INT. HOME - 2012 DAY
There is an armchair to the left that is occupied by GRANDMA (64). There is a bookshelf in the back and a table in the center with chairs around it. There is a door to the right with a drawer beside it.

The door opens. ANDY (8) and DAD (32) walk in, laughing, holding heavy grocery bags that they lay out on the table. Grandma smiles.

INT. HOME - 2035 DAY
An empty panel appears on screen [RECT/CENTER]. ANDY (30) walks in frame. He stops, lost in thought. The panel unveils. The entire place is cleared out except for the armchair and some storage boxes around it.

Andy moves towards the pile of boxes near the armchair, spotting one clearly marked "Andy" with a red packet atop it. He holds up the envelope, but immediately sets it back down. He then takes out his phone as he begins calling someone. They pick up.

Andy
Mom, we've been over this. I don't need your money.
(pause, inaudible)
Well, then what's inside?

Andy goes to open the envelope as his mom responds over the phone.

Andy
Fine, I'll take a look. But if this is just another-

Andy feels something inside the red packet. He takes it out, immediately stopping in his tracks. It is a polaroid of a couple and a young boy.

<u>OPENING CREDITS</u> - One by one, scattered polaroids depicting a couple and a young boy are added in frame on top of the red packet.

INT. HOME - 2012 DAY

A panel of ANDY (8) appears on screen [SQ/CENTER] over the young boy in the polaroid. He sits at the table finishing up breakfast while reading. The panel unveils. GRANDMA (64) sits on the armchair, reading a newspaper. MOM (32) goes to grab Andy's empty bowl off the table.

Mom
Andy, 要迟到了[Andy, you're going to be late]

Andy
马上[One sec]

Mom
Andy, 你别-[Andy, stop-]

Andy
马上, 我快好了[One sec, I'm almost done]

DAD (32) walks in.

Dad
(stern)
够了，走[Enough. Get going]

Andy reluctantly gets up. Walking off in a sullen state.

Grandma
你也别老这么说他，孩子还小呢[Don't be so hard on him, he's still a kid]
(turns to Mom)
还有你，哪有你这样当妈的-[And you, take a look at yourself-]

Dad
妈[Mom]

Grandma
自己的儿子都管不了，还想-[Can't even get your own son to listen to you, and you expect-]

Dad
妈！[Mom!]

Andy reenters the room with his backpack and head draped down. He heads towards the door, but is interrupted by grandma.

Grandma
安安，照片[Andy. The pictures]

Grandma pulls out the same red packet as before. Andy walks back to grab the envelope before heading out the door.

INT. HOME - 2012 NIGHT

A panel of Andy appears on screen [SQ/CENTER]. He is searching through his backpack on the table. The panel unveils. Grandma sits on the armchair. Andy finds the red packet, and walks towards her, giving grandma the envelope.

Grandma
安安，你那个- 叫什么来着？[Andy, your- What's it called again?]

Andy
Show and tell

Grandma
对，就那个。怎么样？[Yea, that. How'd it go?]

Andy
不错。我还写了篇关于你和爸爸的作文[Pretty good. I even wrote about you and dad]

Grandma
我能看看吗？[Can I read it?]

Andy

可是是英文[But it's in english]

Grandma

那你帮我翻译一下呗[Help me translate it]

Andy goes back to grab his essay out of his backpack. Grandma takes a polaroid out of the red packet. She stares at it, initially with a wistful smile that slowly evolves into a frown. Andy turns, noticing his grandma's expression.

INT. HOME - 2035 DAY

ANDY (30) is beginning to get annoyed. He starts to rant over the phone.

Andy

Mom, why are you sending me these now?

(pause, inaudible)

No. No, come on. If this is about dad, we've been over this. I don't want anything to do with him.

(pause, inaudible)

Stop- Stop bringing her up, this isn't about her-

Suddenly, a letter along with the remaining polaroids drop out of the red packet, splattering across the ground. Andy goes to pick the letter up. He is immediately perplexed by its content.

The voice of mom begins reading the letter aloud in english but it is composed from grandma's POV.

Mom

(V.O.)

Dear Andy,

As my days draw to a close, I can only hope this letter finds you in a time of peace. Though I fear I have asked for a peace that has always eluded this family. Much like with my son, your father, I fear that you too have inherited a restless heart.

INT. HOME - 2018 DAY

A panel of GRANDMA (70) and DAD (38) appears on screen [RECT/LEFT].

Grandma

你跟我说实话，医生到底怎么说的[Be honest, how long did they give me]

Dad

妈，不是-[Mom, it's not-]

(locks eyes with Grandma, sighs)

几个月，最多半年[A few months, six tops]

The panel unveils. ANDY (14) stares at his dad and grandma with a backpack on his shoulders, stunned.

Andy

What- What are you talking about?

Grandma

安安，大人的事你不用管[Andy, we're just discussing adult matters]

Andy

Dad! Tell me what's going on.

Dad

We didn't want you to worry. By the time it started spreading-

Andy

What? And you didn't think I deserved to know?

Dad

Andy, you're going to be late. We'll talk about it later.

Andy

Whatever. You're always like this.

INT. HOME - 2018 NIGHT

A panel of Grandma and MOM (38) appears on screen [RECT/LEFT] over the armchair.

Mom

(to grandma)

哪有你这样当妈的。自己的儿子都管不了，还想-[Take a look at yourself. You can't even manage your own son and you expect-]

A panel of Andy by the doorway appears on screen [RECT/RIGHT]. The panel unveils. Mom turns towards him, falling silent. Andy stares at her and grandma for a moment before storming off.

Mom (CONT'D)

Andy. Andy wait

INT. HOME - 2018 MONTHS LATER

A panel of an empty armchair appears on screen [RECT/LEFT]. A panel of grandma's portrait appears on screen [SQ/CENTER] over the bookshelf. The panel unveils. It is raining outside. No one is home.

INT. HOME - 2035 DAY

ANDY (30) is now totally infuriated.

Andy

Mom. Mom! I know you're capable of a lot but- But writing a letter in grandma's stead? What were you even thinking?

(pause, inaudible)

You can't seriously believe that I would fall for this. It's in english for god's sake and the handwriting is so clearly yours.

(pause, inaudible)

No. No, you didn't translate shit for her. I'm not stupid mom. I saw how you two never talked. You didn't know her. She hated you for crying out loud.

(pause)

That- That was uncalled for.

(pause, feeling guilty)

Mom. That night I came home. What went down between you two?

Mom gives an inaudible response over the phone. Andy gradually begins to have an epiphany as his hand slowly drops in realization.

INT. HOME - 2018 NIGHT

A panel of GRANDMA (70) and MOM (38) appears on screen [RECT/LEFT] over the armchair. The panel unveils. Mom kneels beside grandma, writing as she dictates the letter in Mandarin.

Grandma

最后我签个名就行了[I'll just sign at the bottom]

Mom hands over the letter. She sighs.

Grandma (CONT'D)

这么多年过去，偏偏要等到我得了这场倒霉的病，那两个急脾气的又闹翻了，咱们才总算能坐下来好好说说话[After all this time, all it took was this godforsaken condition and another rift between those two hotheads for us to finally make some peace]

(pause, they make eye contact)

对了，还有件事想麻烦你[Hey, can I ask one last favor of you?]

Mom

没问题[Yea, sure]

Grandma

我有个红包，里面装着我老公的照片。安安以前还带到学校过。你把这封信放进去吧[There's a red packet I stored my husband's polaroids in. Andy brought it to school years ago. Please add this in]

Grandma hands mom the letter she just transcribed.

Grandma (CONT'D)

(remorseful)

那天的事，我到现在还记得。当时把火全撒你身上了[I still remember that day. I really let loose on you]

Mom

你哪天不是这样啊[Wasn't that every day?]

They chuckle.

Grandma

安安那天都在，我还说- 说-[Andy was there and I was just like- Like-]

Mom

(joking)

哪有你这样当妈的。自己的儿子都管不了，还想-[Take a look at yourself. You can't even manage your own son and you expect-]

ANDY (14) walks in. Mom turns towards him, falling silent. Andy stares at her and grandma for a moment before storming off.

Mom (CONT'D)

Andy. Andy wait

(sighs, stands up)

我来跟他说[I'll go talk to him]

Grandma

(musters all her strength)

等下，我- 我就想说声对不起[Wait, I- I just wanted to say that I'm sorry]

INT. HOME - 2018 MONTHS LATER

A panel of an empty armchair appears on screen [RECT/LEFT]. A panel of the bookshelf appears on screen [SQ/CENTER]. Mom places grandma's portrait on the bookshelf. A panel of the drawer appears on screen [RECT/RIGHT]. Mom locates the red packet and puts in the letter.

INT. HOME - 2035 DAY

ANDY (30) is speechless. He goes to sit on the armchair, lays his phone down, and picks the letter back up. Mom's voice begins to read the rest of it aloud.

The voice of the reader slowly shifts to grandma's voice in mandarin. Andy also gradually drops his hand down as his childhood begins to unfold in front of him from grandma's POV.

A panel of a door appears on screen [RECT/RIGHT]. The door opens. ANDY (8) and DAD (32) walk in, laughing, holding heavy grocery bags that they lay out on the table. ANDY (30) looks on with a bittersweet smile.

Mom/Grandma

(V.O.)

[Still, I hope when you look back upon these years, you never lose that bright smile of your father's. I hope you and he will continue to share laughter and tears, just as he once did with his own father. If nothing else, I hope the years ahead will bring you both a kinder ending than the one they knew. Andy, in time, I hope you find it in you to do that which your father never could. Love, <u>Chinese Name</u>]

The panel transporting Andy back to 2012 disappears as grandma finishes reading the letter aloud. Overcome with emotions, he picks his phone back up.

Andy

Mom, I'm ready. I'm ready to talk to him.

<u>TITLE</u> - *Once We Were* HERE