

EXT. STREET - DAWN

The streets are still dim, grey-blue light barely touching the high-rises. Neon signs flicker off. A few early lorries rumble past.

CHAN KWOK-WING (48), a security guard wearing a crumpled uniform, drags his feet as he leaves his night shift. With heavy eyes and shoulders slumped with exhaustion, he checks his cheap smartphone.

On screen: One unread message from 2 hours ago - "Want anything for breakfast?" No reply from "Ming".

Kwok-Wing sighs and pockets his phone. He stops at a small 24-hour cha chaan teng stall and buys a simple meal of congee, two mantou, and a carton of milk. He pays with pocket change, carefully counting his coins. With the flimsy plastic bag in hand, he heads home.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC HOUSING FLAT - LIVING ROOM - 6:20 AM

Situated in a crowded estate, the flat is cramped and worn. The cheap wallpaper is peeling in every corner and only the sound of arguing neighbours and the run down fan can be heard.

Kwok-Wing enters quietly, and places the plastic bag of food on the small table. He crashes onto the old sofa, eyes closing immediately from fatigue.

CHAN MING (17) stirs on his mattress. He sits up, still in yesterday's school shirt.

KWOK-WING

(groggy, without sitting up)
我唔知你想食乜...所以買咗饅頭。(I didn't know if you wanted anything... but I got mantou.)

MING

I'm not hungry. But thanks.

Ming grabs his school bag, barely glances at the food, and heads out the door. The metal gate clangs shut.

Kwok-Wing stays on the sofa, already drifting to sleep.

CUT TO:

His eyes wander to the pile of unfinished schoolwork stashed at the corner of Ming's desk. He mindlessly flips through the stacks and grimaces at the sight of the papers fully marked in red. He sighs and puts it back in place.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC HOUSING FLAT - DAY -

Ming returns from school to an empty apartment. He has miscellaneous papers spilling out of his backpack, both sketches and half-finished school work. His arms are covered in dry paint.

 MING
 (projecting as if speaking to
 someone)
 I'm home.

He walks towards the fridge to find something to eat and sees a note stuck to the fridge door. He sighs as he realises his dad already left for work. "There is food for dinner in the fridge. Make sure you finish your homework before anything else."

Ming reads the note and opens the fridge to see his untouched breakfast. He grabs a mantou and heads to his room.

He sits at his desk and opens his schoolbag, pulling out crumpled papers and a scuffed up textbook. While doing school work, he scribbles and re-writes his answers over and over again, clearly struggling. Mindlessly, he begins sketching on the margin of his textbook, then on a loose sheet.

INT. SECURITY GUARD OFFICE / LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Kwok-Wing sits at a tiny desk, eating cold leftovers from a styrofoam box while watching CCTV monitors. His phone buzzes - a bank notification about low balance. He rubs his tired eyes.

Intercut with him on patrol, nodding politely to rich residents while his own uniform looks worn.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSING FLAT - EVENING -

Kwok-Wing returns from work. Ming is in the living room, packing his schoolbag, about to leave for school.

Just as he is about to leave, he stops at the door. He turns to pick up his keys and looks at Kwok Wing.

INT. SCHOOL CANTEEN - DAY

Noisy secondary school canteen. Ming eats silently with two friends.

FRIEND 1

(excited)

Oh, the art exhibition next month! Are any of your parents coming? My sister said she might come if she has time.

FRIEND 2

(laughing)

Mine probably won't. You know how it is.

FRIEND 1 nods and turns to Ming.

FRIEND 1

You should invite your dad. Your painting is the best one. Even Mr Yeung can't stop talking about it

MING

(quiet, looking down at his food)

No... he works the night shift and sleeps during the day. He won't have time.

Ming stays silent after, contemplating whether or not to actually ask his dad.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSING FLAT - DAY -

Kwok-Wing wakes, groggy. He notices the untouched breakfast still on the table, now cold. He sighs, packs it away into the near-empty fridge.

He wanders into his son's tiny room. Canvases lean against the wall - half-finished paintings of cityscapes and figures. Cut open paint tubes, dirty water cups, and dried up paintbrushes litter the desk.

Kwok-Wing picks up a hardened brush, stares at it. A flicker of guilt crosses his face.

KWOK-WING

(muttering to himself)

...全部舊同乾嘅 (They've all gotten old).

MING
I have-

KWOK-WING
我見到- (I saw-)

MING
Oh sorry

KWOK-WING
(awkwardly and gruff)
我今日喺你間房見到啲畫。其實都畫得唔差。(I
saw the paintings in your room today.
They're not bad.)

Ming looks surprised.

MING
(hesitant)
There's an art exhibition at school next month... Would you
come?

Kwok-Wing pauses, then nods once.

KWOK-WING
我可能會有額外嘅班。我試下。(I might have
an extra shift, but yeah. I'll try)

Ming smiles and nods

KWOK-WING (CONT'D)
噉係咪要浪費咗好多時間？你知你嚟緊有考試。
(Does it take up a lot of your time?
You know you have exams coming up.)

Ming smiles and heads out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL ART ROOM - DAY

Ming stays behind after class. The room is quiet except for
the soft scratch of brushes. He works on his exhibition piece
- the abstract portrait of a distant father and child.

MR. YEUNG (50s, kind but firm art teacher) enters, carrying a
stack of sketchbooks.

MR. YEUNG
Your composition is strong, Ming. The
emotion comes through even without
(MORE)

MR. YEUNG (CONT'D)
faces.(pause) But your teachers keep asking me about your school work. Mr Lee said you haven't submitted your math homework in weeks.

Ming doesn't look up, focused on blending colours.

MING
(quietly)
I'll finish it tonight.

MR. YEUNG
(sighing)
You have real talent Ming. But don't let it affect your school work.

EXT. HOUSING COMPLEX -NIGHT-

Kwok-Wing is pacing outside the housing complex, arguing with his boss on the phone.

KWOK-WING
你知我做咗嘅工時，佢哋全部都記錄咗！ (You know I worked the hours, they're all logged!)

BOSS
(on the phone)
It doesn't matter I never approved it.

KWOK-WING
求吓你啦，我月尾要交租呀 (Please, I need to pay the rent.)

BOSS
Sorry man, I don't have the extra pay.

Kwok-Wing angrily hangs up and heads inside

EXT. PUBLIC HOUSING FLAT - EARLY MORNING

Kwok-Wing enters the flat exhausted and angry and sees Ming sitting in front of the tv, working on a painting.

KWOK-WING
(voice rising immediately)
你做緊乜鬼嘢呀？你畫咗成晚啊？ (What the hell are you doing? have you been painting all night?)

Ming looks up, startled, brush still in hand.

MING

I was just—

KWOK-WING

(angry, tired)

Just what? 你都知你啲成績退步緊。我睇你間房見到嗰堆紙。你未做完功課仲夠膽做呢啲嘢？藝術唔會養你！藝術唔會交租！（Just what? You know your grades are dropping! I saw those papers in your room. You have unfinished homework piling up and you're here wasting time on this? Art won't feed you! Art won't pay the rent!)

MING

(retaliating, voice cracking with frustration)

This is the only thing I'm actually good at! I swear I try to study but I just can't focus — I hate it!

KWOK-WING

我每星期做多過80個鐘，只係為咗開住啲燈同埋畀你嘅學費，只係為咗你可以有好未來！唔係等你可以坐喺度發夢做藝術家！（I work more 80 hours a week just to keep the lights on pay for your tuition, just so you can have a future! Not so you can sit here and dream about being an artist!)

MING

You're never here anyway, so why do you suddenly care what I do?

Kwok-Wing goes silent. Ming glares at him, hurt and defiant. Kwok-Wing shakes his head in disappointment and storms off to his room, slamming the door.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

1) While walking home from work, Kwok-Wing passes by an art store. He stands outside and stares hesitantly but ends up turning the other way and going home.

2) Upon arriving home, he heats up leftovers for Ming and leaves it on the table and leaves a note saying "Breakfast",

before dozing off.

3) Right before leaving for work, he walks to Ming's door and is about to knock. He puts his ear against the door and hears him busy studying. Hu turns and walks away.

INT. SCHOOL HALL - ART EXHIBITION - DAY

The school hall buzzes with parents, students, and teachers. Bright student artworks line the walls under harsh fluorescent lights and colourful handmade banners that read "Secondary 5 Art Exhibition".

Ming stands awkwardly beside his painting, shifting his weight from foot to foot. His piece – an abstract portrait titled "Distance" – hangs prominently.

Ming keeps glancing toward the entrance, then looks down, trying not to hope too much. He fiddles nervously with the hem of his school uniform shirt.

A few classmates and teachers stop by, offering polite compliments. Ming nods politely, his smile tight and forced.

Kwok-Wing appears at the entrance. He is still wearing his crumpled security guard uniform from the night shift, eyes tired and bloodshot. He looks out of place among the neatly dressed parents.

He spots the painting and walks over slowly. Stops a few steps away. He stares at it for a long, quiet beat. His tired face softens as he takes in the painting.

Ming turns, surprised to see him.

MING
爸?

Kwok-Wing just nods at the painting.

He finally turns to look directly at his son. Their eyes meet properly for the first time in a long while. A small, tentative understanding lingers between them.

The father and son stand side by side in front of the artwork as visitors move around them.

Kwok-Wing reaches out and gives Ming's shoulder a single, clumsy pat. His hand lingers for half a second, then drops.

The city hum continues outside, but in that moment, the

distance feels just a little smaller.