

GROUP YOURSELVES INTO TWO

Sequence Treatment

Written by: Ashley Ajero

CIIT College of Arts and Technology

MA307-13 Scriptwriting

Year 2 / BMMA / Film & Video Production

Instructor: Maria Zita S. Garganera

LOGLINE

A mannered girl and a talkative boy are paired together for a school thesis, forcing them to overcome their differences until their college graduation as they discover what they call “love.”

SYNOPSIS

On the first day of their fourth year of college, what was meant to be a fresh start turns into something neither of them expected. Two very different people begin an adventure of self-discovery that will stay with them long after graduation. One hides behind every know-it-all type, responsibility, and perfection, while the other person hides very deep fears with humor, recklessness, and happy memories. After having a chance to meet their opposite lives, they slowly learn each other's perspectives and become a shoulder for academic and personal setbacks, through sleepless nights, late homework, failed quizzes, and even family conflicts. As the months pass, their bond deepens into something they never expected to happen, longing for more than a friendship. While chasing their ambitions and facing their flaws, they learn together that the most opposite version of themselves is the person who will be their so-called “home.”

Character Profiles

1. Mira Xiu

20 years old

Background: She came and was raised in a strict Filipino & Chinese family with traditional parents who always value discipline, academics, and reputation. She is the oldest child in the family and expected to be the “perfect example” to all.

Internal Conflict: She secretly wants to have freedom and experience teenage life, but feels guilty whenever she does it.

External Conflict: She's having a hard time expressing her feelings not only to Nico but also the burden she carries outside school.

Core Flaw: She is emotionally unavailable, as she's afraid of embarrassment, and importantly, she carries a lot of pressure.

Character Arc: During an individual presentation that came to be a midterms exam, Nico had a crazy idea to ruin Mira's presentation and make her realize to have a freedom for herself. Nico successfully did his idea and ruined Mira's presentation, which ended up her crying and realizing what Nico did. She finally speaks and stands up for herself, and she learns to have freedom and experience real life. She slowly starts to accept and let her heart develop feelings for Nico. She learns love isn't something you schedule, it just happens.

2. Nico Reyes

21 years old

Background: He's pure Filipino and the middle child in the family. He grew up not having a mother and no one taught him to be reserved. However, he has strengths such as being charismatic, friendly with everyone, and having intuitive emotionality.

Internal Conflict: He acts like everything is fine, just like in his comedic jokes, but the truth is, he's scared that people might know the burden he's carrying.

External Conflict: He doesn't know how to be reserved or start acting like a proper student, which leads him to joke about every struggle he has.

Core Flaw: He literally avoids serious conversations, and by that, every joke he makes has a hidden problem.

Character Arc: It is when he overhears Mira telling her friends that she can't rely on him because he's "not serious about everything." He starts to be academically active and learns how to be responsible. As time goes by, he's still talkative to everyone, especially to Mira, but this time with limitations. He doesn't just make people laugh anymore, he becomes someone people can lean on.

Antagonistic Force

Mira and Nico's struggle is not only with each other's differences but also with the conflicts within themselves. Mira is a perfectionist, responsible, intelligent, and a hard-working person, yet beneath her discipline, she secretly longs to experience a freedom of teenage life. Whenever she allows herself a moment of that freedom, the guilt she has quickly comes to her. Nico, on the other hand, is friendly with everyone and known as the class clown. He always avoids serious conversations and often appears disorganized and carefree. However, behind his jokes and easygoing personality, he hides a deeper secret that, if people look too closely, they might discover the burden he has been quietly carrying for a long time. Their contrasting personalities create tension between them, while their personal struggles remain hidden beneath the surface.

Supporting Character

- **Angel Diaz** plays the role of Mira's closest friend in her life and protector throughout the story. She often becomes the voice that Mira sometimes struggles to express, reminding her of who she really is whenever pressure or self-doubt takes over her. Angel encourages her when she begins to question herself, making her a very observant friend of hers. She is also protective of Mira, especially whenever Nico teases her. Angel becomes Mira's number one supporter in her journey.

- **Andrei Bautista** serves as Nico's emotional support system and the only person who truly understands what Nico is going through. Andrei is also mature enough to recognize when things are not actually okay around Nico. He listens, offers advice, and helps Nico face the things he usually hides behind humor.

Sequence Treatment

The short film opens with a warm, slow-motion montage of flashbacks from five years earlier during Mira and Nico's college days. Inside the university rooms and along the campus hallways, Mira, Nico, Angel, and Andrei walk together while laughing and eating their snacks. At night, the four of them study at school study rooms, surrounded by notebooks, laptops, a stack of papers, and coffee while working on school projects and plates. A quick flash shows them reviewing notes in classrooms for recitations and some of them rushing across campus before class starts. Moments from the graduation day can be seen in the flashback. Over these warm color-graded memories, a voice-over of Mira and Nico's narration reflects on that time, creating a nostalgic tone from them as the montage fades out and the story returns to the beginning of their fourth academic year.

Inside Mira's bedroom early in the morning, before her fourth year of school starts, she carefully puts her neatly ironed uniform on the bed before getting ready. She sits at her desk chair beside her window, and she reviews a planner she filled before the semester started with class schedules and personal goals for the whole academic year. Inside the dining area of their house, Mira eats breakfast while her parents constantly reminding her about maintaining her academic performance. Outside their house along the neighborhood street, she walks toward the bus stop while adjusting the strap of her school bag. A transition to Nico's bedroom across the city, he wakes up late, brushes his hair with his fingers while searching through a messy desk for his notebooks and unnecessary things to put in his bag. In front of the mirror in his room, Nico fixes his hair quickly but still ends up looking messy. Inside the small kitchen of their house, with dark and quiet surroundings, he casually grabs food from the fridge, even if it is still cold, while checking his phone messages from friends. He goes out and straight up runs towards a jeepney stop while greeting nearby neighbors with his charismatic energy.

In the middle of the university hallways, outside their classroom during the first week of the semester, full of introductions and orientations, Mira walks toward the door while holding her notebooks and extra books close to her chest. When she's near their classroom entrance, she smiles and greets her best friend Angel before stepping inside the room. Suddenly, Nico teases Mira before she enters, which is later backed up by her friend Angel. Inside the classroom, Mira sits in the front row and carefully arranges the books she's holding onto the desk. Meanwhile, outside the same classroom hallway, Nico walks into the room while joking around again with his friend Andrei. In the classroom doorway, Nico burst out a loud laugh that filled the classroom inside. Nico steps inside the room and drops his backpack effortlessly onto his chair in the back row, and sits beside Andrei while leaning comfortably against his chair. Angel starts to whisper to Mira about how carefree Nico is. Minutes later, the professor enters and announces that students must complete a major thesis project in pairs for the whole academic year. Students begin whispering and looking

for partners while the professor starts assigning pairs randomly that surprises the students. When the professor reads the names of the pairs, Mira and Nico hear their name together and quickly look across the room with a surprised and confused faces. After class, Mira initiates first and approaches Nico to invite him to the library for a group meeting about their thesis project.

During the afternoon break, Mira sits in a corner of the library with several stacks of paper and books neatly arranged in front of her. Minutes later, Nico arrives late past their call time. He placed his bag on the table in front of Mira, which surprised Mira because of his reckless actions. He sits across the table with Mira, and she later on explains their project schedules, responsibilities, and deadlines while pointing at a detailed to-do list written in her notebook. Nico listens while spinning a pen between his fingers and randomly making jokes that tease her groupmate, Mira, without knowing that he has been struggling lately in his house, making his jokes comedic but hiding a very deep pain at the same time. Nico suddenly laughed louder than Mira expected, which made her face wear furrowed brows. Mira sighs and reminds him to take their project seriously. Nico starts to suggest a few creative ideas to improve their research topic, which makes Mira question herself again if her groupmate is a good or bad partner. She writes down his suggestions while starting to see the difference between them.

Weeks later, during lunch break in their cafeteria, Mira and Nico sit across from each other while reviewing their printed pages of their thesis draft and eating their lunch meals. Angel and Andrei suddenly join the table with them while teasing the two about how often they work together, which annoys Mira, while Nico loves it more. Hours later, the four of them are now walking together while laughing and eating their snacks around the campus. Inside the school, in a study room one evening, Mira and Nico sit side by side while editing their thesis document on a laptop. Nico starts to talk about stories from his childhood while Mira, sitting beside him, quietly listens while typing extra parts in their research. Nico unexpectedly shows a small polaroid and notes from friends keeping it as memories, which made Mira question herself again about what she did in her past life. Nico starts glancing at her secretly while he fidgets with small things in his fingers. Inside her bedroom later that night, Mira writes secret thoughts in a letter about the feelings she cannot express openly.

Inside the classroom, near the midterms week, Mira sits in the front row while reviewing the professor's comments from their previous class about their thesis project. Beside her is Nico, with his improper sitting position while talking to his classmates behind him. Mira secretly glances at Nico to see what he's doing. The next professor enters the room, simultaneously announcing in the class that their physics midterm presentation will take a large part of their grades. Mira grips her notebook tightly while thinking about the expectations of her family. After class, Mira quickly walks out of the room, followed by Nico into the hallway while trying to lighten her

mood with his jokes. Walking through the corridor toward the staircase, Mira explains how important the presentation is for her future. Nico watches her worry while realizing how much pressure she carries about academics compared to him, who no one cares about.

During the midterm presentation day, Nico and Angel tries to calm Mira, who is currently being restless due to nervousness. Nico stared at Mira for a long time, thinking about what he could do to Mira. She noticed Nico's actions and did the same thing to him, which made her uneasy minutes later. Mira walks and stands beside the projector screen to present her physics midterm presentation. At the front, she confidently explains the slides displayed behind her. Students sit quietly while the professor observes the presentation. From his seat, Nico suddenly stands and interrupts the presentation with unexpected behavior. He made Mira realize the importance of being free in yourself and stop caging herself from expectations and pressure. The structured presentation of Mira immediately falls apart as classmates begin whispering around the room. Mira is now embarrassed by Nico's action. Near the professor's desk, the teacher looks concerned while watching the disruption. The presentation ends with Mira running away outside the class.

Outside the classroom, Mira walks quickly towards the women's bathroom while avoiding Nico's attempts to speak with her. Nico tries to explain himself, but Mira continues walking away and enters the bathroom. Angel saw Mira alone, wiping her tears at the bench near the court field. She sat beside her and began to comfort her friend. Mira explains that she cannot rely on Nico because he never takes things seriously, even if it will affect someone's grade. She started to cry all out about what she's carrying from the very start, when he meets Nico. Angel advises different things and encourages Mira to speak up for herself. Around the corner of the pathways, Nico overhears the conversation without being seen. Standing alone beside the wall, he realizes how deeply he hurt her from his reckless actions. Unexpectedly, Andrei came out of nowhere and started to advise Nico to limit himself and not involve his carefree personality in others, despite of his family background.

In the library, a week later, when the two thesis project partners, Mira and Nico, didn't pay much attention to each other, their two friends were thinking about when they would make up and start to talk again while staring at Nico, who sat alone inside the library. Nico carefully writes notes and organizes the documents related to their upcoming thesis defense. Andrei and Angel whisper about how Nico's doing has changed lately. Inside their classroom during typical classes, Nico actively answers the professor's questions about their lesson. Sitting across the room, Mira watches him with a quiet, surprised look. After class, Nico calmly approaches Mira and apologizes for what happened one week earlier. Mira listens to Nico while considering his effort to change earlier in class. Later that evening, inside a different room, Mira approaches Nico and asks to continue working together, which surprises

Nico, Andrei, and Angel. Nico stands from his chair and tightly hugs Mira to accept her proposal to work together again. He starts to tease everyone in the room and starts bragging that both of them are now on good terms.

Outside the thesis defense hall, different pairs of groups are walking back and forth to ease their nervousness. Mira and Nico are in their formal attire. Nico saw that Mira couldn't avoid being anxious, so he started to grab her hands and comfort her. Their eyes meet, but Mira breaks the tension between them. Nico quickly grabs her face and starts advising that everything will be fine, but it will not be perfect, just like her family's expectations. They smiled at the same time and released a big exhale to ease their nervousness. Stepping inside the defense hall, they see Angel and Andrei and their pairs walking out with a big smile to support the next pair, Mira and Nico. Mira started the presentation so well that the panels nodded to each other. In the middle of the presentation, Mira's hands suddenly shake, and Nico sees what's happening. He grabs her hand and replaces Mira with his part. He talks confidently and with a lot of knowledge, which seems like he's secretly studying their work without being noticed. Mira looks down to see the two hands holding each other. She realized that sometimes the person who challenges you the most is the one who changes you the most. The panels congratulate and clap their hand as he finishes their defense smoothly and well. Outside the defense hall, Mira and Nico can be seen sharing a tight and loving hug after their smooth thesis presentation. While hugging, Mira whispers to Nico that she loves him. Unexpectedly, Nico responds with the same thing.

Inside the university event hall, 3 months later, Mira and Nico stand among rows of graduating students wearing their caps and gowns. At the stage of the auditorium, the president of the university calls students one by one to receive their diplomas and achievements. Sitting in the audience, Angel and Andrei cheer loudly as their friends walk toward the stage. Mira walks across the stage and receives her diploma with the honor of being Summa Cum Laude from the dean. After stepping down the stairs from the stage, she meets Nico patiently waiting beside the other graduates. Mira runs to Nico, and he starts to spin around while hugging the love of his life. They reflect the lessons they received throughout their academic journey that changed their lives. The hall filled with applause and celebration, and the smiles of the four friends show how much they have grown. These moments mirror the happy memories shown in the opening image montage, but now those memories carry a deeper meaning in life.