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The Long Excuse

By Miwa Nishikawa

Now we go to the Culture team with author Kei Tsumura.
Ten seconds.
Now let's see Mr Tsumura's answer.
'Nue'. Correct.
What is 'Nue'?
An evil spirit from ancient Japanese legend.
A mixture of various animals, tiger, monkey, and snake.
The hero Yorimasa kills it in 'The Tale of the Heike'.
Turn that shit off.
Why? I'm watching it.
You just think I'm showing off.
No, I'm not.
I didn't know anything about Nue.
Liar!
Careful! You're drunk.
No, I'm not.
Oh, a man phoned today who said he was in grade school with you.
He called you 'Sachio'.
About some NPO event.
Your mother gave him our number.
Why didn't she just give him my manager's number?
You don't know him?
Yeah, I know him.
I haven't seen him since I came to Tokyo.
We played together at recess, so we're still buddies?
If he still thinks that, then he's a fan of yours.
I wonder.
He just wants to use me.
Just say 'hello' from now on when you answer the phone, OK?
What?
I'm not supposed to say 'Kinugasa'?
Don't call me by my real name...
Like you did when my publishers were here the other day.
Don't call me 'Sachio'.
I called you 'Sachio'?
I don't think I did.
Four times.
You were counting?
You were deliberately trying to embarrass me.
Embarrass you?
I've always called you that.
Even before you'd written a book.
Meaning I shouldn't forget when you were supporting me?
My dignity might not concern you...

Look...

...surely your dignity is made of sterner stuff than that.

You try living with the same name as the 'iron man' of Japanese baseball.

It makes me sound like an imitation of the real Sachio Kinugasa.

You're not a ballplayer.

Lots of people have the same names as living legends.

And have you ever lived with the same name as a legend?

Have you?

No.

No.

So you wouldn't understand.

I don't want sympathy.

I don't really like myself anyway.

Don't talk like that.

I like 'Kinugasa', and 'Sachio' is a great name.

When we got married I was glad to be rid of plain old 'Tanaka'.

Forget the good old days.

I guess so.

Finished?

Yep. Perfect.

Will you make it?

I sure hope so.

Oh, my suit for tomorrow...

Hey!

It's hanging in the bedroom.

What?

Sorry...

Could you take care of things here?

I was going to.

MOTOKI Masahiro

Sorry!

How are you!

How's Sachio?

I was worried.

TAKEHARA Pistol

Come in.

FUJITA Kenshin

SHIRATORI Tamaki

IKEMATSU Sousuke

KUROKI Haru

Of all the people I've heard at the Blue Note in Aoyama...

...he's one of the best.

It's like the vocals ring out louder and louder.

Wow!

HORIUCHI Keiko

YAMADA Maho

FUKATSU Eri

Directed by

NISHIKAWA Miwa

The blizzard has closed the national route.

Sensei!

Extreme caution is urged in eastern areas.

The storm is also affecting air traffic.

33 flights in the Obihiro region have been canceled.

It's freezing!

Your call cannot be taken at the moment.

You're not picking up?

I never do.

Why not?

It's a pain in the ass.

Who knows what they'll want?

You're self-conscious.

No, I'm not.

Change the channel.

I'm watching this.

I'm at the scene.

A ski tour bus on the way to Misawamura Hot Spring...

... went through a guardrail on a downhill curve...

...and went down the cliff into the frozen lake.

That'd be cold!

You're cold.

Freezing!

That might be your wife.

I doubt it.

'I got here all right.

Are you being a good boy?'

'Hi, honey. Did you sleep well?'

'How's the front-desk clerk?'

Is he worth hitting on?'

Tell her that.

No. You answer.

Shall I?'

Go ahead. See what happens.

Where is she?'

Indeed!

You didn't ask?'

Hello?'

Be this the home of Natsuko Kinugasa?'

I be Oshita by name, of the Yamagata Prefectural Police.
In connection with a bus accident today...
... we'd like to confirm some things with a family member.
Could someone please call us back as soon as you hear this message?

THE LONG EXCUSE:

What did your wife eat last night?

We ate separately.

I had a dinner

I couldn't get out of, and...

Do you remember what she was wearing...

...when she left?

What color?

Don't worry about it.

White?

Did your wife contact you after she'd left?

No, she didn't.

Did you call her?

I understand. I'm the same.

After 20 years, you're long past gazing at each other.

Right?

Mr Kinugasa...

...I'm afraid...

...Mrs Omiya's family has confirmed her death as well.

Who?

Yuki Omiya. She was traveling with your wife.

Oh!

Oh, I see.

They'd been close friends ever since high school?

Uh, yes.

That's right.

I met my wife in our first year of university...

... when she was 19.

I was 21. I'd needed two extra study years.

But her father died suddenly.

She left the university...

...and vanished from my life.

Then while I was job-hunting...

...I ran into her again at a hair salon in Ginza.

As she ran her scissors smoothly over my head...

...full as it was of rejections from publishing companies...

...she said, 'Didn't you tell me you were going to write a novel?'

Stuck for an answer, I was about to mumble an excuse when she said...

... 'Just write one, then.

'That's best for you. '

On that rainy day in June...
...my life as a writer...
...began with my wife.

Natsuko Kinugasa,
Hair Stylist

Her parents are dead...
...so I had her cremated there.
The body was badly damaged, and it was a long way back.
I'm sorry.

You're sorry, Sensei?
We'd have gone to Yamagata, or anywhere else...
...if you'd just told us.
Yes...
But you have customers here...
None of our customers would be angry if we'd gone to mourn her.
They were all hers to begin with.
That's enough.
For 15 years, more than 300 days a year...
...we worked with her from morning till night.
Didn't you stop to think she had her own life as well?
It's hard for him too, Kotoe.
Oh?
Is it, Sensei?
Really?
Settle down, will you!
Sorry.

On that rainy day in June...
...my life as a writer...
...began with my wife.
Just before she left...
...she cut my hair for me.
The warmth of her fingers...
...on my hair, my forehead, and my temples...
...remains distinctly there.
In 20 years...
...no one except my wife has ever cut my hair.
Now I have lost her...
...my hair will continue to grow.
Who will cut it now?
Mr Tsumura emerges...
...holding firmly onto the ashes of his late wife.
It's been three days since he viewed the body in Yamagata.

Kei Tsumura:

'Why did it have to be her and not me?'

'Kei Tsumura'

Accident

A burned out celeb posing as a great writer.

I thought he was a food critic.

Tragedy

Genius

Cheating

Girlfriend

Lies

There were no mechanical problems with the engine, brakes, or steering.

We know of nothing that would have made the bus unsafe.

Mr Sakai had years of experience driving on show-covered roads...

Hey!

Who gives a shit about that!

Calm down!

Just give me back my wife, damn it!

My life's a wreck!

Put it back like it was!

Put it back!

Yeah!

We didn't come to hear how it's not your fault!

Put yourself in our place!

It's inevitable that things will get emotional...

...given the state of mind of everybody involved.

But in terms of this being an unimaginably bitter experience...

...both sides are equal in this...

Sachio!

So the question is how to create a constructive dialogue...

Sachio!

And how to...

Hey! Hey!

We're recording...

Sachio!

That's you, right? It's Omiya.

Yoichi Omiya, Yuki's husband.

I finally meet you!

I should have come to see you...

...but there's been so much going on.

This is the Horai Watch Store.

We've called several times.

The watch you left for repair on January 28th is ready.

It's Naomi.

Naomi Ando, from university.

Remember me?

Do you think we could meet sometime soon?

A circle of light...

... watches over us, like the Buddha, or in pictures of western saints.

Since Natsuko died...

...I can see even on TV that your light is weak.

My guru is terribly worried about you...

...health-wise and finance-wise.

It's OK.

It wasn't your fault.

But...

...if I hadn't been...

That's not true.

I can't sleep!

I understand.

I understand, so don't worry.

Don't, Sensei.

Why not?

Because.

Because what?

It's just...

Just what?

That's not why I came.

Then why did you?

I've been going crazy, too.

You look stupid.

It's not me you're making love to.

You've never made love to anybody.

'Tomorrow's Graduation Day

'This is our last chance

'Fighting to still my heart

'I dialed the phone

'Your number, 6700'

What's up with that?

So Editorial's all excited?

'What a great thing to write about, Tsumura!

'This'll sell!

Get busy and write it!'

Thanks a heap.

You write it!

It's a disgusting idea.

If I have to use my own grief, it's time to lay down my pen.

'Living my theme'?

What does that mean?
What do you think, Ms Hashimoto?
What does that mean?
Well, with all due respect...
...in your writing over the last three years...
...I haven't seen any urge or desire.
None.
There's no passion.
Quiet, Kuwana!
Lay your pen down all you want.
I'm saying you can't write what you know you should!
Your call cannot be taken at the moment.
Please leave your name and a message after the tone.
It's Omiya... 'Yoichi'. Hello.
Uh, 'Good evening'.
I found Yuki's address book and thought I'd call.
Um...
...I don't have anyone to talk about
Yuki and Natsuko with.
So, uh...
...if you feel like it, give me a call.
It's 090-0401-5432.
Yoichi? Why aren't you answering?
Stop playing that game.
I've met up with Natsuko,
We're about to leave Shinjuku.
Just to be safe, put a diaper on Akari.
Make sure they brush their teeth and get to bed.
I'm on my way.
I'll call when we get there.
To erase this message, press 7.
To replay this message, press 1.
To save this message, press 9.
Message saved.
Hello?
Hello?
Yes. Omiya speaking.
Damn good!
Sir?
For him.
Yes, sir.
Thanks.
Akari?
Close your mouth.

Do you come here...
...with lots of stars?
I don't go out with celebrities very much.
So which one are you best friends with?
If you're just on TV now and then, you don't get to be friends.
It's not just 'now and then'.
Yuki recorded every time you were on so I could see them.
Hey!
What are you doing?!
You're wasting good food!
It makes my throat itch!
Perhaps it doesn't agree with her.
Takashi, could you bring her a new plate?
Certainly.
This is all really good!
Right, Shinpei?
It's great!
I've never had food this good!
What's this?
That's Pat de campagne.
It's French. 'Country-style terrine'.
Akari?
She might be full.
It looks like she's sleepy.
Oh, no!
It's anaphylaxis.
She ate shrimp, or crab!
Is she allergic?
Where's that stuff she takes?
You forgot the epinephrine?
Akari! Hey! Akari!
There was crab in the hors-d'oeuvre.
Why didn't you ask first?!
No, it's my fault.
Ambulance!
A taxi's faster.
Nisseki!
Hiro-o Hospital!
Sachio, could you stay with him?
Of course!
Will you wait?
Be right back.
Too much?
No.

My father never did any cooking.
He didn't think.
I never thought about allergies before, either.
I've never had a child.
Hello?
Yeah...
Good!
She's OK.
Yeah, OK.
It's Dad.
I just talk?
Hello?
Hello?
Yes...
So does your dad cook now?
Yes, a little.
Is it good?
Yeah, I guess so.
But not like Mom's...
No.
What did she make?
Your favorite...
Croquettes...
Gyoza...
Those are hard to make.
What else?
Spring rolls...
I love them! With bean sprouts?
Yeah. And chives.
Chives! We have those, too.
My wife made really good spring rolls, too.
Natsuko?
Yes.
The 3-dimensional figure is cut away at point M.
The base line EF and its parallel GH form a level surface.
Answer the following.
Here you are.
'La Salle Academy'...
This is Grade 6 math?
You can solve these?
Let's see...
Yes.
Wow!
What middle school are you trying for?

Kaisei? Azabu? Hibiya?
No, that's a high school.
So where?
Somewhere closer?
Here in the prefecture?
Probably nowhere.
Then what'll you do?
Nothing.
Then why are you going to this cram school?
I'm not going any more.
I'm not applying.
Is that all right with you?
What does your father say?
'I'm sorry'.
'Mommy'
It struck him then that he had never heard...
...the breathing of a sleeping child at night.
Sachio! I'm sorry!
What, Shinpei's asleep?
Mr Omiya...
Shall I come over?
You just need someone twice a week, right?
We're on the same train line.
With a laptop and a notebook,
I can work anywhere.
Mr Omiya, he hasn't given up, you know.
And I think that's good.
I said that.
How else is he going to get over losing his mother?
Without something to stand on, he can't get over it.
Right?
You've only just met him.
Did he tell you that?
Take care.
Telephone! Shinpei! Quick!
Hello?
Yes...
Yes...
I see you!
He's here.
He's here.
Chicken-and-egg bowl.
What time do I meet you at the bus stop?

About 9:

I'll phone if I'm going to be late.
Then what time?

About 9:

So 9:

I'm going, then.
You are? Off you go, then.
Study hard.
Say 'off you go'.
Shinpei's going.
Off you go!
He's gone.
Is it good?
Do you like that?
Rolly!
'Splish splash splish splash Rolly
'Splish splash splish splash Charlie
What's that?
'Splish Splash Rolly'.
That's cute. It's an anime?
You like that?
What's it about? A fish?
What kind of fish?
I'm kind of tired.
What's your problem?
Stop complaining!
I've been swimming all day.
I'm hungry.
I can't search any more.
We can't stop looking now.
Think of how scared Octo must be!
I'm not going to eat that!
It's for Shinpei!
Want to come to the store?
I'm staying here.
Let's go after that's over.
I'm staying here.
Oh.
Sorry, I just bought this here.
There's no shrimp or crab in it, is there?
Not in a cream puff.
You're absolutely sure?

Akari?

I'm going for Shinpei.

Are you staying?

I'm coming.

Akari?

Hmm?

I thought it was you!

How are you?

What are you doing out now?

Hello. We're going to meet her brother...

And you are?

I don't believe we've met.

No, we haven't.

Uh...her father and I are...

He's Daddy's cousin.

Cousin?

Sachio.

I'm Yoichi Omiya's cousin Sachio.

Oh.

Hello.

Please remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop.

Why 'cousin'?

You don't look the same.

Who doesn't?

You don't look anything like Daddy.

They wouldn't believe 'brother'.

I'm amazed she came out with that on the spur of the moment.

The laundry might be getting wet.

Take care, then.

Hurry up!

I'll be late for cram school.

Stop being so selfish!

Akari!

Not only am I going to be late...

Don't kick me!

But at the store...

Stop it!

...she started arguing.

OK! I'll boil some rice.

No!

You said it had to be curry!

I want chickie-face curry!

That was a one-day special at the store, I told you!

Stupid!

Don't say 'stupid'!
I'll do it! It's OK!
You get going, Shinpei.
Your bus'll be leaving.
Akari! Akari!
Let's have curry.
We've got some.
Off you go.
We'll have curry.
Stupid!
Will you help?
No!
No? The poor rice!
Want to try?
Is that how you do it? OK.
Like this?
The water's getting whiter.
Really white!
When it gets white, you pour it out.
You pour it out, huh?
There's a mark!
Up to 5.
That should be right.
Perfect.
Five?
I'll raise the lid.
Can you reach?
Great!
Is that OK?
Right!
Not yet!
Rolly!
I'll eat them!
I'll tear them in pieces and chomp them down!
No, Octo!
People don't eat octopuses because they hate us.
I don't care!
I won't eat any more little fishes or shrimps!
If you're set free, Mom,
I won't eat them!
How's that? A little more?
A little more.
Two pieces of carrot.
And I'll have some, too.

That's good.
We'll save that for seconds.
Well, shall we eat?
Bless this food!
So how's it going to be?
It's good!
With the towels, first, you do this.
You spread it right out...
Then fold it over.
Now it's half.
Don't fold it wrinkled!
That's OK!
Here's another one.
Whose is this?
That's Shinpei's, isn't it?
Shinpei!
That's his, too.
This is mine.
I'll take care of Shinpei's, then.
My helmet's not done up.
Careful.
OK.
Are you sure you're OK?
You're weaving!
It's OK.
You don't have to hurry.
Sheesh!
Huh?
Shinpei!
Shinpei!
Shinpei!
Hey!
Shinpei!
Wait! Hey!
Sorry.
Shinpei?
Shinpei?
You OK?
What's wrong?
I'm tired...
That's OK. Don't worry.
Come on.
Sorry.
It's like...

...I can't keep up.
After the last test,
I got dropped back a class.
That's only natural.
You were away.
You've still got six months.
I'll help as much as I can.
Tell me what you need.
I'm here, after all.
From you?
So...what can I do for you?
Don't tell Dad I was crying.
Is that all?
He cries all the time!
It's important?
I won't say.
It's a promise.
Let's go home!
There.
Bye!
Go, go, Sachio!
Go, go, Sachio!
Go go go go go!
Go!
I don't believe this!
Could your mom really ride up this hill?
Yes.
She never got off once?
No.
Really?
Shinpei, about that Question 4...
Why did you think it was (B)?
I thought it might be (C)...
'The grief and isolation that comes when you lose faith in others...'
This is deep. Do you understand 'deep'?
'Deep' like 'deep in the ground'.
Yes, like that.
Down here, like that.
Your heart sinks, right to the bottom.
It's not emotional, it's a quiet...
There's a 'deep heart'?
There most certainly is.
Do you have one?
No.

You don't?
Then what about 'conscience'...
Hi, Daddy!
I'm back!
Akari!
Hungry?
Starving!
We made some stir-fry.
You did?
I'll have some of that!
I'll heat it up.
It's a treatment for a TV show about how you've coped.
The whole world's a mess.
How you've managed to cope...
...will resonate with people who've lost loved ones...
...and fallen apart after natural disasters.
Stop distorting things.
I'm not like someone who's been in a natural disaster.
'I'll get milk...
'...near the station.'
What's that all about?
'Milk'?
This?
The boy went on a school trip and bought me this 'sleeping cat'.
Meow!
The girl made this.
But why do you have to be there?
Because he came crying to you?
That, uh...that guy?
'That guy'?
Your wife's friend.
You mean Yoichi?
Yeah, that's the guy.
He didn't come crying to me.
Is this to write?
Is it material for a book?
Eventually, I guess.
It's fertilizer for one.
But no, Kishimoto.
It's not that.
They're in trouble.
They can't get by without a mother.
All he can do is drive a truck.
You think looking after children doesn't suit me?

No, it suits you.
It's running away.
Raising kids is a great way for a man to indulge himself.
One's four, and one came last year.
They cancel out everything.
They make me forget what an asshole I am.
What are you saying?
What do you want from me?
Sensei...
...have you really cried since you lost your wife?
Even once?
Is it a problem whether I've cried or not?
You came here to get me to cry on TV?
I don't really know.
It's OK to avoid the issue.
It's just...
...the longer you do that, the longer you'll suffer.
Go, go, Sachio!
Go, go, Sachio!
Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!
'Jumpin', jumpin', jumpin'...
'Jumpin' over big waves, jumpin' over small...'
Shinpei?
It's OK.
That was a surprise!
Yeah.
You've got something to protect.
I envied that.
I was scared shitless.
There's times I've thought it'd be a lot easier without them.
Then I could get killed tomorrow and I wouldn't care.
Bullshit.
You live for those kids.
Yeah, but still...
You're crazy.
Aw, damn it.
Now I'm happy.
Huh?
Now I've finally met you...
...why couldn't Natsuko be here?
Daddy!
Yeah?
Is this the same hermit crab as last year?
He was crying again.

Still...
...it's not because he's weak.
Your dad's really strong.
When a strong man...
...loses someone important...
...he faces up to it.
He grieves, and he cries.
I didn't cry at Mom's funeral.
The tears just wouldn't come.
'You're OK with this?' he said.
Your dad?
I'm not OK with it.
I know that.
I know.
Hello, Kishimoto?
About that TV thing...
...I'm thinking I might accept it.
All right.
I'll call them.
Don't you want to know why?
Not particularly.
I won't need a make-up artist.
Your hair's a mess.
A mess?
It's all grown out.
I don't care.
I'll be fine.
More to the point, is it cold up there?
It's up in the mountains.
I'm told it gets warm during the day.
Let's see... what else?
Oh, and prayer beads.
Prayer beads?
Just in case.
Just in case, huh?
All right.
We meet at Shinjuku?

At 7:

7:

I'll see you there.
Notepad
To Sachio

I don't love you any more.
Not one bit.
More to the left.
Mr Tsumura! Move left!
A bit more.
A bit more!
And cut.
Move the flowers left.
Mr Tsumura, do you usually stand when you pray?
I was thinking more 'squat'.
Squat, like that.
Well?
No, let's do it standing.
Sorry. Stand up.
And...action.
And Mr Tsumura...
...when you've prayed, could you look out at the lake?
Can we get a shot of you looking deeply pensive?
'Pensive'?
Yes. Looking over there.
A bit to the left.
Looking up.
Too high.
Pull in the jaw.
That's right. Good.
What would you like to tell your wife in Heaven?
In Heaven...
If you have a message for her, go ahead.
I don't have any message.
Nor she for me.
Rather...
...I take her death itself as being a message to me.
My wife was intelligent.
She understood.
The ones who suffer from death...
...are those left behind, not those who die.
It's great for her.
One day, suddenly, at the worst possible time...
...she disappears out of my life.
Great, huh?
I'm left stuck to feed and clothe myself.
'Serves you right,' you say?
Eat shit! You only died to get at me!
Now what?

Rethink.

Go, go, Sachio!

Of course I have regrets about the life my wife led.

That's why now I want to find what good I can...

...in our being parted this way.

It's difficult to accept the death of one close to you.

You feel like you're losing yourself.

But I won't try to forget her.

I want my wife's death to be with me.

I always want it in my mind.

Left behind, I want her in my mind as I live on.

Good. We've got it.

Wait there, please.

Right.

The praying scene was a little forced.

Yeah, acting.

The kids are great.

For sure!

The kids!

A huge gap.

Good thing Mr Omiya let us film.

It sure was!

Well done, Mr Kishimoto.

I thought we were sunk.

Let's move on.

Mr Omiya, what would you like to tell your wife in Heaven?

If you have a message for her...

I want her to come home.

That's all.

That's powerful.

It sure is.

Simple really gets to you.

It never gets old.

Now we'll blow in air with a straw.

When I say 'blow', you blow with me, OK?

Ready, blow!

Go, Akari!

Harder! Blow harder!

Fine.

Well, well, well!

What have we here?

What happened to my water?

It turned white!

Yes! It's turned white.

My beaker holds limewater, lime mixed in with the water.
Limewater turns white when you mix it with a certain something else.
So what was there in my breath?
Let's ask Daddy over there!
What is the substance in my breath that makes it do that?
Right! I don't know.
I'm s-s-sure you know.
I'll g-g-give you a hint.
It starts with 'car'.
'Carlic'!
Yes, there might be g-g-garlic on my breath...
It's fucking embarrassing!
Don't swear like that.
You shut up!
No, you shut up.
Not knowing carbon dioxide never killed anyone.
It's more use knowing garlic makes your breath stink.
It's more important to know about photosynthesis!
What's that?
Aw, forget it.
Be careful!
That never happened when Yuki was around.
He's at that age.
It means he's growing up.
Lately he doesn't like me talking about Yuki.
Not everyone handles things the same way.
He's got his own issues as far as his mother's concerned.
So he forgets her?
He's trying to forget the only mother he'll ever have?
If we don't remember her, who will?
What does her life go then?
I want to talk to Yuki.
I want to talk to her.
Sachio...
...a friend of my boss says some people can talk to the dead.
So I...
Give me a break!
Shinpei's reaction is natural.
When are you going to quit?
'Quit'? It's only been six months.
No, it's almost seven months.
So what?
Yoichi...
...where did Shinpei place in his cram school summer test?

Who's Akari's best friend?
Are you paying attention to them?
The only time they'll be kids is right now.
That's amazing, Sachio!
Yuki said the same thing.
'Yuki' again!
They're trying as hard as they can to move forward.
So why are you dragging them back?
You have to forget.
You have to disconnect.
It's OK now with me coming.
But what about next year?
Just keep coming.
Once Shinpei's in middle school, there's no need.
Why not?
'Why not'?'
I can't kick back like this forever.
I've got a serial to work on.
Yeah, but...why?
Mr Ts-Ts-Tsumura?
Um, I saw you...
...give a lecture once.
I never dreamed I'd see you here.
Then I saw you on T-T-TV with the children.
You saw that?
Did you recognize me?
Yes.
After the garlic...
...I thought I'd seen you.
Wow!
I was m-m-moved.
I've never gotten over losing my elder sister.
'But I won't try to forget her,' you said.
'I-I-I want...
'...m-m-my wife's death to be with me.
'I-I-I-I...
'... always want it in my mind...'
That's fine.
Thank you.
But...
...I'm not really as sentimental as what I write.
That's life in the real world.
Daddy!
Coming!

Sorry to disillusion you.
N-n-no, that's...
Talk to him about the show.
S-s-sorry...
...I guess.
No, that's OK.
It's fine.
You didn't say anything wrong.
1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10!
Wait...
There!
Akari!
Daddy!
Come here.
I've met up with Natsuko,
We're about to leave Shinjuku.
Just to be safe, put a diaper on Akari.
Make sure they brush their teeth and get to bed.
I'm on my way.
I'll call when we get there.
To erase this message, press 7.
To replay this message, press 1.
To save this message, press 9.
Message erased.
There are no more saved messages.
Go!
Happy birthday!
This isn't much...
Thank you!
What did you get? Open it.
What is it? What's in there?
Where did you get it?
They were selling them at the Science Center.
It's open? Take it out.
There's lots!
They eat that in space.
Put lots in.
For Ms Kaburagi...
Put tons in.
No allergies?
No, I'm fine.
Thank you.
Eat up.
Have some sauce.

Thank you.

I found out something.

What?

Ms Kaburagi's parents are part of some city program for children.

Something like that.

Something like what?

Retired people register for a child-support program.

They look after children at their homes.

Her parents live near Akari's kindergarten.

You're going to be busy, so when you can't come...

Who's going to take her there?

You can't if you're gone three or four days at a time.

Will Shinpei have to go again, after it's gotten dark?

I'll check and see if she can be picked up by car.

By car?

How old are your parents?

My f-f-father is...

...73.

Wait a minute!

A man of more than 70...

...driving a child at night?

How will that work out?

How?

Yes, how?

It's all right. I can drive, too.

Are there kids at your house?

Yes.

They come sometimes.

Are they yours?

No. I don't have any children.

Why not?

Why not?

I'm not married, for one thing.

Why not?

That's a tough question.

What's tough?

Don't you have children, Sachio?

That's enough.

Some things you don't understand.

Like what?

Akari...

I don't mind.

You see...

...having children isn't all good.

They take time, they cost money, you have to sacrifice a lot.
Lots of people say raising kids has ruined their lives.
Without children, there's not so much risk.
Do you understand 'risk'?
It means 'danger', 'loss', 'hurt'.
That's not so.
Oh?
But you said yourself it'd be easier without them.
That was different.
What was different?
Look...
...you don't get children just by getting married, Akari.
What are you talking about?
Some people can't...
...and some people don't.
As for me...
...I didn't have them on purpose.
The world doesn't need any more jerks like me.
Have you ever thought...
...you hated your own genes?
G-g-genes?
What about Natsuko?
Didn't she want them?
No.
She wasn't good with kids.
She hated them.
Do you really believe that?
It's true.
I don't think so.
I think she really wanted your...
No no no no no!
What would you know about it?
What would you know?
What?!
Sure, at one time we meant to.
We were man and woman.
But relationships change.
Parents and children, husbands and wives, friends...
Yesterday's not today.
Things change, right?
So please...
...don't judge my happiness by your standards.
No way.
She wouldn't want a child of mine.

She died not wanting one.
What am I saying?
I think it's great.
It's great her parents will look after Akari.
Right, Ms Kaburagi?
Akari?
It'll be fun.
Right, Shinpei?
Sorry to spoil a day like this.
I guess I don't belong here.
I'm going.
You suit each other.
Do well by her.
What's going on, Sachio?
Well, I mean...
...you've done it with her, right?
Wait...what makes you say that?
I think it's great.
She's cute in her own way.
That's the best way to forget Yuki.
What's the problem?
It's better than me.
When Natsuko died...
...I was with another woman.
When the bus went off the cliff...
...and Natsuko was drowning in that frozen lake...
...I was having sex in her bed.
I was fucking!
I'm not like you at all!
Yeah, that one!
I read your book.
Which?
The new one.
'Lost One'.
That was shit.
Pure shit.
Excuse me.
Your hair's in your face.
You know, it's kind of like...
So...that welt...
Careful!
Stop it!
You OK?
It's, like, you know...

...this chair needs more thought!
Missed Call
Shinpei
You can't do stir-fry.
Sure I can!
No, you can't. Let go!
You can't stir-fry vegetables.
You can't do it, Akari. Let go.
Stop it!
Aoba Tutorial...
This is Shinpei Omiya, 6th-year special course.
Omiya? Hello.
Um...
...I'm afraid I need to take this week off, too.
I see...and the test on Sunday?
I'll come for that.
And next week?
Next week I'll...
...talk to my father.
'The Lord is come, the Lord is come
'The Lord is come'
Shinpei?
Shinpei?
What's the matter?
Nothing.
Turn that off and get to bed.
I'm taking a break.
Then I'll get back to work.
I don't mean keep studying.
You'll get sick if you don't sleep.
I have my own pace.
Nothing'll go into your head at this hour.
Sure, I drive through the night...
...but I know when it's time to stop and go to sleep.
This isn't a truck.
It's not the same at all.
Try it sometime and see.
What?
I didn't hear you.
What did you say?
Does studying so hard make you talk to people like that?
Well, it's true.
What do you know about exams or this house from driving a truck?
You don't care.

It's just something I do.
I can go to cram school, or skip out.
And if I fail, you don't care.
And Mom's fucking dead.
That hurts, but that's all.
Nothing changes.
Sachio's not coming back.
And my dad can't even talk!
There's no way
I want to be like you.
I never want to be like you!
And what does the prize-winning novelist Shinji Mitsu say?
Correct! He did it!
Hello?
Sorry to call so late. I'm a nurse at the Yagyu Public Hospital.
Yes?
Mr Sachio Kinugasa?
Speaking.
It concerns Mr Yoichi Omiya.
He's been in a traffic accident.
He's been brought here.
Hello?
Shinpei? It's Sachio!
It's been a while.
I need to apologize about some things.
Sachio...
...Dad hasn't come back.
It's all right, Shinpei.
Your dad's fine. Don't worry.
I said a few bad things to him.
Bad things?
OK. You can tell me when I get there.
Wait for me.
Wait, OK?
Morning.
Thanks.
You stay here.
Take care.
Off you go!
Sachio...
Did Dad really have an accident?
Sure he did.
He worked all night over New Year's.
Then when he ate something, he got sleepy.

I wondered...
...why it was Mom...
...after she died.
I wondered why it couldn't have been him?
I thought it would've been better if he'd died, and not Mom.
Well...
...I'm sure that's what your dad's thought, too.
And all the time he's been thinking that...
...he's been hanging in there, holding that steering wheel.
But it's a man's heart.
It's strong, but at the same time it's weak.
Sometimes it just breaks.
Even once you've grown up, once you're a father, too.
You two mean the world to him.
Don't worry, Shinpei.
People think a lot of things.
But...
...when someone treasures you...
...you don't just toss them away.
You can't look down on them, or disrespect them.
If you do...
...you end up like me.
Like me...
...with no one in your life to love.
You don't think you'll lose them...
...but they're gone in a flash.
Know what I mean?
So what you have to make sure you do is...
...to hold onto them tight.
OK?
Are you OK?
Thanks!
It's all yours.
Goodbye.
Life is Others
Come in.
Anyway, I felt validated.
I started to shake.
I knew I hadn't been wrong.
'The Long Excuse'
All those times
I'd said 'write it!'...
...I wasn't wasting my breath.
Maybe he wanted a bigger prize...

That was you!
Me? You wanted it.
Go for it!
No, I'm really happy.
Now a few words to celebrate this literary prize.
Shinpei and Akari Omiya, if you would.
Sachio, for your new novel...
OK?
Congratulations!
My father says he's not very good at speeches...
...so I will speak in his place.
Go for it!
My name is Shinpei Omiya.
This is my sister...
Akari Omiya, Grade 1B!
Straight ahead.
That's right!
KINUGASA Sachio
MOTOKI Masahiro
OMIYA Yoichi
TAKEHARA Pistol
OMIYA Shinpei
FUJITA Kenshin
OMIYA Akari
SHIRATORI Tamaki
KISHIMOTO Shinsuke
IKEMATSU Sousuke
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KUWANA Koichiro
IWAI Hideto
OSHITA Jun-nosuke
KAN Suon
TAHARA Naoya
TOTSUGI Shigeyuki
KINUGASA Natsuko
FUKATSU Eri
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NAKAE Yasuhito
OTA Tetsuo
NAGASAWA Shuichi
MATSUI Kiyoto
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NISHIKAWA Asako
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ITO Hideki
Planning Associate
KITAHARA Eiji
Creative Director
USHIRO Tomohito
Director of Photography
YAMAZAKI Yutaka
Lighting
YAMAMOTO Kosuke
Sound
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KUMA Shinji
KIKUCHI Seiji
Production Manager
SHIRAIISHI Osamu
Costume Designer
KOBAYASHI Miwako
Make-up Artist
SAKAI Mutsuki
Casting Director
TABATA Toshie
Sound Effect
KITADA Masaya
Assistant Producer
IKENO Kana
International Affairs
YOSHIDA Kayo

Music

Shu limited

Composers/Arrangers

NAKANISHI Toshihiro

KATO Michiaki

Song

"Ombra mai f"

Singer:

Ending Theme

"The Harmonious Blacksmith"

Piano:

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