautiful and isolated surf beach. They are alone.

JOE
When I first come to Melbourne, I
come here all the time.

MAY
It's beautiful.

JOE sits on the sand. MAY joins him.

JOE
I come here. To watch the waves.
He points out to sea.

JOE
Over there is Hong Kong.

MAY
Do you get homesick?

JOE
(PENSIVE)
Miss my mother. My father. My
mei-mei.

MAY nods, understandingly. Joe is melancholy.

JOE
No can go back. Don't have
citizenship. If I go, immigration
never let me in again. Then, last
seven years, new life here, all for
nothing.

JOE smiles at MAY.

JOE
You shy girl?

MAY
Don't stare at me.

JOE
You no need be shy.

MAY
And stop teasing me!

JOE pulls a camera out of his trouser pocket.

JOE
I take photo of you. Make you
movie star!

MAY blushes. JOE steps a long way back, and takes a
photograph with his instamatic.

JOE puts his camera away.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You will make your husband very
happy one day.

MAY doesn't say anything.

JOE
Good girl... Beautiful.

He touches her face. His finger lingers on her cheek. MAY
blushes then pulls away.

MAY
We better go...

112 INT. CHUNG ON - (1972) DAY 112
ROSE, KIM.

ROSE working at the restaurant, scrubbing pots. She works hard, sweat pours off her brow. KIM brings more dishes in to be washed.

113 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) DAY 113
TOM, MAY, JOE.

TOM runs into the house excitedly. He jumps in the air, miming that he's caught the football again. He pretends to kick the goal again.

He takes a running kung fu leap and opens the door to his and MAY's bedroom.

TOM
Jade Warrior kicked a goal!

TOM stops when he sees MAY, sitting on her bed, strumming her guitar, her hair falling prettily over her face. She's playing a folk song ineptly.

Then TOM notices JOE sitting on the floor, listening. He stops, realising that he's interrupted something.

MAY
Don't you knock?

TOM looks at MAY. Then at JOE.

TOM
Why should I, it's my room.

JOE
(SMILING)
Your sister, very good. Play
rock'n'roll music!

TOM leaves. Behind him, the door closes ominously. He stares at the closed door.

114 EXT. SUBURBAN SHOPPING STREET (1972) DAY 114
ROSE, BACKGROUND WHITE COUPLE.

It's the end of the day. ROSE shuffles towards home, along the suburban shopping strip, carrying a plastic bag of food.

She walks along the street self consciously.

A CAUCASIAN COUPLE IN THEIR FORTIES walk the other way. ROSE watches them pass. She is completely invisible to them.

115

INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) DAY
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

115

TOM is at the living room table, shuffling and dealing out four rounds of playing cards. He's playing bridge by himself. He's agitated but only shows it by his knee jiggling nervously up and down. TOM picks up the first hand and sorts it with tremendous speed and efficiency.

TOM

Two clubs.

He picks up the next hand and sorts that as well. His knee is still jiggling.

TOM

Two hearts.

JOE folds a clean apron and places it into his shoulder bag, preparing for work. On the table, his cheap camera.

MAY is at the table, doing her homework. They are aware of each other's presence. The sound of the front door opening causes JOE to look up, almost guiltily.

ROSE enters, carrying a plastic bag of food.

JOE

(IN CANTONESE)

I have to work late tonight. Chan wants me to help him prepare for a banquet tomorrow.

ROSE

(IN CANTONESE)

What time will you be home?

JOE

(IN CANTONESE)

Don't wait for me. Go to sleep, you need rest.

YOUNG TOM has finished bidding and is playing out his cards, growing more and more agitated by the conversation.

ROSE (OS)

(IN CANTONESE)

You go to work when I get home. I go to work, you're asleep. I never see you.

JOE kisses ROSE on the cheek.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I have to go, I'll be late.

ROSE watches him go, then notices the camera on the table. She picks it up curiously, then sees MAY doing her homework. There are a stack of dirty dishes piled up on the sink.

TOM continues to play out the four bridge hands, picking each one up in succession to play a card. His knee jiggles up and down.

ROSE (OS)
(IN MANDARIN)
Why are you still studying? You were supposed to do the dishes.

MAY (OS)
I haven't finished my homework yet.

ROSE (OS)
(IN MANDARIN)
Why not? What are you, stupid?

MAY (OS)
They gave me extra.

TOM looks in MAY's direction.

TOM
She was playing guitar for Uncle Joe all afternoon, that's why she hasn't finished her homework.

MAY shoots a warning look at TOM. Ignoring her, TOM continues to play bridge. ROSE glares at MAY, then explodes.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Waste your time in the day! Waste your time at night!

ROSE grabs MAY's text book and tosses it across the room.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Clean the kitchen! Useless!

ROSE storms out. MAY looks at TOM angrily. She walks out as well.

TOM is left on his own. He continues to play bridge.

116 EXT. DUPLEX (1972) NIGHT 116
BACKGROUND TEENAGE BOY.

The duplex at night. Insects flying around a street lamp. A teenage boy wanders past. Cats eyes shine in the dark

117 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 117
TOM, MAY.

TOM is putting on his best short sleeve shirt over a singlet. MAY is opening the wardrobe. She has make up on, and is wearing a pretty sleeveless dress. For the first time, her hair is out, making her look older, more sophisticated.

TOM
You look pretty.

MAY ignores him. She pulls a cardigan from the wardrobe. TOM suddenly puts on a kung fu pose.

TOM
Double dagger attack! Hai!

MAY doesn't respond. TOM does some slow motion moves.

TOM
Dragon claw technique!

MAY
Don't.

TOM tries harder.

TOM
Hai! Hai!

MAY
(ANGRILY)
Don't!

MAY walks out.

118 INT. CINEMA (1972) NIGHT 118
**ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE, BING, WING, WINNIE, CHAN, KIM,
BACKGROUND CHINESE X ?**

A poster advertises a Chinese film- the "One Armed Sword's Woman". The session time is plastered across the bottom - "Sunday night, 10pm"

The lobby of an old cinema is filled with CHINESE RESTAURANT PEOPLE. It's their regular Sunday gathering.

They all know each other, and are gossiping madly, a cacophony of chatter and excitement. We recognise some of the faces- BING, WINNIE, WING, CHAN and KIM.

ROSE, JOE, TOM and MAY enter through this crowd, with ROSE leading the way in an ostentatious cheung sam. Even in this crowd, ROSE stands out. JOE is beside her, self conscious of the attention. A pace behind, MAY follows, then an embarrassed TOM. TOM tries to catch MAY's eye but she ignores him, still furious at her betrayal. She takes her cardigan off, revealing her pretty dress.

TOM notices that KIM is whispering to a GIRLFRIEND as ROSE and her FAMILY pass. It seems that everyone knows about ROSE's suicide attempt. TOM also notices several YOUNG MEN cast admiring glances at MAY.

WINNIE and CHAN greet ROSE and JOE.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Ai ya, Rose Wah. Look at you. You put the rest of us women to shame.

ROSE
(TO WINNIE/IN CANTONESE)
I'm glad you're here. Everyone is looking at me.

CHAN
(IN CANTONESE)
You always look like a movie star. Even when you wash dishes.

CHAN laughs at his own poor joke. BING joins them.

BING
(IN CANTONESE)
Eh Rose Wah, good to see you out again.

BING notices MAY.

BING
And your daughter, beautiful like her mother.

MAY smiles, shy but pleased.

BING
You should come and work for me. We can always use a pretty young waitress.

MAY is not sure of how to respond. ROSE intervenes.

MAY
(IN CANTONESE)
Thank you, Uncle.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Maybe next year. This year, she
has to concentrate on her studies.
Good education first. Thank you,
Uncle.

ROSE puts her arm around her daughter possessively. TOM
looks at MAY, concerned, but MAY refuses to acknowledge TOM.

119 INT. CINEMA (1972) NIGHT 119
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE, BING, WING, WINNIE, CHAN, KIM,
BACKGROUND CHINESE X 25

A Hong Kong sword fighting film - A SWORDSWOMAN hacks off the
head of an evil opponent. She cuts a swathe through a horde
of enemies, slicing and dicing with choreographic beauty.

TOM watches, completely enthralled. Further down the row,
ROSE is distracted and conscious of the people around her.
Next to her, JOE offers popcorn. ROSE refuses. TOM takes a
handful of popcorn. On the other side of TOM, MAY also
watches the movie.

JOE reaches across TOM and offers MAY popcorn. MAY shakes
her head. JOE rattles the box insistently. MAY shakes her
head again. JOE makes "sword fighting movements". MAY
giggles. TOM gives his sister a warning glance- ROSE is
watching as well.

120 EXT. STREET (1972) NIGHT 120
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE, BACKGROUND X 6

TOM walks with his family, his head still ringing with the
sound of sword fights and somersaults.

Beside him, ROSE is in a dark mood. MAY is bright and
oblivious.

MAY
Should I ring Uncle Bing about the
job, ma? Then we can all work at
the restaurant.

ROSE looks at JOE darkly.

ROSE
Work at night with you. You like
that.

MAY hasn't picked up on the tension.

MAY
We could save up my money for a new television.

ROSE snaps at MAY.

ROSE
Why you dress like that? Like cheap slut. Show your arms, your shoulders. That why Bing want you to work.

MAY is stung. She covers her arms.

MAY
It was too hot for the cardigan.

ROSE
You put me to shame. Shame your whole family.

JOE glares at ROSE. They have reached his car and he unlocks the driver's door.

JOE
Don't.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Work with her, then. When I die, you marry her, too.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
What are you talking about?

ROSE
Be better for everyone if I die.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
Stop talking rubbish!

ROSE's darkness clouds the family as they get into the car. TOM sees that his sister is close to tears, devastated by their mother's comments. He reaches over and touches her hand. MAY pushes him away.

121 EXT/INT. DUPLEX (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

121

Later that night, TOM is bouncing a ragged old tennis ball against a brick wall. Insects buzz around the front light, otherwise, it's dark and quiet all around.

He catches the ball, then throws it back against the wall, repeating this action over and over. He is aware of what is happening inside the duplex.

ROSE (OS)
(IN CANTONESE)
You're cheating on me. Admit it!

JOE (OS)
(WEARY/IN CANTONESE)
Why are you saying that?

ROSE (OS)
(IN CANTONESE)
You're seeing someone else!

JOE (OS)
(IN CANTONESE)
You always talk rubbish. I'm sick of it!

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
I know you are!

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
I can't stand you anymore!

The next bit of the conversation is garbled. TOM can't hear what is being said. Then, through the living room window, TOM sees ROSE grab hold of JOE's arm.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
Let go of me!

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Where are you going?

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
To get away from your madness.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
If you leave me, I'll do the same thing again! You know what I did!

TOM bounces the ball against the wall, using the sound to drown out his mother's wailing.

JOE (OS)
(LOSING HIS TEMPER/IN
CANTONESE)
Good! You kill yourself, then!
Everyone will be better off!

*

The front door bursts open and JOE walks out angrily. He slams the door shut behind him.

For a moment, he and TOM make eye contact. JOE walks away, conflicted by emotion. TOM hears his mother's voice again in the house.

ROSE (OS)
(IN MANDARIN)
How many times? Eh? You little slut.

MAY (OS)
Don't...

ROSE (OS)
How can you betray your own mother?
(IN MANDARIN)
Don't you have any shame?

TOM is alarmed. Through the window, he sees MAY being dragged into the living room by ROSE. MAY screams. TOM goes back inside.

MAY (OS)
Let go of me!

ROSE (OS)
(IN MANDARIN)
Whore!

122 INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

122

ROSE pulls MAY to the living room mirror and forces her to stare at her own tear stained face.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Look at that face, eh? Look at yourself! This is the face that killed your mother. Are you proud of yourself? Kill your own mother!

MAY pulls herself away.

MAY
No! I didn't do anything!

ROSE slaps MAY.

MAY runs into the bathroom and locks the door. TOM is at the doorway, watching the fight between his mother and sister. ROSE bangs angrily on the bathroom door.

ROSE (OS)
(IN MANDARIN)
Open the door!
(MORE)

ROSE (OS) (cont'd)
Is this how you repay me? I never
wanted you. I should have sold you
at the markets! All the men I've
lost because of you. I should have
drowned you! You ruined my life.
You've ruined my life!

TOM stares at ROSE. He is helpless, paralysed.

123

INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY, JOE.

123

Dean Martin is on television. As ROSE and TOM watch, they
hear a car pull into the drive. TOM looks in the direction
of the bathroom, his stomach knotted tight with tension. He
tries to get up but ROSE grabs him by the arm forcefully.

ROSE
Leave her. Teach her lesson.

ROSE pours herself another drink. JOE returns. He's been
drinking. ROSE is anxious, desperate.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Promise me you won't touch her
again, and I'll forgive you.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You're crazy.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Promise me you won't touch her, and
you can stay.

JOE
Where's May?

TOM
She's in the bathroom.

JOE knocks on the bathroom door.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
Are you alright? Come out.

ROSE
(IN CANTONESE)
Let her rot in there.

JOE knocks more urgently.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
Come out! I won't let her hurt
you.

There's still no response. JOE pushes at the door. He turns away. Then turns back, and forces himself against it. He bounces off ineffectively. He tries again with an angry violent heave. The door gives way. JOE pushes again, and succeeds.

Inside, JOE sees MAY slumped on the floor. Next to her is an empty bottle of her mother's valium. Her face is blue, she's barely breathing. JOE rushes to her side. ROSE is behind him, at the door.

JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
What have you done? She's your
daughter. Have you thought about
that?

JOE carries MAY out. ROSE is frozen in shock. TOM stares at his sister's unconscious face. On the television, Dean Martin sings "Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime..."

124 INT. HOSPITAL- SURGERY (1972) NIGHT 124
MAY, 2 x DOCTORS, 2 x NURSES.

The song continues. Attached to life support, MAY is in the emergency theatre with DOCTORS and NURSES swarming around her. A NURSE places MAY on her side, whilst a DOCTOR slides a long lubricated tube down her throat.

125 INT. HOSPITAL- WAITING ROOM (1972) NIGHT 125
ROSE, TOM, JOE, NURSE.

The song continues. ROSE and JOE are in the waiting room. Both are numb. Opposite, TOM stares at ROSE and JOE as though they are a million miles away.

126 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) DAY 126
ROSE, JOE.

The song continues. JOE packs his suitcase again whilst ROSE watches. This time, there is no protest. He looks at her one final time, then leaves.

127 INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) DAY 127
TOM, JOE.

The song continues. TOM is sitting on the sofa, reading a comic book. JOE sits down next to him.

JOE
You look after your family, ok,
little man? Be strong, don't cry
so much.

JOE puts his arm affectionately on TOM's shoulder.

JOE
Good boy.

TOM stares at JOE then unexpectedly and ferociously hugs him.
JOE is surprised by the boy's affection.

128 INT. DUPLEX- KITCHEN (1972) NIGHT 128
ROSE, TOM, WINNIE.

The song continues. ROSE and WINNIE are drinking together.
TOM sits in a chair, reading a comic book, pretending that
he's not there. A black cloud hangs over him.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
How can she do that to you, eh?

ROSE is catatonically drunk. She doesn't even answer.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Who would have a daughter?
They're all useless. Selfish.

ROSE pours herself another drink.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
You slave all your life for them,
then they treat you like this!
You should make her beg for your
forgiveness! Make her kowtow to
you!

ROSE doesn't listen. TOM stares at her. She avoids his eye.

129 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) NIGHT 129
ROSE.

The song continues. ROSE stares at herself in the mirror of
her dresser. She is shaking uncontrollably. Without
warning, she bursts into uncontrollable sobs.

130 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 130
TOM.

The song continues. From above, we see TOM in his bed. Awake. We track closer and closer to him. He chants something, mouthing words rather than making sounds. We move closer till we can hear.

TOM

Dear God, please look after my
sister... Dear God, please look
after my sister... Dear God, please
look after my sister..

131 INT. HOSPITAL- MAY'S WARD (1972) NIGHT 131
MAY.

The song continues. In her bed, MAY's face is cold, as if lifeless. Fade to black.

132 EXT/INT. DUPLEX (1972) DAY 132
TOM.

The duplex. It's morning. A figure can be seen through the window, in the kitchen. It's TOM. He's hunting for his breakfast.

133 INT. DUPLEX- KITCHEN (1972) DAY 133
TOM.

The kitchen is a mess. TOM opens the fridge. It's empty. He looks in the cupboards. Nothing.

134 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) DAY 134
ROSE, TOM.

TOM checks his mother's room. It is also a mess. Clothes are strewn everywhere. Under her blanket, ROSE is asleep. TOM tries to wake her.

TOM

Ma, there's nothing for breakfast.

ROSE groans but does not stir. She's out of it. TOM sees the half full bottle of sleeping pills by the side of her bed. He turns and leaves the room.

135 EXT. HOSPITAL- CORRIDOR (1972) DAY 135
TOM, NURSE X 2, PATIENT, VISITOR.

TOM is wandering through the hospital corridors carrying a heavy school bag. He is lost. He takes one turn, then doubles back, checking the signs, confused.

136 EXT. HOSPITAL- MAY'S WARD (1972) DAY 136
TOM, MAY, FEMALE PATIENT.

MAY is propped up in bed when TOM arrives. He is carrying a heavy school bag. She looks haggard and weak. She smiles when she sees TOM.

TOM
I brought you some stuff.

He opens the school bag and displays its contents.

TOM
So you can study.

MAY
Thanks...

TOM
I wasn't sure if you wanted to do history or geography.

TOM sits next to MAY.

MAY
You should be at school.

TOM
School is for retards.

MAY
You're a retard for saying that.

TOM doesn't respond.

MAY
How's mum?

TOM
Still asleep.

MAY
Why? What's wrong with her?

TOM
I don't know.

MAY is alerted.

MAY
Did you ring a doctor?

TOM
No.

MAY
You have to watch everything she
does. You know what she's like.

TOM doesn't answer.

MAY
You have to take care of her!

TOM
(ANGRILY)
Why should I?

MAY
Because she's your mother.

TOM
I don't care!

MAY
Don't say that!

TOM
I don't care! I hate her! I wish
she was dead!

MAY grabs TOM by the arm and shakes him.

MAY
Stop it!

137 EXT. STREET (1972) DUSK 137
TOM, BUS DRIVER, PASSENGERS X 4

Night. A bus stops and TOM gets off. He wanders down the
street towards home.

138 INT. DUPLEX - HALLWAY (1972) NIGHT 138
TOM.

TOM enters the darkened duplex. He turns the lights on.
There is no sign of movement or life. He walks through the
hallway, turning lights on as he does.

139 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 139
ROSE, TOM.

TOM turns the lights on in his mother's room. ROSE is still
in bed, still asleep, breathing loudly through her mouth.

She is pale, and there are flecks of dried saliva on her mouth. TOM looks at her bedside table- the bottle of sleeping pills is now empty.

140 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 140
TOM.

TOM sits on his bed with a deck of cards. He deals out four hands. One by one, he picks up the hands of cards and arranges them into suits. He's playing bridge.

141 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) NIGHT 141
ROSE.

ROSE is sleeping, her breathing staggered and troubled.

142 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 142
TOM.

TOM
One heart.

He picks up the next hand and arranges it, then bids.

TOM
Two clubs.

TOM nods to himself, knowingly, then picks up the next hand.

TOM
No bid. What? Are you kidding?

143 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) NIGHT 143
ROSE.

ROSE is struggling, finding it harder and harder to breathe.

144 INT. DUPLEX- TOM AND MAY'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 144
TOM.

TOM plays bridge. He leads an ace with one hand, then plays each hand successively. In his head, he hears his mother's breathing.

145 INT. DUPLEX- ROSE'S BEDROOM (1972) NIGHT 145
ROSE.

ROSE stops breathing. Then she starts again.

146 INT. DUPLEX- LIVING ROOM (1972) NIGHT 146
TOM.

The telephone. A hand picks up the receiver.

TOM (OS)
Hello? Is this the ambulance?

147 INT. HOSPITAL- MAY'S WARD (1972) DAY 147
MAY.

MAY asleep in her hospital ward, still connected to a drip.
The camera rises upwards, through the ceiling..

148 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 148
ROSE, TOM, WINNIE.

... to the ward above where ROSE is asleep, also attached to a drip. Her complexion is deathly pale. But she is breathing. Slowly, she opens her eyes. She blinks.

TOM and WINNIE are waiting for her. ROSE stares at TOM, smiling at first. Then she sees his stony expression. Her smile drops and she looks bereft. She doesn't know what to say.

TOM stares at his mother, cold as ice. She tries to hug him. He hangs limply in her arms, like a rag doll.

149 INT/EXT. WING'S FLAT (1972) DAY 149
TOM, JOE, WINNIE, WING, CHAN.

WINNIE and TOM climb the stairs of the housing commission flat. TOM is carrying a bag of his possessions, mainly clothes and books.

WINNIE
Ai ya! You poor mother. Have such a hard life.

WINNIE knocks on the door of one flat in particular. The door opens, and WING, the kitchen hand appears. He sees TOM and smiles.

WING
(IN CANTONESE)
Here he is, our young guest!

JOE is behind him.

JOE
Hey, little man!

Hello! TOM

JOE hugs TOM. TOM is glad to see a familiar face.

JOE
Not much space, but we work
something out.

TOM looks around. There are two cot beds in the bedroom. These are WING and CHAN's beds. In the living room, there's a foam single mattress on the floor where JOE has been sleeping. Next to it, his open suitcase.

The sound of a toilet flushing. The bathroom door opens and CHAN emerges, doing up his pants.

CHAN
(IN CANTONESE)
Ai ya! I think that crab was bad.

He indicates the toilet to the others.

CHAN
(IN CANTONESE)
Don't go in there.

150 INT. HOSPITAL- CORRIDORS (1972) DAY 150
MAY, DOCTOR, ORDERLY.

MAY walks through the corridors of the hospital, trying to be inconspicuous. MAY finds the fire stairs.

151 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 151
ROSE, MAY.

MAY finds her way to ROSE's ward. Her mother, who is on a drip, is sitting up in bed. ROSE smiles when she sees her daughter.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Shao Wah!

MAY also smiles.

152 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 152
ROSE, MAY, NURSE, PATIENTS X 2

Golden afternoon light fills the hospital ward. One of ROSE's ceramic birds casts a shadow on the wall. MAY sits on her mother's bed, ROSE is brushing her hair for her. MAY luxuriates in her mother's touch.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
One day, you will be even more
beautiful, eh? More beautiful than
your mother.

MAY
I'll never be as beautiful as you.

ROSE looks at MAY, suddenly filled with sadness. As if for the first time, she sees the damage she has inflicted on her daughter.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
You must learn to treasure this
life. Life is a gift.

Even as she says this, ROSE realises how foolish she must sound. MAY doesn't respond. ROSE puts down the hair brush.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
I was not always like this, Shao
Wah.

MAY looks puzzled.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Let me tell you a story... Because
I was the youngest girl of five
children...

Obediently, MAY writes.

153 INT. ROSE'S FAMILY HOUSE- SHANGHAI (1940) DAY 153
**YOUNG ROSE, ROSE'S MOTHER, BROTHERS X 2, SISTERS X 2, ROSE'S
DAD, SERVANT.**

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
So I had the lowest place in my
household.

We see YOUNG ROSE, a beautiful 16 year old girl, carrying a heavy tray of food to a long flat table. Behind her, a SERVANT bring more food. Sitting around the table are her OLDER BROTHERS and SISTERS (two of each).

At the head of the table, ROSE'S MOTHER, is a stern matriarch. ROSE'S FATHER, is a remote and cold looking man. YOUNG ROSE serves food to her siblings, mindful of her mother's stern gaze. She spills soup from a large heavy bowl.

ROSE'S MOTHER raises her hand and strikes her.

ROSE'S MOTHER
(IN MANDARIN)
Stupid girl! Do you think we
have so much money we can waste
food?

YOUNG ROSE cowers and protects herself, trying to put the soup down without spilling more.

ROSE'S MOTHER
(IN MANDARIN)
Go clean up your mess! You
always make me so angry! Useless
girl!

YOUNG ROSE leaves the soup on the table, her head bowed in shame.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
My mother felt I was useless. At
your age, I was married off.

154 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE- MAIN ROOM (1940) DAY 154
YOUNG ROSE, MR SUN.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
His name was Mr Sun.

YOUNG ROSE, dressed as a bride, stands in front of her new husband, MR SUN. Her face is covered by a red veil. YOUNG ROSE hands her husband a red handkerchief and a pair of chopsticks with chestnuts and dates attached. He puts them into a triangular box on the bed.

MR SUN
(IN MANDARIN)
Do not be afraid. I wont hurt you.

Nervously, YOUNG ROSE lifts her veil and sees her husband for the first time. MR SUN is a hard man in his mid forties.

155 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE -BEDROOM (1940) NIGHT 155
YOUNG ROSE, MR SUN.

Jump cut to MR SUN on top of YOUNG ROSE. The sex is hard and brutal.

156 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE -BEDROOM (1940) DAY 156
YOUNG ROSE, AMMAH.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
When I was seventeen years old, I
became pregnant.

YOUNG ROSE gives birth, attended by an old AMMAH. She
screams in agony.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
But I was a child myself. I did
not know how to care for a baby.

157 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 157
ROSE, MAY.

In hospital, ROSE continues to tell her story

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
So my first daughter, your older
sister, died.

MAY is shocked by this news.

ROSE's voice is distant, remote, as if she's telling the
story of someone else.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
The year after, I bore another
daughter. She died as well.

158 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE -BEDROOM (1940) NIGHT 158
YOUNG ROSE.

YOUNG ROSE howls inconsolably.

159 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE -BEDROOM (1940) NIGHT 159
YOUNG ROSE.

YOUNG ROSE stares at herself in the mirror.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
After that, I had no more children
with Mr Sun.

160 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE- MAIN ROOM (1950) DAY 160
YOUNG ROSE.

Ten years have passed. YOUNG ROSE looks older and harder.
She paces up and down, bored and depressed. She pours
herself a drink.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
Mr Sun had taken a concubine. My
family had forgotten me. Life was
not worth living...

161 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE- MAIN ROOM (1950) DAY 161
YOUNG ROSE, MR SUN, WEN XUAN, SERVANT.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
Then one day, everything changed...

MR SUN helps a pale, sickly young man into his house. This
is WEN XUAN, MR SUN's younger brother.

MR SUN
(IN MANDARIN)
Get his bags.

YOUNG ROSE and THE SERVANT pick up WEN XUAN's bags.

162 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 162
ROSE.

ROSE relives the memory of her first meeting with WEN XUAN.
Her expression is tender.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Wen Xuan was Sun's youngest
brother. He was injured during
the war.

163 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE- WEN XUAN'S ROOM (1950) NIGHT 163
YOUNG ROSE, WEN XUAN.

WEN XUAN is at a desk, painting a landscape in calligraphic
brush strokes. He is a handsome young man. YOUNG ROSE
brings him tea.

WEN XUAN
(IN MANDARIN)
Thank you.

He smiles at her. YOUNG ROSE looks away, shyly.

164 DELETED 164 *

165 INT. MR SUN HOUSE- MAIN ROOM (1950) DAY 165
YOUNG ROSE, WEN XUAN, SERVANT.

YOUNG ROSE poses as WEN XUAN does a pencil drawing of her, the same portrait which ROSE found in her silver trunk many years later.

A SERVANT enters with a tray of food. The SERVANT watches WEN XUAN and YOUNG ROSE.

166 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE- WEN XUAN'S ROOM (1950) NIGHT 166
YOUNG ROSE, WEN XUAN.

WEN XUAN is asleep in his room. The door slides opens. YOUNG ROSE enters. WEN XUAN and YOUNG ROSE embrace.

167 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE- MAIN ROOM (1951) NIGHT 167
YOUNG ROSE, MR SUN, WEN XUAN, SERVANT.

WEN XUAN, MR SUN and YOUNG ROSE are eating.

MR SUN
(IN MANDARIN)
You should come out gambling with me. You spend too much time at home.

WEN XUAN
(IN MANDARIN)
I don't like gambling as much as you do.

MR SUN
(IN MANDARIN)
Too much time inside is not good for a man.

The same SERVANT serves them. WEN XUAN is conscious of the cold stare of the SERVANT. YOUNG ROSE doesn't say a word.

WEN XUAN
(IN MANDARIN)
I don't mind it.

MR SUN
(IN MANDARIN)
I suppose my wife keeps you
company.

MR SUN scrutinises WEN XUAN coldly, as if to say, "I know".
Then he laughs.

MR SUN
(IN MANDARIN)
What's wrong? What did I say?

168 INT. MR SUN'S HOUSE- WEN XUAN'S ROOM (1951) NIGHT 168
YOUNG ROSE, WEN XUAN.

WEN XUAN is packing his bag. YOUNG ROSE is at the door.

YOUNG ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Please don't go.

WEN XUAN
(IN MANDARIN)
I can't live like this.

YOUNG ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Sun doesn't care about me. He has
a concubine.

WEN XUAN
(IN MANDARIN)
He's my brother. He saved my life.
How can I betray him?

YOUNG ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
My life will mean nothing if you
go. I will have nothing.

WEN XUAN's eyes are filled with love.

WEN XUAN
(IN MANDARIN)
What kind of man do you think I am?
How can you ask me to stay?

169 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 169
ROSE, MAY.

ROSE tells her story to MAY. Her expression is ineffably sad.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
I had no choice. He was the only
man I ever loved.

170 INT. MR SUN'S BEDROOM (1951) DAY 170 *

Lingering shot of Mr Sun's bedroom, YOUNG SUE is gone. *

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
It was a huge scandal. A disgrace
to both our families.

171 INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT (1953) DAY 171
YOUNG ROSE, WEN XUAN.

WEN XUAN and YOUNG ROSE live in an impoverished apartment. They have few possessions, their clothes are worn. YOUNG ROSE boils rice on a small stove.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
Because of his injury, Wen Xuan
could not find work.

YOUNG ROSE scrapes rice from the pot. There is hardly anything there. Enough for two very small bowls. She gives the bigger one to WEN XUAN, who seems weak, feverish. He takes a small mouthful. YOUNG ROSE takes a small mouthful from her bowl.

172 DELETED 172 *

173

INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT (1955) DAY
YOUNG ROSE, WEN XUAN.

173

WEN XUAN is in bed, shivering with fever.

ROSE (VO)
(IN MANDARIN)
Wen Xuan became weaker and weaker.
He started to cough up blood.

YOUNG ROSE mops WEN XUAN's brow. She brings a jar of water to his mouth. She goes to the stove. There are a few grains of rice left in the pot. She scrapes what she can into her hand, then takes it back to the bed. She feeds the morsel to WEN XUAN.

YOUNG ROSE unwraps an ink stone and brush wrapped in rags, the last of their possessions. She whets the ink stone with water and makes ink. WEN XUAN watches her weakly.

From under their sleeping mattress, YOUNG ROSE retrieves a sheet of paper. She places the brush in WEN XUAN's hand. WEN XUAN shakes his head.

WEN XUAN
(IN MANDARIN)
I can't.

YOUNG ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
We have no choice. Write to Sun.

WEN XUAN starts to shakily compose a letter. His eyes well up with tears as he writes. She watches him write the letter. *

174

INT. HOSPITAL - ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY

174

ROSE pauses, choked by the memory. Then she continues to speak. A tear flows as she does. *

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Because I could not read, I did not know what Wen Xuan really wrote. *

175

INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT (1955) DAY
YOUNG SU, WEN XUAN.

175

WEN XUAN finishes his letter.

WEN XUAN
(WEAK/IN MANDARIN)
I've ruined your life.

YOUNG ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Don't talk like that.

WEN XUAN
(WEAK/IN MANDARIN)
I'm too weak to take care of you.
I'm not a man anymore. I am a
ghost.

YOUNG ROSE is close to tears herself.

YOUNG ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
I can endure anything if I am with
you. Nothing is too hard. You are
my strength.

She embraces WEN XUAN, then leaves to post the letter. *

176 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 176 *
ROSE, MAY *

ROSE continues her story to MAY. *

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
I found out later that Wen Xuan had
not asked my husband for money. He
had begged Sun to take me back. *

176A DELETED 176A *

177 INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT (1955) DAY 177
YOUNG ROSE, WEN XUAN.

YOUNG ROSE is excited when she returns to the apartment. In
her hand, she clutches a mandarin.

YOUNG ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
I helped an old woman in the
street, and she gave me a piece of
fruit. Our luck is changing, eh?

YOUNG ROSE stops in her tracks, horrified. Using the sheets, WEN XUAN has hung himself by the neck from the rafters.

178 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 178
ROSE, MAY.

MAY watches her mother. But ROSE doesn't show any emotion.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
I wanted to kill myself, too. But
I didn't... I was pregnant.

MAY looks at her mother, fighting back the tears.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
You are the reason I stayed alive.
You saved me. You always save me.

ROSE stares at MAY, tears streaming down her face. They hold each other.

179 INT. HOUSING COMMISSION FLAT- WING'S FLAT (1972) DAY 179
TOM, JOE, CHAN, WING.

TOM reads his Junior Encyclopaedia, Volume "M". Monaco. He sits on the battered second hand sofa in JOE, CHAN and WING's apartment.

WING is at the kitchen sink, doing his washing whilst CHAN sits at a laminex table, picking his teeth with a tooth pick and listening to the races on the radio, the form guide in his hand. He hoiks into a spittoon.

WING
(IN CANTONESE)
Ai ya! Why do my horses always run
so slow.

CHAN
(IN CANTONESE)
You don't think enough when you
bet. Always trying to make the
most money.

WINGS walks into the living area and hangs his washing on a clothes horse.

WING
(IN CANTONESE)
What are you talking about? You
lose more money than I do!

TOM keeps his head in his encyclopaedia, uncomfortable in the company of men. JOE emerges from the bathroom, freshly showered with a towel around his waist. He gathers his clothes from a small pile beside his mattress then dries himself with his towel.

TOM glances at JOE as he changes. JOE catches TOM looking. He smiles but it's an uncomfortable moment. TOM looks away.

180 INT. HOSPITAL- WAITING ROOM (1972) DAY 180
TOM, JOE, BILL, NURSES X 2, VISITORS X 2.

Impeccably dressed, JOE makes his way to the hospital waiting room with TOM in tow. JOE carries a plastic bag. TOM holds JOE's other hand, clutching his encyclopaedia.

TOM stops when he sees a familiar face in the waiting room. It's BILL, in his naval uniform.

BILL
Hey matey.

TOM
Hi Uncle Bill.

BILL looks at JOE. He knows who he is. JOE knows who BILL is, too.

BILL
Thanks for looking after him.

JOE
He good boy.

They stare at each other, neither knowing what to say. BILL turns his attention to TOM.

BILL
So how have you been mate?

TOM
Good.

TOM looks up at JOE. JOE nods. TOM drops his hand and takes BILL's. BILL nods in acknowledgement to JOE. JOE returns the nod. They part. TOM leads BILL down the corridor.

181 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 181
ROSE, TOM, BILL.

BILL is sitting next to ROSE. She is still weak, although there's more colour to her face.

BILL is awkward, tentative. TOM sits at the foot of the bed, reading his encyclopedia.

BILL
The hospital rang the Navy's social
worker. She arranged for me to
take compassionate leave.

ROSE
Thank you.

BILL
And um... mum's moved out of my
house. So there's room in there...
if you want.

BILL looks at ROSE sadly.

BILL
I don't know what to say. I wish...

ROSE
You are good man.

BILL
(CLOSE TO TEARS)
I wish things had worked out.

ROSE doesn't answer. They sit in silence. ROSE looks at
BILL with an expression of sadness and regret. She knows
that her life would have been different if she had been able
to love this man. BILL understands what she is feeling.

TOM watches BILL and ROSE. BILL turns to TOM.

BILL
How's the ping pong going, mate?
When we going to have that game?

182 INT. HOSPITAL- MAY'S WARD (1972) DAY 182
MAY, AGNES, JOE, FEMALE PATIENTS X 2.

MAY is chatting to the Chinese nurse, AGNES. They seem to
get on well. AGNES surreptitiously gives MAY white paper
packet. MAY smiles. Moon cakes.

AGNES
My mother sent me a whole box from
Singapore.

MAY
I love moon cakes!

AGNES
My favourite, too. Explains why I
look like this!
(MORE)

AGNES (cont'd)
Don't tell anyone. I'm supposed to
pretend that the food here is
edible.

AGNES looks up and is suddenly serious and professional.
There's a figure standing in the doorway. It's JOE. He's got
a bag with him. AGNES turns to him.

AGNES
You'll have to come back tomorrow.
Visiting hours are over.

JOE looks at AGNES, then at MAY awkwardly.

JOE
Sorry. Don't know what is right
time.

AGNES sees the way that JOE is looking at MAY. She waivers.

AGNES
Alright, a quick visit.

She leaves MAY and JOE together, tactfully drawing the
curtain around them. JOE gives MAY the plastic bag. It's
filled with food containers as well. MAY opens one of them.
More moon cakes.

JOE
Hey, bring you some food. Don't
want you to get skinny.

MAY
Thanks.

JOE sits beside the bed. He's beaming.

JOE
Every day, I think, should I come?
But no want to cause trouble.

JOE looks at MAY. She is caught between wanting to be
tender, and needing to be hard.

JOE
I hear what your mother do.

MAY nods.

JOE
I feel very bad.

MAY
It's not your fault.

JOE
She have hard life, your mother.
Make it hard for her sometimes.

JOE changes the subject, tries to be "upbeat".

JOE
Have been thinking about you a lot.

MAY nods.

JOE
You and your mother, always
fighting not good.

MAY
I know.

JOE
Maybe, when you get out of
hospital, you need to find a new
place. Eh? I can help you. We
can find a place together. You can
have your own room.

MAY looks at JOE for the first time. He is so vulnerable,
his eyes shining with love.

JOE
You need someone look after you,
eh? You are good girl. So
beautiful...

MAY is struggling to say something. She whispers inaudibly.

MAY
Please go...

JOE
Sorry?

MAY
(LOUDER)
Please go...

JOE is hurt. He looks at MAY, who averts her eyes.

MAY
Please...

A long pause. JOE stands, trying to put on a cheerful
façade.

JOE
You young girl. Need your mother.

MAY doesn't answer. JOE starts to leave.

JOE
You change you mind, I wait for
you, eh? Have some rest.

MAY still doesn't say anything. After a while, he turns and walks away. He looks back. But MAY still doesn't look up at him.

182A INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR (1972) DAY 182A

JOE leaves MAY's room and walks down the corridor.

183 INT. HOSPITAL- ROSE'S WARD (1972) DAY 183
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

MAY and TOM sit on ROSE's bed. TOM is eating moon cakes. Oblivious.

MAY
The nurse gave them to me.

MAY offers one to ROSE. She takes it.

ROSE
Good.

A portrait of the family, hanging together by a thread.

Fade to black.

184 INT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 184
ADULT TOM.

ADULT TOM is at his computer, writing his story.

ADULT TOM (VO)
My mother had her revenge on Uncle
Joe.

185 EXT. HOSPITAL- BALCONY (1972) NIGHT 185
ROSE.

Late at night. In her apricot dressing gown, ROSE sits on the hospital balcony, smoking a cigarette. She is deep in thought.

ADULT TOM (VO)
She dobbed him in to the Department
of Immigration.

186 EXT. CHUNG ON (1972) DAY 186
MEN IN SUITS X 4

A white Holden pulls up outside the Chung On restaurant.

187 INT. CHUNG ON (1972) DAY 187
WINNIE, MEN IN SUITS X 4, BACKGROUND X 2.

FOUR MEN IN SUITS burst through the restaurant doors. WINNIE harangues them in protest.

WINNIE
What are you doing? Everyone here
is legal. We are all citizens.
All Australians!

188 INT. CHUNG ON- KITCHEN (1972) DAY 188
JOE, CHAN, WING.

JOE awaits his fate in the kitchen. He looks at CHAN and WING who continue with their cooking, fearfully, not wanting any trouble themselves. JOE watches the kitchen door.

189 EXT. BILL'S HOUSE (1972) DAY 189
ROSE, TOM, MAY, BILL, NORMA, FRED.

NORMA is carrying her suitcases out of the house. She is accompanied by an old man in his late sixties, FRED. She loads them into an old Holden.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Against all odds, Norma met a
widower called Fred and remarried.

BILL'S car pulls up as NORMA and FRED load NORMA'S suitcase into FRED'S Holden. BILL, ROSE, MAY and TOM get out of BILL'S car. BILL nods to NORMA. NORMA is frosty.

BILL
You right?

NORMA
Yes.

BILL
I'll call in later tonight. Help
you settle in.

NORMA
Don't worry yourself.

NORMA walks out with FRED. She passes ROSE, looking at her darkly, as if she's lost. A mirror of their earlier scene.

BILL struggles with the silver trunk, helped by TOM and MAY.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Bill's compassionate leave ran out,
and he was sent back to Vietnam.

ROSE stares at the house. Her face is expressionless.

We hear the opening strains of her song, the Mandarin love ballad.

190 INT/EXT. BILL'S HOUSE (1972) DAY 190
ROSE, MAY, AGNES, MICHAEL, LIM.

The song continues. THREE YOUNG CHINESE PEOPLE are at the front door. The Chinese nurse, AGNES, her boyfriend, MICHAEL, and a nervous young man, LIM, in his early twenties. MAY answers. She is dressed up, ready to go out.

ADULT TOM (VO)
That autumn was the best for my
mother and my sister...

Through the lounge room window, ROSE watches her daughter leave with her new friends. She is still in her dressing gown.

191 EXT. STREET (1972) DAY 191
ROSE, TOM, JOHN C.

The song continues. TOM returns home from school. He's walking down the street with JOHN CUNNINGHAM. JOHN is wheeling his colourful Malvern Star dragster.

JOHN
I got this for my birthday. My mum
said I'd grow into it.

TOM
It's cool.

JOHN
Yeah, but what if I don't grow
another inch. I'll have to wheel
it around for the rest of my life.

TOM
Maybe you could ride on tippie
toes?

TOM gets on his tippie toes and walks around. He looks like a puppet. JOHN laughs.

They reach TOM's house. As they do, TOM sees ROSE in the front garden. She is still in her dressing gown, her hair everywhere. She moves slowly.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM stares at ROSE. TOM sees him staring, too.

ROSE sees them watching. Her face fills with shame.

ADULT TOM (VO)
But not for my mother and me.

192 EXT. PRIMARY SCHOOL (1972) DAY 192
TOM, JOHN C, GRAHAM, KEVIN.

TOM arrives at school the next day, seeing JOHN CUNNINGHAM, sitting on his colourful Malvern Star, chatting to KEVIN and GRAHAM. TOM has a big smile. JOHN has his back to TOM.

JOHN
You could see her tits hanging out
and everything. She looked like a
zombie.

One of the OTHER BOYS looks at TOM. JOHN turns around and sees TOM approaching as well. He looks awkward, caught out.

TOM looks down at his bag, pretending to get out his encyclopaedia. He walks past JOHN, his ears burning. JOHN and the OTHER BOYS watch TOM pass.

193 INT. PRIMARY SCHOOL- TOILET (1972) DAY 193
TOM.

TOM goes into a toilet cubicle and closes the door. We hear a faint sound, the sound of a young boy crying. We track closer and closer to the door.

ADULT TOM (VO)
That morning, I made an important
decision.

194 INT. TOILET CUBICLE (1972) DAY 194
TOM.

The bell goes, signalling that it's time for class. TOM is trying to control his tears.

ADULT TOM (VO)

No matter what happened, no matter
how bad things got, I would never
feel sorry for myself.

195 EXT. SCHOOL YARD (1972) DAY
TOM.

195

The rest of the class have gone in. TOM strides across the courtyard. In the bicycle racks, he sees JOHN CUNNINGHAM's colourful Malvern Star. He grabs a branch from a nearby tree.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Never ever.

He uses the branch to bend the spokes of JOHN CUNNINGHAM's bikes back. Then he throws down the branch, and heads into class.

196 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

196

ROSE, MAY and TOM are in Bill's living room. They are eating oranges. TOM is reading his encyclopaedia. He is up to Volume "S".

At the dining room table, ROSE is smoking, a full ashtray and half empty bottle of gin beside her. The glass bead curtain hangs limply over the door, bashed carelessly into place. There is something wild and restless in her manner.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
He brings us back here, then he leaves us again. He promises to look after us, but he lets us down every time... This place smells like old woman. I see her ghost everywhere.
(IN ENGLISH)
This place no good for us.

TOM refuses to look up from his encyclopaedia.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
I rang my old boss in Hong Kong. He says how much he misses me. "Everyone ask, where is Hong Mei Gwei?" Anytime I want to come back to Hong Kong, he will give me a job.

TOM looks at MAY, alarmed at the mention of "Hong Kong". ROSE lights another cigarette and paces up and down.

ROSE

(IN MANDARIN)

I can sell some things, and buy us
tickets. We can go back, make
everything better.

MAY bows her head, choking back the tears. Even though she fears the worst, she will always be the obedient daughter. TOM, on the other hand, feels his anger mounting.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)

Hong Kong is our home. We should never have come to this country. This country is cursed. In Hong Kong, we'll have our own house. We can have good food. You'll make good friends in Hong Kong.

She reaches to stroke his cheek. He pulls away.

TOM
Don't!

ROSE is halted in her tracks.

TOM
I don't want to go to Hong Kong.

MAY
Shut up, Tom!

TOM
You shut up! (TO ROSE) You go to Hong Kong!

ROSE stares at her son, crestfallen. It is as though her mask has fallen off, and she is utterly vulnerable- hearing the truth of her son's words for the first time.

TOM
You don't love us. You just pretend to. I hate you!

MAY
(ANGRY)
Stop it!

TOM
Go away!

ROSE is stricken, as if hearing TOM's words for the first time. TOM leaves the room.

ROSE
(IN MANDARIN)
Dede! Dede! Come back here!
Dede!

INT. BILL'S HOUSE- TOM'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT
ROSE, TOM.

TOM is in his room.

ROSE (OS)
 (IN MANDARIN)
 Dede! Dede!

He refuses to respond.

ROSE
 Dede?

TOM doesn't stir. ROSE sits on his bed, strokes his hair tenderly.

ROSE
 I know you don't mean to say bad things about you mother. You good boy. You understand. Your mother is always thinking about you. Always want the best for you. But she...

ROSE gets stuck. She doesn't know what to say next. She is lost. TOM still doesn't move.

ROSE
 Look after your jie jie. Love each other. She is your family.

She kisses TOM on the top of his head. He steadfastly refuses to acknowledge her.

ROSE
 Always remember. You mother love you...

A moment later, she leaves the room. TOM still has his eyes closed. We hear the sound of a battle- swords clashing.

EXT. STUDIO (1972) NIGHT
TOM, NAMELESS CHINESE FOE.

In TOM's imagination, his alter ego, JADE WARRIOR is fighting a fierce battle against a NAMELESS FOE. The battle is more graphic and serious than previously. The FOE strikes a blow and draws blood. JADE WARRIOR looks at his wound, then attacks again with an angry cry.

JADE WARRIOR
 Hai!

199 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- GARAGE (1972) NIGHT 199
ROSE.
 As if frozen, ROSE stares at the open silver trunk in the sleep out.

200 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- TOM'S ROOM (1972) DAY 200
TOM.
 The clock reads 5:00am. TOM gets out of bed, still half asleep.

201 INT/EXT. BILL'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM/GARAGE (1972) DAY 201
TOM.
 Early morning. TOM shuffles through the lounge. He notices the garage door is open and the light is on.

202 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- BATHROOM (1972) DAY 202
TOM.
 TOM washes his face in the hand basin.

203 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM/GARAGE (1972) DAY 203
TOM.
 From behind, we see TOM walk into the lounge. He stops in his tracks and stares at the open garage door. He walks towards it.

204 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - GARAGE (1972) DAY 204
ROSE.
 Hanging from the rafters, using the sheets as ropes, ROSE has hanged herself by the neck.

205 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - GARAGE (1972) DAY 205
ROSE, TOM, MAY.
 TOM and MAY are desperately trying to save their mother. MAY is hysterical.

MAY
 Lift, Tom, lift!

TOM
I can't! She's too heavy!

MAY
You have to hold her! You have to
carry her.

MAY runs out of the room, leaving TOM to try to hold his
mother's weight on his own.

TOM
Where are you going?

TOM is hysterical.

TOM
MAY!

206 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- GARAGE (1972) DAY 206
MAY.

MAY is looking for something to cut the sheet with. She
finds a pair of scissors.

207 INT. BILL'S HOUSE- GARAGE (1972) DAY 207
ROSE, TOM, MAY.

MAY climbs onto a chair and desperately tries to cut the
sheet with the scissors. It isn't working.

MAY
It's not working! It's not
cutting!

MAY hacks at the sheet, cutting her hand in the process. TOM
strains and buckles under the impossible burden of his
mother's weight.

TOM
I can't hold her! I can't!

208 INT. HOSPITAL- INTENSIVE CARE (1972) DAY 208
ROSE, MAY.

ROSE lies in the hospital bed, a raw purple bruise around her
throat.

ADULT TOM (VO)
She didn't die right away.

MAY sits beside her, her hand bandaged.

ADULT TOM (VO)
May visited every week.

209 INT. HOSPITAL- INTENSIVE CARE (1972) DAY 209
ROSE, BILL.

BILL sits beside ROSE, holding her hand.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Uncle Bill came back and for three
months never left her side.

BILL looks at ROSE lovingly. Her face is serene and at
peace. BILL's lips gently touch ROSE's. He sits and watches
her, impossibly sad.

210 INT. CHUNG ON (1972) DAY 210
TOM, MAY, KIM, WINNIE,

TOM is at the CHUNG ON restaurant, waiting for MAY, who is
working as a waitress. He is reading his Junior
Encyclopaedia. He's reached Volume "W-Z".

ADULT TOM (VO)
I never visited.

At the next table, KIM is sitting with WINNIE, folding
napkins. KIM glances at TOM, then at WINNIE. She shakes her
head.

KIM
(IN CANTONESE)
I don't understand how a mother can
do that to her children.

WINNIE glances at TOM.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
She fooled us all.

TOM knows exactly what they are saying. He closes the final
volume. He's pleased. MAY approaches him with take away
food.

TOM
It's official. I know everything
now.

His expression is serious, as if he really believes this.
MAY looks at him, dumbfounded.

211 INT. HOSPITAL- INTENSIVE CARE (1972) NIGHT 211
ROSE.

We see ROSE, in a coma. We hear her breathing, getting
slower and slower.

212

INT. BILL'S HOUSE- DINING ROOM (1972) NIGHT
TOM, MAY, BILL.

212

MAY is with BILL and TOM, eating dinner. She is now the woman of the house, dressed formally, her hair pulled back severely. She looks older, too, as if events have aged her. She serves dinner. TOM watches.

Although we don't hear it, everyone at the table reacts to the telephone ringing. MAY freezes, the serving spoon still in her hand. BILL leaves the table to answer the phone. TOM looks at MAY. She doesn't look back.

BILL

Yes... Yes... That's right... Well, as long as she wasn't in pain...

MAY puts the serving spoon down. Her face is blank. She stares at TOM. She leaves her chair, and the room.

A moment later, TOM follows.

213

INT. BILL'S HOUSE- MAY'S ROOM/HALLWAY (1972) NIGHT
TOM, MAY.

213

TOM is at the closed door to MAY's bedroom.

TOM

May?

There is no response. TOM knocks again.

TOM

May?

He hears a whimper, which slowly grows in volume. MAY's tears. They grow louder and louder. TOM stands outside her door, helplessly listening to his sister cry.

Finally, he turns the door knob. MAY is curled up on the bed, wracked with sobs. TOM goes in and sits beside her. He looks at her crying.

He tries to reach out to her, but she snaps at him, angrily.

MAY

You said you wanted her to die!

TOM

No, I didn't...

MAY

Yes you did! You wanted her to die! (She wasn't supposed to die, Tom). We're supposed to save her.

Tom is struck dumb by this attack.

MAY

We've got no mother now.

214 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - TOM'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 214
TOM.

Eleven year old TOM. Sitting on his bed. Stony faced.

We move closer and closer to TOM. He is completely expressionless.

Fade to black.

215 INT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 215
ADULT TOM.

ADULT TOM is typing at his computer.

ADULT TOM (VO)

After Rose died, Uncle Bill took an early retirement from the Navy..

216 INT. BILL'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM (1972) DAY 216
TOM, MAY, BILL.

Fade up to BILL setting the table, wearing an apron. TOM and MAY are helping him. He carries plates with ham steaks and pineapple rings on them.

ADULT TOM (VO)

...and came back to look after us.
We lived with him for three years.

We track in closer and closer to BILL.

ADULT TOM (VO)

Then, completely unexpectedly, on August 16th, 1977, the same night as Elvis Presley, Uncle Bill, our father, had a heart attack and died.

217 INT. BILL'S HOUSE/SUE'S ROOM (1972) DAY 217
MAY

ROSE's cheung sams are being neatly folded. MAY is in ROSE's room, packing her cheung sams into the silver trunk, neatly and lovingly. We track closer and closer.

ADULT TOM (VO)
May stayed in Melbourne and got a degree in Psychology. She works as a School Psychologist. Although she kept all of our mother's cheung sams, she's never worn any of them.

218 INT. BILL'S HOUSE/TOM'S ROOM DAY 218
TOM.

A wooden maze game is being played. TOM is in his room, playing the game.

ADULT TOM (VO)
I left Melbourne when I was seventeen and went to study in Canberra. Literature and Philosophy. I eventually became a writer.

219 DELETED 219

220 DELETED 220

221 INT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 221
ADULT TOM

ADULT TOM types at his computer.

ADULT TOM (VO)
In one way or another though, all of my stories are about grief.

222 EXT. ADULT MAY'S HOUSE (PRESENT) DAY 222
ADULT TOM, ADULT MAY, OLIVE, FELIX, FRANK.

DOCUMENTARY STYLE - HAND HELD *

ADULT TOM (VO) *
We get together every Christmas. *

ADULT MAY, now a woman in her late forties, is haranguing her daughter, OLIVE (9) and son, FELIX (12) to get out of the car. Stepping out of the front and back seats are ADULT TOM and his partner, FRANK. *

ADULT MAY *
Come on, you two, help your uncles *
with their luggage. *

OLIVE *
 But you said we could go to the *
 video shop! *

ADULT MAY *
 No I didn't. *

OLIVE *
 Yes you did! *

ADULT MAY *
 Olive, get out of the car, now! *

FRANK opens the boot and gets out a heavy suitcase. He *
 cajoles OLIVE and FELIX into helping him. *

ADULT TOM scolds his sister. *

ADULT TOM *
 You yell at her too much. *

ADULT MAY *
 I can't help it, she just makes me *
 so angry. *

ADULT MAY calms down. *

ADULT MAY *
 How are you guys? *

ADULT TOM *
 You know, same same. Too much *
 work. Not enough sex. *

They approach the verandah to ADULT MAY's house. On the *
 front verandah, the silver trunk from their childhood is *
 being used as a coffee table. *

ADULT TOM *
 How about you? *

ADULT MAY *
 Too much stress. *

She grabs his arm affectionately. *

ADULT MAY *
 I'm glad you're here. *

ADULT TOM smiles. They head inside, with FRANK and the kids *
 straggling after. Hanging in the doorway to one of the *
 bedroom, is the beaded glass curtain. *

ADULT TOM (VO)
Perhaps the most unlikely thing
about our childhood is that, in
spite of everything, May and I
turned out kind of normal. Fucked
up, in our own ways, but kind of
functional.

*
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*

ADULT TOM and ADULT MAY go into the house.

*

ADULT TOM (VO)
But we never talk about our mother.

*
*

223 EXT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 223
ADULT TOM.

ADULT TOM is writing at his computer.

ADULT TOM (VO)
 Neither of us know what to say.
 But then, a week ago, the most
 amazing thing happened.

We see the words on the screen as he types.

224 INT. MALL (LAST WEEK) DAY 224
ADULT TOM, ADULT MAY, FELIX, OLIVE, OLD JOE, SHOPPERS X 20.

ADULT TOM and ADULT MAY are Christmas shopping with FELIX and OLIVE. They stop at the shop window. ADULT MAY indicates a strange object.

ADULT MAY
 Is that what you want?

FELIX
 Yeah, it's cool.

ADULT MAY
How much is it?

ADULT TOM sees an old Chinese man ahead of them. He looks at him curiously. He wanders ahead.

ADULT TOM
Uncle Joe?

OLD JOE, a man in his late fifties, looks at ADULT TOM, puzzled. Then a glimmer of recognition. Then his face lights up.

OLD JOE
Ai ya! It's you! Look at you!
Big man now!

ADULT TOM is incredulous.

ADULT TOM
Wow, Uncle Joe!

ADULT TOM awkwardly shakes his hand, not knowing whether an embrace is appropriate. UNCLE JOE is all smiles.

OLD JOE
(IN CANTONESE)
You used to be so small! Now look
at you! A giant!

Then OLD JOE notices that ADULT MAY has joined her brother. He stares at her, in silence. She looks at him, as well.

ADULT MAY
Uncle Joe...

OLD JOE
May...

OLD JOE stares at ADULT MAY, speechless.

225

INT. MODERN RESTAURANT (LAST WEEK) DAY
ADULT TOM, ADULT MAY, OLD JOE, WAITRESS, DINERS X 4.

225

In a shopping mall restaurant, tea is being poured. ADULT TOM and ADULT MAY sit with OLD JOE.

ADULT TOM
We never thought we'd see you
again. We thought you must have
been deported.

OLD JOE
No, you mother tried to deport me.

OLD JOE looks at ADULT MAY brightly.

OLD JOE
But you save me. Warn me!

ADULT MAY is surprised, then she remembers.

ADULT MAY
Oh my God, that's right. I
completely forgot.

226 INT. CHUNG ON- KITCHEN (1972) DAY 226
JOE, WINNIE, BING, CHAN.

We flash back to 1972. JOE hangs up the telephone, his
expression ashen.

JOE is conversing with BING and WINNIE. WINNIE shakes her
head in disbelief.

WINNIE
(IN CANTONESE)
Ai-ya! Why would she do this? She
has gone too far this time!

BING reaches into his wallet, and peels out a roll of twenty
dollar bills.

227 INT. CHUNG ON- KITCHEN (1972) DAY 227
MEN IN SUITS X 4, CHAN, WING.

IMMIGRATION OFFICERS burst into the CHUNG ON kitchen. CHAN
and WING are there, but there's no sign of JOE.

OLD JOE (VO)
I go to airport and catch airplane
to Perth.

228 INT. GOLDEN BOWL RESTAURANT/KITCHEN (1972) NIGHT 228
JOE.

JOE is in the kitchen, working fast and furious.

OLD JOE (VO)
Work in the Golden Bowl Chinese
Restaurant in Perth for seven
years. I become head cook.

228A INT. MONTAGE (1972) DAY/NIGHT 228A

We cut to a montage of the most spectacular array of
traditional Chinese food. Whole snappers, chilli mud crabs,
barbequed pork, abalone casseroles, Peking duck.

229

EXT. DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE (1972) DAY

229

Documentary footage of Gough Whitlam, and the "It's Time" Campaign.

OLD JOE (VO)

Then, in 1974, Gough Whitlam let immigrants stay...

AL GRASSBY, the colourful Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam government, make a public announcement on the evening news.

OLD JOE (VO)

I am Australian citizen. Don't have to worry, anymore.

230

INT. MODERN RESTAURANT (LAST WEEK) DAY

230

ADULT TOM, ADULT MAY, OLD JOE, BACKGROUND AS FOR 225

OLD JOE's face shines with emotion as he remembers this day.

OLD JOE

After seven years, I come back. Work as head chef in best restaurant in Melbourne. Part owner now. I try to find you. Ask Winnie, ask Kim, ask everyone. No one know where you are.

ADULT MAY

We didn't have much to do with the Chinese restaurant people after our mother died.

OLD JOE

Your mother. She have a hard life.

ADULT MAY nods her head. She still feels the sadness of this.

OLD JOE

When I come back from Perth, I look for you everywhere. Ask for "May Hong". And May Hong ring me up. I make time to meet her.

ADULT TOM looks at ADULT MAY.

ADULT TOM

Did you forget that as well?

ADULT MAY looks puzzled.

231 INT. CHUNG ON (1979) NIGHT 231
JOE, CHINESE WOMAN, LONE PATRON, CHINESE WAITRESS.

JOE is anxious, dressed in his finest clothes. He's sitting at the Chung On Chinese restaurant, waiting. The door opens, and a CHINESE WOMAN enters. She's in her forties.

OLD JOE (VO)
The wrong May Hong! Same name, no
same woman!

JOE's smile collapses in disappointment.

232 INT. MODERN RESTAURANT (LAST WEEK) DAY 232
ADULT TOM, ADULT MAY, OLD JOE, BACKGROUND AS FOR 225.

OLD JOE laughs heartily. ADULT MAY smiles as well. Then OLD JOE is serious.

OLD JOE
You know why I come back? Eh?

ADULT MAY looks at OLD JOE shyly.

OLD JOE
Come back to take care of you. To
marry you.

ADULT MAY glances at ADULT TOM, embarrassed. He intervenes.

ADULT TOM
So, did you ever have your own
family?

OLD JOE nods, sadly. He looks around the restaurant.

OLD JOE
Yes. After I no can find you, I
get married to good woman. Have
two sons - one is doctor and one is
dentist.

ADULT MAY
You must be very proud.

OLD JOE nods.

OLD JOE
Yes, very proud... You husband, he
good man?

ADULT MAY
He's a very good man.

ADULT TOM glances at ADULT MAY. She gives nothing away.

OLD JOE
You have happy marriage?

ADULT MAY
Yes. Very happy. Thank you.

OLD JOE gets a far away look in his eyes.

OLD JOE
Many times, I think how different
my life would be if I can find you.
You beautiful girl, you know.

ADULT MAY
Thank you, Uncle Joe.

OLD JOE
Not Uncle Joe, just Joe.

ADULT MAY
Thank you Joe.

OLD JOE smiles. Remembering that he said this before, many years earlier. MAY smiles as well. A mutual acknowledgement of what was.

OLD JOE
You need good man, take care of
you.

OLD JOE sees that ADULT MAY is feeling awkward. He turns his attention to ADULT TOM.

OLD JOE
And you, you married? Children?

ADULT TOM
No, not married.

OLD JOE
Why not married, what wrong with
you?

ADULT MAY laughs.

233

EXT. MODERN RESTAURANT (LAST WEEK) DAY
ADULT TOM, ADULT MAY, OLD JOE.

233

OLD JOE, ADULT MAY, and ADULT TOM are saying their goodbyes outside the restaurant. ADULT TOM gives OLD JOE his business card.

ADULT TOM

If you ever come to Sydney, give me
a call...

OLD JOE digs into his wallet and fishes out an old instamatic
photograph. He gets a pen out of his top pocket and writes
his phone number on the back.

OLD JOE
I'm happy you have good marriage,
eh? Good life.

ADULT MAY
Thank you, Uncle Joe.

OLD JOE
I keep this, from before. But now,
it is time I give back to you.

He hands the photograph to ADULT MAY, who looks at it,
surprised and moved.

ADULT MAY
Thank you.

OLD JOE
Yes, you have good life. I am
happy.

For a moment, he seems choked with emotion. Then he gathers
himself, and leaves. They watch him go.

234 INT. STUDIO (PRESENT) DAY

234

A close up of a photograph. In it, we see MAY. But the shot
is very wide, and we can barely see her. She is small and
distant.

ADULT TOM (VO)
This is the photograph that Joe
gave back to May.

We track closer and closer towards the photo, so that MAY
comes closer to us.

ADULT TOM (VO)
He took it that day on the beach.
May is so far away, you can barely
see her. You can only imagine.

As we come closer and closer to the photograph, MAY's image
becomes more and more blurry. It's as though the closer we
get to her, the further away she actually is.

ADULT TOM (VO)
Which is what Uncle Joe must have
been doing these past thirty years.
Imagining and longing.

EXT. STREETS (LAST WEEK) DAY
ADULT TOM, ADULT MAY, BACKGROUND TBC.

ADULT MAY and ADULT TOM walk away from restaurant, back towards ADULT MAY's car.

ADULT TOM
 Why didn't you tell me you warned
 Uncle Joe?

ADULT MAY
 I told you, I forgot.

ADULT TOM shakes his head. He puts his arm through his sister's. She stops and reflects.

ADULT MAY
 (PROUD OF HERSELF)
 I was heroic, wasn't I?

ADULT TOM laughs. He puts his arm around his sister. She leans her head against his shoulder. Talking with OLD JOE has made her think about her mother. *

ADULT MAY
 Sometimes I miss her so much, Tom.
 I wish she could see us now. I
 wish she could meet her
 grandchildren... *

ADULT TOM snorts. *

ADULT TOM
 (JOKING)
 And fuck up their lives as well?

ADULT MAY
 Don't say things like that. *

ADULT TOM
 I was just joking. *

ADULT MAY is annoyed.

ADULT MAY
 I hate it when you say things like
 that. *

ADULT TOM shrugs. ADULT MAY is still annoyed. *

ADULT MAY
 Our mother slaved all of her life
 for us. She couldn't read or
 write. She had to work shit jobs
 so we were never hungry. *

You don't know what she went
through so we could survive. She
loved us more than anything.

*
*
*

ADULT TOM
(STUBBORN)
I don't remember it that way.

*
*
*

ADULT TOM looks at his sister.

*

ADULT MAY
Let me tell you a story.

*
*

She puts her arm in his, and they continue to walk down the
street.

*
*

ADULT TOM (VO)
That afternoon, for the first time,
May told me the story our mother
had told her.

*
*
*

236 INT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 236
ADULT TOM.

ADULT TOM is at his computer, typing.

ADULT TOM
The night my mother died, I
remember thinking, "I should cry
now". But I didn't.

237 INT. BILL'S HOUSE - TOM'S ROOM (1972) NIGHT 237
TOM.

Cut back to eleven year old TOM. Sitting on his bed. Stony
faced.

ADULT TOM (VO)
In all these years, I have never
shed a tear for her.

We move closer and closer to TOM. He is completely
expressionless.

238 INT. ADULT TOM'S OFFICE (PRESENT) DAY 238
ROSE, ADULT TOM.

Dissolve to ADULT TOM writing.

ADULT TOM
Instead, I write about her.
Bringing her back to life, over and
over. Perhaps to understand her.
Or to punish her. Or just to
remember... to feel... to accept to
love...

ADULT TOM pauses. He closes his eyes. We hear the sound of
a Mandarin love ballad.

In the background, we see ROSE entering the room in her
beautiful cheung sam. She is proud, glamorous and beautiful.
She walks behind ADULT TOM, whose eyes are still closed.
ADULT TOM presses his head against his mother's arm and
closes his eyes, luxuriating in her touch. Fade to black.

CREDITS