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# Ring

By Hiroshi Takahashi

is turned completely down. Camera PANS to show two cute high school girls, MASAMI and TOMOKO. Masami is seated on the floor at a low coffee table, TEXTBOOK in front of her. Tomoko is at her desk. There are SNACKS on. Masami is currently in mid-story, speaking excitedly.

**MASAMI:**

They say that some elementary school kid spent the night with his parents at a bed and breakfast in Izu. The kid wanted to go out and play with everybody,

program he always used to watch back in Tokyo, so he records it on the VCR in their room. But of course the stations in Izu are different from the ones in Tokyo. In Izu, it was just an empty

nothing but static. But when the kid gets back to his house and watches the tape, all of a sudden this woman comes on the screen and says--

Masami points so suddenly and dramatically at her friend that Tomoko actually jumps in her seat.

Short silence as Masami pauses, relishing the moment.

freaked, and he stops the video.

Just then the phone rings, and when he picks it up a voice says--

Her voice drops voice almost to a whisper.

same time, exactly one week later...

Masami laughs loudly, thoroughly enjoying her own performance. Tomoko, however, is completely silent. She begins looking more and more distressed, until finally Masami notices.

**MASAMI :**

What is it, Tomoko?

Tomoko comes out of her chair and drops onto the floor next to her friend. Her words are quick, earnest.

**TOMOKO :**

Who did you hear that story from?

**MASAMI :**

knows it.

**TOMOKO :**

Youko told you?

**MASAMI :**

Tomoko looks away, worried. Masami slaps her on the knee, laughing.

**MASAMI :**

Tomoko speaks slowly, still looking away.

**TOMOKO :**

The other day, I... I watched this strange video.

**MASAMI :**

Where?

**TOMOKO :**

With Youko and them.

**MASAMI :**

(excited)

about you doing some double-date/  
sleepover thing! So, you and that  
guy Iwata, huh?

**TOMOKO :**

happened!

Their eyes meet and Tomoko half-blushes, looks away again. Her expression becomes serious as she resumes her conversation.

**TOMOKO:**

Iwata... he found this weird video.

he put it on and we all watched it.

**MASAMI:**

(quietly)

And? What kind of video was it?

**TOMOKO:**

it. Anyway, right after we finished watching it, the phone rang. Whoever

Silence. Masami curls up on herself, thoroughly spooked.

**MASAMI:**

Jesus.

**TOMOKO:**

It's cuz, you know, we'd all heard the rumors.

Tomoko looks seriously over at her friend.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

That was one week ago today.

There is a long, heavy silence as neither of them says anything.

**MASAMI :**

Waaait a minute. Are you faking me out?

**TOMOKO:**

Busted, huh?

They both crack up laughing.

**MASAMI:**

Masami reaches out, slaps her friend on the knee.

**TOMOKO:**

Gotcha!

**MASAMI:**

(thinking)

But hang on... you really stayed  
the night with Youko and Iwata,  
right?

cheeks and grinning wildly.

**MASAMI:**

So, how far did you and he get?

**TOMOKO :**

**MASAMI:**

Masami laughs, then slaps Tomoko on the knee again as she remembers  
the trick her friend played on her.

**MASAMI:**

Man, you had me freaked me out.

I--

Just at that moment, the phone RINGS. They are both suddenly,

begins shaking her head, -No-. Masami looks over her shoulder,

Tomoko is looking at the CLOCK, which currently reads 9:40.

The phone continues to ring. Tomoko is now clutching tightly onto her  
friend, looking panicked.

**MASAMI:**

(softly)

Was it true?

Tomoko nods her head, still holding on tightly. Masami has to  
forcibly disengage herself in order to stand. The phone is downstairs,  
so Masami opens the bedroom DOOR and races down the STAIRS. Tomoko  
calls out to her from behind.

**TOMOKO:**

Masami!

Tomoko and Masami run down the staircase, through the hallway towards the kitchen. Tomoko cries out again just before they reach the kitchen.

**TOMOKO:**

Masami!

Masami has come to a halt before a PHONE mounted on the wall. She pauses, looking slowly at her friend, then back to the phone. She takes it tentatively from its cradle, answers it wordlessly. The tension continues to mount as nothing is said. Masami suddenly breaks into a huge grin.

**MASAMI:**

Still grinning, she hands the phone to Tomoko. Tomoko snatches it quickly.

**TOMOKO:**

(softly)

Yes?

She is silent for a moment, then smiling widely.

**TOMOKO:**

Oh, man!

She is so relieved that all the strength seeps out of her and she sinks to the kitchen floor. Masami, equally relieved, slides down the wall and sits down next to her.

**TOMOKO:**

(on the phone)

Yeah. Yeah, OK. Bye.

Tomoko stands to place the phone back in its wall cradle, and then squats back down onto the kitchen floor.

**TOMOKO:**

They burst out laughing with relief again, and are soon both clutching their stomachs.

**TOMOKO:**

Jeezus, my parents...

**MASAMI :**

this tomorrow!

**MASAMI :**

go anywhere.

**TOMOKO :**

Masami walks out of the kitchen. Alone now, Tomoko stands and walks toward the SINK, where she takes a GLASS from the DISH RACK. She then goes to the FRIDGE and sticks her face in, looking for something to drink. Suddenly there is the SOUND of people clapping and cheering. Tomoko, startled, peers her head over the refrigerator door to check for the source of the sound.

She begins walking slowly, following the sound to the DINING ROOM adjacent the kitchen.

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are off, and there is no one in the room. Tomoko pauses a moment, bathed in the garish LIGHT from the TV, which has been switched on. Playing is the same baseball game they had on the TV upstairs; the

quite high.

A puzzled look on her face, Tomoko takes the REMOTE from the coffee table and flicks the TV off. She walks back to the kitchen.

A bottle of SODA that Tomoko had earlier taken from the fridge is on the kitchen table. She picks the bottle up, pours herself a drink. Before she can take a sip, however, the air around her becomes suddenly charged, heavy. Her body begins to shiver as somewhere out of sight comes a popping, crackling SOUND underscored by a kind of GROANING. Trembling now, Tomoko spins around to see what she has already felt lurking behind her. She draws in her breath to scream.

The screen goes white, and fades into:

**CAMERA POV:**

The screen is filled with the visage of a nervous-looking YOUNG GIRL. She is being interviewed by ASAKAWA, a female reporter seated offscreen.

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

There seems to be a popular rumor

videotape.

**YOUNG GIRL:**

Uh-huh.

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

Have you heard what kind of video  
it might be?

**YOUNG GIRL:**

Uh-huh.

staring, silently, at the camera.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

KOMIYA, the cameraman, has lowered his camera. We can now see that the young girl being interviewed is seated at a table between two friends, a SHORT-HAIRED GIRL (GIRL#2) and a LONG-HAIRED GIRL (GIRL #3). They are all dressed in the UNIFORMS of junior high school students. Opposite them sits Komiya and Asakawa, a pretty woman in her mid-twenties. A BOOM MIKE GUY stands to the left.

**KOMIYA:**

OK?

**YOUNG GIRL:**

Sorry.

**ASAKAWA:**

Asakawa glances over her shoulder, makes sure that Komiya is ready.

**ASAKAWA:**

Have you heard what kind of video  
it might be?

**YOUNG GIRL:**

What I heard was, all of a sudden  
this scaarry lady comes on the

GIRL #2



**ASAKAWA:**

Watching TV late at night... do you know what station?

GIRL #2

Mmmm... I heard some local station, around Izu.

**ASAKAWA:**

Izu?

GIRL #2

Mmm-hmm.

**ASAKAWA:**

died from watching it?

The girl flashes a look at her two friends.

**YOUNG GIRL:**

Well, no one that we know, right?

Girl #2 nods her head. Girl #3 nods slowly, opens and closes her mouth as if deciding whether to say something or not. The reporter notices.

**ASAKAWA:**

What is it?

GIRL #3

I heard this from a friend of mine in high school. She said that there was this one girl who watched the video, and then died a week later. She was out on a drive with her boyfriend.

**ASAKAWA:**

They were in a wreck?

GIRL #3

No, their car was parked, but they were both dead inside. Her

friend said.

Girl #3 grows suddenly defensive.

or three days ago.

**ASAKAWA:**

Do you know the name of the high school this girl went to?

GIRL #3

No... I heard this from my friend,

She heard it from a friend at a different school, she said.

Asakawa is seated at her DESK. The station is filled with PEOPLE, and holds out a MANILA FOLDER.

**KOMIYA:**

Mrs. Asakawa?

**ASAKAWA:**

Hm?

**KOMIYA:**

Here you are.

**ASAKAWA:**

(taking the folder)

Thanks.

Komiya has a seat.

**KOMIYA:**

This same kind of thing happened

Some popular young singer committed suicide, and then suddenly there was all this talk about her ghost showing up on some music show.

**ASAKAWA:**

about. Everyone you ask always

**KOMIYA:**

Hey, where was that Kuchi-sake  
Onna \* story from again?

>Japanese folk stories who wears a veil to hide her mouth, which  
>has been ripped or cut open from ear to ear. She wanders the  
  
>lowering her veil to reveal her true features.

**ASAKAWA:**

Gifu, but there was some big  
accident out there, and that ended  
up being what started the rumor.

**KOMIYA:**

A big accident?

**ASAKAWA:**

Mmm-hmm. Something terrible like

minds. Sometimes the story of what  
happened gets twisted around, and  
ends up coming back as a rumor like

least.

**KOMIYA:**

happened out at Izu?

**ASAKAWA:**

tomorrow.

:

**KOMIYA:**

See you.

Asakawa gets up from her desk and begins walking towards the exit.  
She takes only a few steps before noticing a RACK of recent DAILY  
EDITIONS.

She takes one from the rack, sets it on a nearby TABLE. She begins  
flipping the pages, and suddenly spies this story:

STRANGE AUTOMOBILE DEATH OF YOUNG COUPLE IN YOKOHAMA

The bodies of a young man and woman were discovered in their passenger car at around 10 A.M. September 6th. The location was a vacant lot parallel to Yokohama Prefectural Road. Local authorities identified the deceased as a 19-year old preparatory school student of Tokyo, and a 16-year old Yokohama resident, a student of a

injuries, police are investigating the possibility of drug-induced suicide...

Just then two men walk by, a GUY IN A BUSINESS SUIT and a youngish intern named OKAZAKI. Okazaki is carrying an armload of VIDEOTAPES.

**GUY IN SUIT:**

**OKAZAKI:**

Yessir.

The guy in the suit pats Okazaki on the shoulder and walks off.

Okazaki turns to walk away, spots Asakawa bent over the small table and peering intently at the newspaper article.

**OKAZAKI:**

Miss Asakawa? I thought you were going home early today.

Asakawa turns around and begins speaking excitedly.

**ASAKAWA:**

Okazaki, can I ask you a favor?

**OKAZAKI:**

Sure.

Asakawa points to the newspaper.

**ASAKAWA:**

Could you check out this article for me? Get me some more info.?

**OKAZAKI:**

I guess...

**ASAKAWA:**

Good. Call me as soon as you know more, OK?

**OKAZAKI:**

Asakawa walks off. Okazaki, still carrying the videotapes, leans forward to take a look at the article.

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EXT. APARTMENT PARKING LOT - DAY

Asakawa drives her car into the lot and parks quickly. She gets out, runs up the STAIRCASE to the third floor. She stops in front of a door, sticks her KEY in the lock, and opens it.

A BOY of about 7 is sitting in an ARMCHAIR facing the veranda. We can see only the back of his head.

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

Yoichi!

Hearing his name, the boy puts down the BOOK he was reading and stands up, facing the door. He is wearing a white DRESS SHIRT with a brown sweater-type VEST over it. He sees Asakawa, his mother, run in the door. She is panting lightly.

**ASAKAWA:**

changed.

**YOICHI:**

Yup.

I got your clothes out for you.

Asakawa turns to see a DARK SUIT hanging from one of the living room shelves. She reaches out, takes it.

**ASAKAWA:**

She runs into the next room to change.

Asakawa has changed into all-black FUNERAL ATTIRE. Her hair is up, and she is fastening the clasp to a pearl NECKLACE. Yoichi is still in the living room.

**ASAKAWA:**

Did grandpa call?

YOICHI (O.S.)

Nope.

Yoichi walks into the room and faces his mother.

**YOICHI:**

Why did Tomo-chan die? \*

>It is most often used for young girls, though it can also be used for  
>boys.

**ASAKAWA:**

Well... it looks like she was really,  
really sick.

She takes a seat on the bed.

**ASAKAWA:**

Will you do me up?

**YOICHI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Asakawa turns to face her son, puts an arm around him.

**ASAKAWA:**

As hard as it is for us, what your  
auntie and uncle are going through

not talk about this over there, OK?

Yoichi nods.

**ASAKAWA:**

(remembering)

You and her used to play a lot

Yoichi says nothing.

EXT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

RED PAPER LANTERNS mark this place as the site of a wake. Several  
GIRLS in high school uniforms are standing together and talking in  
groups. Asakawa and Yoichi, walking hand in hand, enter the house.

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

There are many PEOPLE milling about, speaking softly. A MAN seated  
at a counter is taking monetary donations from guests and entering  
their information into a LEDGER. Asakawa and Yoichi continue walking,

down a hallway.

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Mother and son halt before the open DOOR to the main wake room, where guests may show their respects to the departed. The room is laid in traditional Japanese-style tatami, a kind of woven straw mat that serves as a carpet. Two GUESTS, their shoes off, are kneeling upon zabuton cushions.

guests are bowing deeply, and Kouichi bows in response.

**ASAKAWA:**

Dad.

Kouichi turns to see her.

**KOUICHI:**

Ah!

**ASAKAWA:**

How is sis holding up?

**KOUICHI:**

things easy for a while.

Asakawa nods.

**ASAKAWA:**

then.

**KOUICHI:**

here for a little while?

He grabs the young boy and seats him on a cushion next to the two guests.

eyes wander to the ALTAR at the front of the room set up to honor the deceased. It is made of wood, and surrounded by candles, flowers, and small paper lanterns. At the center is a PICTURE of the deceased, a teenage girl. A small wooden PLAQUE reads her name: Tomoko Ouishi. It is the same Tomoko from the first scene.

gesture as he does so, rubbing his index finger in small circles just between his eyes.

Asakawa walks down the hallway, looking for her aunt. She walks until finding the open doorway to the kitchen. There are a few people in there, preparing busily. Asakawa sees her AUNT, who rushes into the hallway to meet her, holds her fast by the arm. The aunt speaks in a fierce, quick whisper.

**AUNT:**

Have you heard anything more about

**ASAKAWA:**

No, I...

**AUNT:**

But the police have already finished their autopsy!

**ASAKAWA:**

Well, they said there was no sign of foul play.

**AUNT:**

(shaking her head)

once opened the casket to let us see

strange?

Asakawa looks away, thinking.

Yoichi has wandered off by himself. He stops at the foot of the steps, looking up-- and catches a glimpse of a pair of BARE FEET running up to the second floor.

A guarded expression on his face, Yoichi walks slowly up the stairs.

room, finally coming to rest on the TELEVISION SET. Suddenly, he

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

Yoichi?

Yoichi turns to face her as she approaches, puts an arm around him.



**ASAKAWA:**

What are you doing up here? You

set. Asakawa holds him by the shoulders, turning him to meet her.

**ASAKAWA:**

You go on downstairs, OK?

**YOICHI:**

OK.

He turns to leave, and Asakawa follows.

Just as Yoichi and Asakawa are about to descend the steps,

**ASAKAWA:**

(to Yoichi)

You go on ahead.

**YOICHI:**

He walks down the steps. Asakawa brings out her cell phone, answers it.

**ASAKAWA:**

Hello?

**OKAZAKI:**

some more info on that article for you. The girl was a student of the uh, Seikei School for Women in Yokahama City.

Asakawa blinks at this, looks disturbed.

**ASAKAWA:**

(softly)

Thanks.

She hangs up the phone.

EXT. OUSHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Asakawa stands now at the entrance of the house. Dazedly, she

walks toward a large, hand-painted PLACARD. The placard reads that the wake is being held for a student of the Seikei School for Women.

Asakawa stares at that placard, making the mental connections. She turns abruptly, walks towards a nearby TRIO of HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS.

**ASAKAWA:**

Excuse me. This is, um, kind of a strange question, but by any chance were you friends of that young girl that died in the car as well?

The three girls turn their faces to the ground.

**ASAKAWA:**

Please. If you know anything...

**GIRL RIGHT:**

They all died the same day. Youko. Tomoko. Even Iwata, he was in a motorcycle accident.

**GIRL LEFT:**

Because they watched the video.

**ASAKAWA:**

Video?

**GIRL LEFT:**

watched some weird video, and after that their phone rang.

**ASAKAWA:**

Tomoko-chan watched it, too?

Where?

Girl Left shakes her head.

**GIRL LEFT:**

She just said they all stayed somewhere.

**GIRL RIGHT:**

There was a girl with Tomoko when

hospitalized for shock.

**GIRL MIDDLE:**

near a television.

Asakawa and YOSHINO, another news reporter, are watching scenes from the Yokohama car death. In the footage there are lots of POLICEMEN milling about, one of them trying to pick the door to the passenger side. Yoshino is giving Asakawa the blow-by-blow.

**YOSHINO:**

The bodies of those found were Tsuji Youko, age 17, a student of the Seikei School for Women, and Nomi Takehiko, age 19, preparatory school student. Both their doors were securely locked.

Onscreen, the policeman has finally picked the lock. The door opens,

a BUTTON on the control panel, scans the footage frame by frame. He stops when he gets a good close-up of the victim.

Her face is twisted into an insane rictus of fear, mouth open, eyes wide and glassy. Yoshino and Asakawa lean back in their seats.

**YOSHINO:**

seen something like this.

**ASAKAWA:**

Cause of death?

**YOSHINO:**

heart failure.

**ASAKAWA:**

Drugs?

**YOSHINO:**

The autopsy came up negative.

Yoshino takes the video off pause. Onscreen, a policeman has caught

back into the car. As the body moves into an upright position, we

**YOSHINO:**

These two, about to go at it,  
suddenly up and die for no  
apparent reason.  
He sighs.

Do -you- get it?

EXT. OUSHI HOUSEHOLD - DAY

with a small covered parkway for a garage. She gets out of her car,  
closes the door. She stares at the house, unmoving.

Asakawa stands before her SISTER RYOMI, who is seated at the kitchen  
TABLE. Ryomi is staring blankly away, making no sign of acknowledging  
her sister. The silence continues unabated, and Asakawa, pensive,  
wanders idly into the adjoining dining room. She takes a long look at  
the television, the same television that had puzzled Tomoko by suddenly  
switching itself on, sitting darkly in one corner. Her reflection in  
the screen looks stretched, distorted.

RYOMI(O.S.)

They tell me that Yoichi came to  
the funeral, too.

Asakawa steps back into the kitchen. She addresses her sister, who  
continues to stare out at nothing.

**ASAKAWA:**

Mmm-hmm.

**RYOMI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Yeah...

Ryomi lapses back into a silence. Asakawa waits for her to say more,  
but when it is clear that nothing else is forthcoming, she quietly gives  
up and exits the kitchen.

Asakawa climbs the steps to the second floor. She makes her way down  
the hall.

The window to the room is open, and a single piece of folded white PAPER it up. It is a RECEIPT from a photo shop. The developed photos have yet to be claimed.

Asakawa senses something, spins to look over her shoulder. Her sister has crept quietly up the stairs and down the hall, and stands now in the her hands, as her gaze has already shifted to the sliding closet door. She regards it almost druggedly.

**RYOMI:**

(haltingly)

This... this is where Tomoko died.

**FLASHBACK:**

RYOMI (O.S.)

Tomoko!

blue CARCASS of her daughter, curled up into an unnatural fetal position.

of her head. Her hands are caught in her hair, as if trying to pull it out by the roots. It is a horrific scene, one that says Tomoko died as if from some unspeakable fear.

**PRESENT:**

Ryomi sinks to her knees, hitting the wooden floor hard. She puts her face into her hands and begins sobbing loudly. Asakawa says nothing.

walks out onto the sidewalk and begins flipping through them. We see Tomoko standing arm-in-arm with Iwata, her secret boyfriend. Tomoko and her friends eating lunch. The camera had its date-and-time function enabled, and the photos are marked

97 8 29.

The next shot is of Tomoko, Iwata, and another young couple posing in front of a SIGN for a bed and breakfast. The sign reads:

IZU PACIFIC LAND

**ASAKAWA:**

Izu...

Asakawa continues looking through the photos, various shots of the four friends clowning around in their room. Suddenly she comes to a shot taken the next day, at check out. The friends are lined up, arms linked-- and all four of their faces are blurred, distorted as if

someone had taken an eraser to them and tried to rub them out of existence.

Asakawa wears an APRON, and is frying something up on the STOVE. Yoichi stands watching.

**ASAKAWA:**

coming home tonight, so just stick your dinner in the microwave when

**YOICHI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Hmm?

**YOICHI:**

Tomo-chan watched some cursed video!

Asakawa leaves the food on the stove, runs over to Yoichi and grabs him by the shoulders. She shakes him roughly.

**ASAKAWA:**

What did you say? You are not to speak of this at school, do you hear me?

**YOICHI:**

(utterly unfazed)

Yoichi walks off. Asakawa goes back to the stove, but stops after only a few stirs, staring off and thinking.

Asakawa drives her car speedily along a narrow country road, LEAVES blowing up in her wake.

Asakawa mutters to herself, deep in thought.

**ASAKAWA:**

IZU PACIFIC LAND

Asakawa has left her car and is walking around the driveway of what is less a bed and breakfast and more like a series of cabin-style rental COTTAGES.

She wanders about for a while, trying to get her bearings. She pauses now in front of a particular cottage and reaches into her PURSE. She withdraws the PICTURE from the photomat, the one that showed Tomoko and her friends with their faces all blurred. The four are posing in front photo to regard the cottage before her.

B4

Asakawa walks in.

Asakawa lets her eyes wander around the cottage. It looks very modern, all wood paneling and spacious comfort.

Her eyes rest on the TV/VCR setup at the front of the room. Crouching before the VCR now, she presses the eject button. Nothing happens. She fingers the inside of the deck, finds it empty, then reaches behind to the rear of the VCR, searching. Again, there is nothing. Asakawa presses the power button on the television, picks up the REMOTE, and

all talk shows, no clues whatsoever. She flicks the TV off and leans back in the sofa, sighing.

Just then, she spies a LEDGER on the coffee table. These things are sometimes left in hotels in Japan, so that guests can write a few comments about their stay for others to read. Asakawa picks the ledger up, begins thumbing through it. She stops at a strange PICTURE obviously drawn by a child, that shows three rotund, almost entirely round personages. She reads the handwritten MESSAGE.

**ASAKAWA:**

"My dad is fat. My mom is fat.

She smiles in spite of herself.

of any import.

She tosses it back onto the coffee table and, sighing again, leans into the sofa and closes her eyes.

Asakawa eats silently, alone.

INT. PACIFIC LAND - FRONT RECEPTION - NIGHT

Asakawa has returned to the bed and breakfast. As she walks in the

door, the COUNTER CLERK rises out of his chair to greet her.

**CLERK:**

Room for one?

**ASAKAWA:**

She passes the clerk a picture of Tomoko and her three other friends. He stares at it for a moment.

**ASAKAWA:**

They would have stayed here on August 29th, all four of them.

might have...

**CLERK:**

Uh, hang on just a minute.

The clerk turns his back to her, begins leafing through a guest log.

**CLERK:**

(to himself)

August 29th...

BOOKSHELF filled with VIDEOTAPES. They are all in their original boxes, and she lets her eyes glance over the titles. Raiders of the Lost Ark, 48 Hours--

--and then, suddenly, she spies a VIDEOTAPE in a plain, unmarked sleeve, tucked away in the back of the very bottom shelf. She feels the hairs on the back of her neck rise.

**ASAKAWA:**

That...

The clerk looks up.

**CLERK:**

Hmm?

Asakawa stabs a finger excitedly towards the shelf.

**ASAKAWA:**

That! What tape is that?

The clerk reaches out for it, grabs it.



**CLERK:**

This? Hmm...

The clerk pulls the tape out of its SLEEVE and checks for a label.

**CLERK:**

static. She kneels down to slide the tape into the deck and pauses a moment, framed in the vaguely spectral LIGHT from the television screen. Steeling her nerves, she puts the tape into the machine, picks up the remote, and presses play.

**NOTE:**

translation before watching the movie, do yourself a favor; STOP reading this now and watch the scene for itself. Afterwards, you can come back here to check the meaning of the Japanese characters displayed.

**THE VIDEOTAPE:**

At first it looks like nothing has happened-- then Asakawa realizes that she is now viewing recorded static instead of broadcast static. She watches, waiting, but the static continues unbroken. Asakawa looks down at the remote, is about to press fast forward, when suddenly the  
  
at the moon.

moon, but it seems to be made up of thin RIBBONS of cloud streaking  
  
shadows, looking down from above.

What is this?

The scene changes now, and Asakawa notes that the tape has that kind of grainy quality one sees in 3rd or 4th generation copies. The scene is of a WOMAN brushing her long hair before an oval-shaped MIRROR. The nerve-wracking grating as if of some giant metallic insect sounds in the

using to brush her hair suddenly changes position from the left part of the wall before which she stands, to the right. Almost instantly the mirror returns to its original position, but in that one moment in its changed location we see a small FIGURE in a white GOWN. The woman turns towards where that figure stood, and smiles.

The screen next becomes a twitching, undulating impenetrable sea of the kanji characters used in the Japanese language. Asakawa can pick out

only two things recognizable:

local volcanic eruption

Now the screen is awash in PEOPLE-- crawling, scrabbling, shambling masses, some of them moving in reverse. A sound like moaning accompanies them.

-

A FIGURE stands upon a shore, its face shrouded. It points accusingly, not towards the screen, but at something unseen off to one side. The insect-like screeching sounds louder.

--

Close up on inhuman, alien-looking EYE. Inside that eye a single character is reflected in reverse: SADA, meaning "chastity." The eye blinks once, twice. The symbol remains.

---

A long shot of an outdoor, uncovered WELL.

----

Sudden loud, blinding STATIC as the tape ends.

Asakawa turns the TV off, looking physically drained. She sighs shakily and slumps forward, resting on her knees. Just then, she glances at the television screen. She sees, reflected, a small FIGURE in a white gown standing at the rear of the room. Shocked, Asakawa draws in breath, spins around.

The room is empty. Asakawa runs to the sofa to collect her jacket-- --and the RINGING of the telephone stops her dead in her tracks. Zombie-like, she walks towards the telephone, picks it up wordlessly. From the other end comes the same metallic, insectoid SQUEAKING heard on the video. Asakawa slams the phone down and glances up at the CLOCK.

**ASAKAWA:**

(to herself)

Asakawa grabs her coat, pops the tape out of the deck, and runs out the door.

school, UMBRELLA firmly in hand. The sidewalk is quite narrow, and Yoichi comes to a halt when a second PERSON comes from the opposite direction, blocking his way. Yoichi slowly raises his umbrella, peers up to look at this other pedestrian. It is a MAN, a BAG slung over one shoulder. He has a beard; unusual for Japan where clean-shaven is the norm.

The two continue looking directly at each other, neither moving nor

way. The man resumes walking as well.

EXT. OUTSIDE AN APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

The bearded man, whose name is RYUJI, reaches out to press the DOORBELL, but the door has already opened from within. Asakawa leans out, holding the door open for him. Neither of them speaks. Wordlessly, Ryuji enters the apartment.

Ryuji puts his bag down, looks around the apartment. The interior is dark, ominous somehow. He takes his JACKET off and wanders into the living room.

Asakawa is in the kitchen behind him, preparing TEA. Ryuji spies the collection of FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS in living room.

**RYUJI:**

already, is he?

**ASAKAWA:**

His first year. What about you, Ryuji? How have you been recently?

**RYUJI:**

Same as always.

She takes a seat next to him, serves the tea. On the coffee table before them is a VIDEOTAPE in a plain, unmarked case.

**ASAKAWA:**

And money is...?

**RYUJI:**

Ryuji picks up his cup of tea but stops, grimacing, before it is to his lips. He rubs his forehead as if experiencing a sudden headache. Ryuji shakes it off and quickly regains his composure.

**RYUJI:**

Anyway. You said that the phone rang?

**ASAKAWA:**

**RYUJI:**

So if I watch it too, that phone over there--

He gestures with his mug

--should ring.

**ASAKAWA:**

Ryuji, four people have already died. On the same day!

**RYUJI:**

(flippant)

an exorcist?

He takes a sip of his tea. Asakawa reaches quickly, grabs something from the bookshelf behind her-- a POLAROID CAMERA. She shoves it

**ASAKAWA:**

Take my picture.

Ryuji raises the camera to his eye.

**RYUJI:**

Turn this way.

**ASAKAWA:**

(unmoving)

Hurry up and take it.

Ryuji snaps off a shot. It comes out the other end and he takes it, waits impatiently for an image to appear. When it does, all he can do is pass it wordlessly over to Asakawa. Her face is twisted, misshapen.

Just like the picture of Tomoko and her friends.

Asakawa stares at it, horrified. By the time she finally looks up, Ryuji has already risen from his seat and slid the videotape into the VCR. Again, the screen is filled with static, only to be replaced with what looks like the moon. Asakawa slams the Polaroid on the coffee table and goes outside onto the veranda.

EXT. VERANDA - DAY

Asakawa stares out at a view of the houses shaded in cloud and rain. There is a knock on the glass door behind her. A moment later, Ryuji slides the door open.

**RYUJI:**

Asakawa re-enters her apartment.

**RYUJI:**

ringing.

Ryuji pops the tape from the deck, hands it to Asakawa.

**RYUJI:**

Make me a copy of this, will you?

write us off as dead just yet.

He dramatically takes a seat.

somebody had to make it.

**ASAKAWA:**

cottage to look into... and the possibility of someone hacking

signals.

Asakawa pulls a NOTEPAD from her purse and begins busily scribbling away.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

Okazaki putters around.

Asakawa sits by herself, reviewing the videotape. She is replaying the very last scene, an outdoor shot of a well. She stares at it carefully, and notices...

The tape ends, filling the screen with static. A split-second afterwards, there is a KNOCK on the door and Okazaki enters, holding a FILE. Asakawa momentarily forgets about the video.

**OKAZAKI:**

(handing her the file)

**ASAKAWA:**

Oh, thanks.

**OKAZAKI:**

What are you gonna do with this?

**ASAKAWA:**

something personal.

EXT. IN FRONT OF A TRAIN STATION - DAY

Some quick shots of a FOUNTAIN gushing water, PIGEONS flapping away

thought, writing in a NOTEPAD. There are multitudes of PEOPLE about him, and we can hear the sounds of their coming and going. A PAIR OF LEGS attached to a woman in white dress, hose, and pumps appears, heading directly for Ryuji. Her pace is slow, rhythmical, and as that pace progresses all other sounds FADE into the background, so that all we can hear is the CLOMP, CLOMP as those legs walk to stand just before Ryuji. The pumps are scuffed, dirtied with grime. A gust of WIND rips by. Ryuji fights the urge to look up as in his ears rings the same hollowed, multi-voiced BABBLING heard on the videotape. The sound grows stronger.

RYUJI (VO)

So, it was you. You did it.

background sounds return. Ryuji looks up, but the woman in white is nowhere to be seen.

Ryuji rides up on a BICYCLE. He turns the corner towards his apartment and finds Asakawa seated on the steps, waiting for him.

**RYUJI:**

Hey.

Asakawa notes in his face that something is wrong.

**ASAKAWA:**

What happened to you?

**RYUJI:**

(gruffly)

Nothing.

He enters the building, carrying his bicycle. Asakawa follows.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

apartment. He unlocks the door and they enter.

Ryuji and Asakawa enter the living room.

**RYUJI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

the list brought the tape with them.

of course, but even over the phone I got the feeling they were all being upfront with me.

**RYUJI:**

How about the other angle? Pirate signals or...

Asakawa shakes her head.

**ASAKAWA:**

television signals being broadcast around Izu.

She reaches into her purse, pulls out a large white ENVELOPE.

**ASAKAWA:**

you wanted.

Ryuji tears the package open. He squats down on the tatami in front of his TV and slides the tape in. Asakawa sits on the tatami as well, but positions herself away from the TV and keeps her eyes averted. Ryuji glares over his shoulder at her.

**RYUJI:**

(sternly)

Asakawa.

She reluctantly scoots closer, looks up at the screen. Ryuji fast-forwards the tape a bit, stopping at the scene where the woman is brushing her long hair before an oval mirror. He puts the video on frame-by-frame.

**RYUJI:**

Have you ever seen this woman?

Asakawa regards the screen intently.

**ASAKAWA:**

No...

The tape advances to the scene where the mirror suddenly changes positions. When it does, we can again see the small figure in the white gown, a figure with long black hair. When Ryuji sees this his body stiffens, becomes tense. Asakawa notices but says nothing. She also notices something else.

**ASAKAWA:**

(excitedly)

this shot.

She takes the remote from Ryuji, rewinds it a ways. Onscreen, the woman begins coming her long hair again.

**ASAKAWA:**

From this angle, the mirror should

**RYUJI:**

So, what does that mean?

Asakawa lets out a short sigh.

**ASAKAWA:**

Well, if the person who made this

that, I guess, but still...

The screen changes, showing the mass of squiggling kanji characters again.

**RYUJI:**

(reading)

Volcanic eruption... Eruption where?

He pauses the screen, trying to make sense of what is written.

**ASAKAWA:**

This is gonna be impossible to figure out on just a regular TV screen,

They are both still staring at the screen when from behind them comes the SOUND of someone opening the front door. Ryuji turns off the TV, ejects the tape from the deck.

**RYUJI:**



Come on in.

Asakawa flashes a look at Ryuji and then turns her head back towards the front door to see who has entered. A cute, nervous-looking young GIRL with short hair approaches slowly. She is carrying a PLASTIC BAG filled with groceries.

**RYUJI:**

Asakawa, meet my student, Takano Mai.  
He turns, addresses Mai.

This is Asakawa, my ex-wife.  
Ryuji gets up and walks conveniently away.

**MAI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Asakawa. \*  
> \* As you may already be aware, Japanese name order is the

Mai sets the bag of groceries down and chases after Ryuji. He is putting on his jacket and getting ready to leave.

**MAI:**

Sensei, the people from the publishing company called about the deadline on your thesis again.

**RYUJI:**

(brusquely)  
  
about it for?

**MAI:**

Because they can never get a hold of you.  
Ryuji picks up his keys, video firmly in hand.

**RYUJI:**

Ask them to wait another week.

**MAI:**

Sensei, ask them yourself,  
please.

Ryuji is already headed for the door. His back is to her as he responds.

**RYUJI:**

OK, OK.

Asakawa walks after him. They leave.

Mai pouts unhappily a bit, and then breaks into a smile as an idea crosses her mind. She walks across the room to where Ryuji has set up a large BLACKBOARD filled with mathematical equations. Grinning, Mai rubs out part of one equation with her sleeve and writes in a new value.

Asakawa and Ryuji stride purposefully. They stop before a DOOR to the right, which Asakawa unlocks. They both walk in.

INT. NEWS STATION - VIEWING BOOTH - NIGHT

Asakawa and Ryuji sit in a completely darkened room, their eyes glued to the television MONITOR. They are again watching the scene with the fragmented kanji characters, but despite their efforts have been able to identify only one additional word, bringing the total

**to three:**

volcanic eruption    local            residents

**RYUJI:**

This is impossible.

Ryuji fast forwards, stopping at the scene with the kanji reflected inside an alien-looking EYE. He reads the kanji aloud.

**RYUJI:**

Sada...

Ryuji moves to make a note of this, notices the time.

**RYUJI:**

Is Yoichi gonna be all right?

**ASAKAWA:**

(sadly)

Short silence. Ryuji breaks it by gesturing towards the screen.

**RYUJI:**

Whoever made this had to have left

probably waiting for us to find it.

Asakawa turns a DIAL to bring up the volume, which up until now has been on mute. The room is filled with an eerie, metallic GRATING, and Asakawa spins the dial again, shutting it off. Just as she does,

**RYUJI:**

Wait a minute.

He turns the dial again, punches a few buttons as if searching for something. He listens carefully, and when he hears that strange something again he stops, looks at the screen.

It is paused at the scene with the figure, pointing, a CLOTH draped over its head. The figure now looks oddly like a messenger.

Ryuji and Asakawa exchange glances. This could be it. Ryuji flips some more switches, setting the sound for super-slow mo. What follows

the skittering distortion of the tape in slow motion.

**TAPE:**

Shooooomonn bakkkkkarrri toou...

boooouuuukonn ga kuuru zouuu...

**RYUJI:**

(repeating)

Shoumon bakkari, boukon ga kuru

zo. Did you hear that, too?

Asakawa nods. Ryuji is already writing it down excitedly.

**ASAKAWA:**

What does that mean?

Ryuji tears the sheet of paper off the notepad, folds it, and tucks it into his shirt pocket.

**RYUJI:**

Yoichi is walking to school. He looks back over his shoulder, just once, then resumes walking.

All the lights are turned off, and she is sitting on the living room school girls.

Just when the girl in the interview mentions that whomever watches  
own phone RINGS, startling her. She runs to answer it.

**ASAKAWA:**

Hello?

RYUJI (O.S.)

like I thought. SHOUMON means

>\* Translated from standard Japanese, the phrase from the videotape  
>would initially have sounded like, "If only SHOUMON then the  
>BOUKON will come." These two capitalized words, later identified to  
>be dialectical, were at the time completely incomprehensible to Ryuji  
>and Asakawa. Dialect can vary dramatically from region to region in  
>Japan, to the point of speakers of different dialect being unable to  
>understand one another.  
>The phrase on the tape can now be rendered, "If you keep playing in  
>the water, the monster will come for you."

**ASAKAWA:**

But, dialect from where?

**RYUJI:**

Oshima. And the site of our

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Ryuji and Asakawa are seated at cubicles, looking through bound  
ARCHIVES of old newspaper articles. Asakawa sneaks a look at Ryuji,  
stands up and walks off a little ways. She has already pulled out her  
cell phone.

**ASAKAWA:**

(whispering, on phone)

late tonight, honey.

Ryuji looks over his shoulder at her, scowls.

**ASAKAWA:**

You can do it yourself, right? OK.

Sorry. Bye.

She hangs up, returns to her seat at the cubicle. She resumes her

scanning of the newspaper articles, and Ryuji shoots her another scowl. Asakawa turns a page and then stops, frowning. She has spied an article that looks like...

Nervously, Asakawa puts the thumb and forefinger of each hand together, forming the shape of a rectangle. Or a screen. She places the rectangle over the article she has just discovered, its headlines reading:

Mount Mihara Erupts Local Residents Urged to Take Precautions

Ryuji notices her, leans forward excitedly.

**ASAKAWA:**

The two scan the remainder of the page, and find a smaller, related article.

Did Local Girl Predict Eruption?

A young lady from Sashikiji prefecture...

The two read over both articles, absorbing the details. Ryuji stands suddenly, gathering his things.

**ASAKAWA:**

What are you doing?

**RYUJI:**

Has your newspaper got someone out there at Oshima?

**ASAKAWA:**

I think so. There should be a correspondent out there.

**RYUJI:**

I need you to find out, and let me know how to get hold of him.

Tonight.

He begins walking briskly away. Asakawa chases after him.

**ASAKAWA:**

**RYUJI:**

(angrily)

Asakawa! Your newspaper contact and I can handle this from here on out. You just stay with Yoichi.

Ryuji strides off. Asakawa stands motionless.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A car speeds along. CUT to a gravel DRIVEWAY leading up to a wooden,

the entrance and pattering around in his GARDEN. The car from the previous shot drives up, comes to a halt. The passenger door opens and Yoichi hops out, running towards the old man. Asakawa walks leisurely after her son.

**YOICHI:**

Grandpa!

**KOUICHI:**

Whoa, there! So, you made it, huh?

**ASAKAWA:**

doing some fishing with you.

**KOUICHI:**

Is that so?

**YOICHI:**

**KOUICHI:**

together and then we can go.

Asakawa stands on a RIVERBANK while her father and Yoichi, GUMBOOTS on, are ankle-deep in a shallow river. Yoichi holds a small NET, and

**KOUICHI:**

Yoichi tries to scoop up the fish his grandfather is pointing out.

**KOUICHI:**

Oh, oh! Ah... guess he got away, huh?

**YOICHI:**

That was your fault, grandpa.

**KOUICHI:**

Well, whaddya say we try again?

He begins sloshing noisily out to the center of the stream, Yoichi in tow.

**KOUICHI:**

Asakawa looks away, pensive.

Yoichi is passed out asleep on the tatami mats. A TELEVISION looms in one corner of the living room, but it is switched off. The SLIDING DOORS to the adjacent guest room are open and we can see futons set out, ready for bed.

Asakawa enters the living room and, seeing Yoichi, scoops him up in her arms and carries him over to the guest room.

**YOICHI:**

(sleepily)

How was work, mommy?

Asakawa tucks him into the futons and walks silently off.

Asakawa stands at the foot of the staircase, telephone RECEIVER in hand. The phone rests on a small STAND by the staircase.

**ASAKAWA:**

Hello?

RYUJI (O.S.)

Yeah. Your Oshima contact came through. It looks like the woman who predicted the Mihara eruption is the same woman from the video.

Ryuji is crouched in front of the TV, REMOTE in hand. The screen is paused on the scene of the woman brushing her long hair.

**RYUJI:**

Her name is Yamamura Shizuko. She committed suicide forty years ago by throwing herself into Mt. Mihara.

**ASAKAWA:**

Have you got anything else?

RYUJI (O.S.)

Oshima tomorrow morning.

**ASAKAWA:**

left!

RYUJI (O.S.)

Short silence.

RYUJI (O.S.)

Ryuji hangs up. Asakawa, deep in thought, slowly places the phone back in its CRADLE. She turns around to walk back down the hallway only to find her father standing there, face full of concern.

**KOUJI:**

Asakawa shakes her head.

**ASAKAWA:**

Nothing. I just had some things left over from work.

She walks past her father, who glances worriedly after her over his shoulder.

The lights are all off and Asakawa is asleep in her futon. Her eyes suddenly fly open as a VOICE sounding eerily like her deceased niece Tomoko calls out to her.

TOMOKO (O.S.)

Auntie?

Asakawa looks around the room, gets her bearings. Her eyes fall on the futon next to hers.

**ASAKAWA:**

Yoichi?

There is a BODY in that futon, but it is full-grown, dressed all in black. It is curled into a fetal position and has its head turned away.

Suddenly, the IMAGE from the video of the figure with its face



visage materializes, and then disappears. It reappears a moment later, pointing more insistently now, and disappears again. Asakawa blinks her eyes and realizes that the futon next to hers is empty. Yoichi is nowhere to be seen.

Just then, she hears that high-pitched, metallic SQUEAKING from the video. Eyes wide with horror, she flings the sliding doors apart-- --and there, seated before the television, is Yoichi.

He is watching the video.

It is already at the very last scene, the shot of the outdoor well. CLOSEUP on the screen now, and for just an instant we can see that something is trying to claw its way out of the well. The video cuts off, and the screen fills with static.

Shrieking, Asakawa races over to Yoichi, covers his eyes though it is already too late. She scoots over to the VCR, ejects the tape and

shaking him roughly.

**ASAKAWA:**

Yoichi! You brought this with you,

**YOICHI:**

Tomo-chan...

Asakawa freezes, her eyes wide.

**YOICHI:**

Tomo-chan told me to watch it.

:

WAVES are being kicked up by a large PASSENGER SHIP as it speeds on its way. CUT to Asakawa and Ryuji standing on deck, looking out over the waves.

**RYUJI:**

When I was at your place that day, I could feel something there. I thought it was just because of the video...

**ASAKAWA:**

**RYUJI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Yoichi... he can see them too,

Ryuji nods his head, lowers it sadly.

**ASAKAWA:**

died, then those three others. It should have stopped there, but it

**RYUJI:**

I wonder...

Asakawa turns to Ryuji suddenly.

**ASAKAWA:**

How did the rumors about the video even start in the first place?

**RYUJI:**

start by one person telling a

fear just takes on a life of its own.

**ASAKAWA:**

Fear...

**RYUJI:**

secretly hoping for all along.

The ship has docked, its GANGPLANK extended. Ryuji and Asakawa walk the length of the gangplank towards the shore. A man named MR. HAYATSU is already waiting for them. He holds up a white SIGNBOARD in both hands.

**ASAKAWA:**

Mr. Hayatsu?

**HAYATSU:**

Aah, welcome! You must be tired after your long trip. Please, this way.

Mr. Hayatsu leads Asakawa and Ryuji to an awaiting minivan.

Ryuji and Asakawa sit in the back. Mr. Hayatsu is behind the wheel, chattering away.

**HAYATSU:**

Back in the old days, the Yamamuras used to head fishing boats out in

old man now. His son and his daughter-in-law run an old-fashioned inn. I went ahead and booked

alright...

Asakawa gives the briefest of nods in reply, after which the minivan lapses into silence. Asakawa looks dreamily out at the mountain-studded landscape, then suddenly snaps to.

**ASAKAWA:**

(to Ryuji)

Why did Yamamura Shizuko commit suicide?

**RYUJI:**

She was taking a real beating in the press, being called a fraud and all sorts of names. After a while she just lost it.

CUT to a scene of the minivan speeding along a country road.

**RYUJI:**

Shizuko was getting a lot of attention around the island after

predicting the eruption of Mt.  
Mihara. Seems that for some time

precognition. It was around then  
that she attracted the attention  
of a certain scholar whom you may  
have heard of; Ikuma Heihachiro.

**ASAKAWA:**

He was driven out of the university,

Ryuji nods.

**RYUJI:**

This Professor Ikuma convinces  
Shizuko to go to Tokyo with him,  
where he uses her in a series of  
demonstrations meant to prove the

the darling of the press, but the

knocking her down, calling her a  
fraud. Hmph. Forty years later,

much.

**ASAKAWA:**

sure I remember hearing that somebody  
died at one of those demonstrations.

for a moment.

**RYUJI:**

After getting kicked out of  
university, Ikuma just vanished,

even alive anymore.

**ASAKAWA:**

But, why even try looking for him?

**RYUJI:**

child with Shizuko. A daughter.

Asakawa freezes. In her mind, she sees a small FIGURE dressed in white, its face hidden by long, black HAIR. It is the figure from the video.

EXT. OUTSIDE YAMAMURA VILLA - DAY

Mr. Hayatsu leads Asakawa and Ryuji to the entrance.

**HAYATSU:**

Hello?

The INKEEPER, a middle-aged lady named KAZUE wearing a traditional KIMONO, comes shuffling up. She addresses Mr. Hayatsu.

**KAZUE:**

Thank you.

She turns to Asakawa and Ryuji.

Welcome.

**HAYATSU:**

He gives a little bow and is off. Kazue, meanwhile, has produced two pairs of SLIPPERS, which she offers to Ryuji and Asakawa.

**KAZUE:**

Please.

Ryuji and Asakawa begin removing their shoes.

Kazue leads Ryuji and Asakawa up a shadowed, wooden STAIRCASE.

**KAZUE:**

And for your rooms, how shall we...?

**RYUJI:**

Separate, please.

**KAZUE:**

Kazue gives a little bow.

**KAZUE:**

This way.

Kazue turns to the right. Almost immediately after reaching the

He heads down the opposite end of the corridor, Asakawa close behind.

**KAZUE:**

(alarmed)

Sir!

Ryuji flings open the SLIDING DOOR to one of the older rooms. There, hanging from one of the walls, is the oval-shaped MIRROR from the video, the one used by the mysterious lady to brush her long hair. Ryuji stares at the mirror, almost wincing. He turns around as if to look at Asakawa, but continues turning, looks past her. Asakawa follows his gaze, as does Kazue. Standing at the end of the corridor is an old man, MR. YAMAMURA.

Yamamura regards them silently, balefully. Breaking the silence, Kazue gestures for Asakawa and Ryuji to follow.

**KAZUE:**

(softly)

Please, this way.

Asakawa races past the innkeeper towards the old man. He keeps his back turned towards her.

**ASAKAWA:**

Please! If you could just answer a few questions, about Shizuko...

**YAMAMURA:**

**ASAKAWA:**

The old man says nothing.

**ASAKAWA:**

Yamamura regards her for a moment, then turns to walk away.

**YAMAMURA:**

The TABLE is laid out with an elaborate-looking DINNER. Asakawa sits alone, knees curled up to her chin, eyes wide and frightened.

She is whimpering softly to herself. Just then, the DOOR slides open and Ryuji walks in. He sits at the table and picks up a pair of CHOPSTICKS.

**RYUJI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Umm...

**RYUJI:**

Hm?

**ASAKAWA:**

**RYUJI:**

Oh, stop it.

Asakawa scoots across the tatami mats towards the table, grabs Ryuji fiercely by the arm.

**ASAKAWA:**

that could help Yoichi--

**RYUJI:**

I said stop it! Have you forgotten  
There was a girl with Tomoko when

mental institution. Who knows what  
could happen.

**ASAKAWA:**

But you could stay with me, Ryuji.

**RYUJI:**

(angrily)

right in the head?

slams his chopsticks down angrily.

**RYUJI:**

let things run its course, get rid  
of father -and- son? Yoichi was a  
mistake, anyway.

**ASAKAWA:**

Stop it!

Short silence. When Ryuji speaks up again, his voice is soft,  
reassuring.

**RYUJI:**

We still have two days left...

Just then the VOICE of the innkeeper calls tentatively out from  
the other side of the sliding door.

KAZUE (O.S.)

Excuse me?

**RYUJI:**

Come in.

Kazue slides the door open. She stands hesitantly in the doorway,  
something tucked under one arm.

**KAZUE:**

Ryuji shoots a glance at Asakawa and stands up from the table,  
walks towards the innkeeper.

**KAZUE:**

This is all that there is...

Kazue produces an old black and white PHOTOGRAPH. The photo shows a  
WOMAN, seated, dressed in a KIMONO. A MAN in a Western-style SUIT  
stands beside her.

**RYUJI:**

Is this Professor Ikuma?

Hearing this Asakawa leaps up, walks over to examine the picture for  
herself.

**KAZUE:**

...yes. This picture is from before

She pauses a moment.



I should go now.

The innkeeper scuttles off, leaving Asakawa and Ryuji alone with the photograph. Unbidden, the VOICE from the video enters their thoughts.

**VOICE:**

Shoumon bakkari... boukon ga kuru zo...

EXT. IZU SEASHORE - DAY

Asakawa watches Ryuji stride down the shore.

Ryuji strolls up to find old man Yamamura sitting alone, staring out at the sea. Yamamura glances up to see Ryuji approaching.

first. The deep basso of his voice emphasizes the drawl of his accent.

**YAMAMURA:**

tonight.

**RYUJI:**

What kind of a child was Shizuko?

**YAMAMURA :**

stare out at the ocean. The fishermen

year it swallows up more of our own.

ike that...

**RYUJI:**

Yamamura looks at Ryuji, surprised.

**RYUJI:**

must have been difficult for her...

Yamamura rises unsteadily to his feet, features twisted angrily.

**YAMAMURA:**

Please leave! Now!

**RYUJI:**

myself. It was you who spread the

And you who first contacted  
Professor Ikuma?

**YAMAMURA:**

**RYUJI:**

some money off her. You even got  
some, from one of the newspapers.

**YAMAMURA:**

Leave me the hell alone!

Mr. Yamamura strides angrily off. Both Ryuji and Asakawa take

**RYUJI:**

Who was she?

**YAMAMURA:**

**RYUJI:**

She was there, with Shizuko. She  
had to be.

causes him to stumble and fall. Ryuji comes up behind him,

**FLASH:**

The setting is a large MEETING HALL. A number of people are seated in folding chairs before a STAGE, on which are a four MEN in BUSINESS SUITS and a WOMAN in a KIMONO. A BANNER hangs above the stage, which reads PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION ON THE EXISTENCE OF CLAIRVOYANCE.

**FLASH:**

before the press. He also realizes--

**RYUJI:**

(to Yamamura)

You were there!

**FLASH:**

YAMAMURA SHIZUKO, the woman in the kimono, is sitting at a TABLE onstage. Her face is calm and expressionless. Standing off to one side and peering from behind the curtains is a young Mr. Yamamura. RYUJI(O.S.)

You stood there and watched the demonstration.

CUT back to the beach. Asakawa comes running up toward Ryuji and the prone Mr. Yamamura. Suddenly there is another

**FLASH:**

Asakawa, her eyes wide, finds herself inside the scene, reliving it as if she had actually been there. She watches as Shizuko receives a sealed clay POT in both hands. Shizuko regards the pot a moment and then places it gently on the table before her. She takes a calligraphy STYLUS from the table, begins writing on a thin, rectangular sheet of RICE PAPER. The members of the press talk excitedly, craning their necks for a better look.

Onstage, a JUDGE holds up the phrase written by Shizuko and the folded sheet of paper taken from the sealed pot. The phrase on both sheets is identical.

**JUDGE:**

Match.

smile.

The experiment is performed again, and again the phrase written by Shizuko corresponds to the sealed sheet of paper.

**JUDGE:**

Match.

the unseen. Finally, a bearded REPORTER explodes from his chair, begins striding angrily towards the stage.

**REPORTER:**

Faker! This is nothing but trickery, and the lowest form of trickery at that.

The reporter stops at the foot of the stage, points his finger accusingly at Shizuko.

**REPORTER:**

What are you trying to pull, woman?

A SECOND REPORTER sitting in the front row also rises to his feet.  
REPORTER #2

By now most of the press has risen from their chairs, pointing and shouting angrily. Onstage, Shizuko backs away, eyes wide and frightened. She covers both ears, trying to block out the increasing din. Professor Ikuma holds her protectively by the shoulders. The first reporter is still shouting angrily, his voice rising above the others. Suddenly, a pained look crosses his face and he collapses to

face is contorted into a grotesque mask of fear.

REPORTER #3

REPORTER #4

REPORTER #5

(to Shizuko)

Witch!

Professor Ikuma begins leading Shizuko offstage. They stop as someone head shaking in disbelief.

**SHIZUKO:**

Sadako? Was it you?

CUT to Ryuji on the beach. He looks up excitedly.

**RYUJI:**

Sadako?!

He recalls the image from the video, the alien eye with the single character SADA reflected in reverse. \*

>\* The majority of girls' names in Japanese end in either -mi ("beauty")  
>or -ko ("child"). Thus, Sadako means "Chaste child." Sadako is, of  
>course, the mysterious daughter of Shizuko and Professor Ikuma.

**RYUJI:**

Sadako killed him? She can kill  
just with a thought?

**YAMAMURA:**

CUT back to the demonstration hall. Sadako, her face completely hidden  
by her long hair, runs offstage... and heads directly for Asakawa.  
Asakawa instinctively raises her arm, and Sadako grasps it fiercely.

bloody stumps.

CUT back to the beach. Asakawa, still caught in the throes of the  
vision, has begun to swoon. Finally her legs give out and she crumples  
to the beach. Ryuji grabs hold of her supportively. He glances down at  
her wrist, sees an ugly, purple BRUISE already beginning to form.  
The bruise is in the shape of five long, spindly fingers.  
Mr. Yamamura slowly rises to a sitting position, and together the three  
watch the approach of ominous, dark STORM CLOUDS.

Asakawa is on the phone, her voice almost frantic.

**ASAKAWA:**

committed suicide, Professor Ikuma  
took the daughter and ran. No, no one  
need -you- to find out where they are.

explain it all later, but right now  
just hurry!

Asakawa slams the phone down. PAN to show Ryuji slumped in one corner  
of the room, his back to the wall.

**RYUJI:**

could kill people with just a thought,  
close to that.

**ASAKAWA:**

(flustered)

Well, what about that video? If

**RYUJI:**

all. That video... is the pure,

hatred.

Ryuji turns to regard Asakawa, his eyes blank.

**RYUJI:**

There is a moment of silence before Mr. Hayatsu slides the door open, almost falling into the room. He is out of breath, and speaks rapidly.

**HAYATSU:**

coming in, all ships are temporarily staying docked.

**RYUJI:**

What about the fishing boats?

**HAYATSU:**

Fishing boats? Sir, without knowing whether this typhoon is going to hit

wait and see how things turn--

Ryuji interrupts him, slamming both palms on the table. Glasses rattle wildly.

**RYUJI:**

Ryuji stands and races past Mr. Hayatsu out into the rain. Hayatsu takes pursuit, calling after him.

**HAYATSU:**

Mr. Takayama!? Mr. Takayama...

Asakawa, left alone, stares down at the tatami mats.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

White-capped waves roll angrily in a black sea.

Asakawa sits at a table, alone, her hands clasped as if in prayer. Her eyes are wide and glassy. The phone RINGS suddenly and Asakawa dives for it, wrenching it from the cradle before it can ring a second time.

**ASAKAWA:**

Hello?

OKAZAKI (O.S.)

leads at all.

into herself.

OKAZAKI (O.S.)

Hello?

**ASAKAWA:**

(softly)

Thank you...

Asakawa slowly places the phone back in its cradle. Almost immediately, her face begins to crumple. She falls to her knees, sobbing into the floor.

**ASAKAWA:**

Yoichi...

She cries a while longer but suddenly stops. Her face, eyes streaked with tears, shoots suddenly up, stares directly at the telephone.

**ASAKAWA :**

(softly)

Izu...

Asakawa stands looking down on the wharf, scanning.

Several FISHING BOATS are docked. The wind whips her hair crazily around. She continues scanning, and suddenly she spies--

**ASAKAWA:**

(calling)

Ryuji!

Asakawa runs down onto the wharf, heading towards Ryuji. He is in mid-conversation with Mr. Hayatsu.

**ASAKAWA:**

Ryuji! The phone in my apartment

never rang! It only ever rang at  
the rental cottage! Professor

**RYUJI:**

**HAYATSU:**

anybody going out in this weather...

The three fall into silence as they realize the powerlessness of their  
situation. Suddenly, a deep VOICE booms from behind them.

YAMAMURA (O.S.)

The three spin around to see Mr. Yamamura, his ROBES flapping in the  
gusty night air. He begins walking towards them.

**YAMAMURA:**

Mayhap to drag you down under the  
water.

Short silence. Ryuji shoots a short questioning glance at Asakawa,  
turns back to face Mr. Yamamura.

**RYUJI:**

Please. Take us out.

A tiny FISHING BOAT is tossed about on the waves. Mr. Yamamura stands  
at the wheel, his face expressionless.

expression is dreamy, faraway.

**ASAKAWA:**

Ryuji leans over, rubs her hand comfotingly. Suddenly he switches  
back into analytical mode.

**RYUJI:**

Sadako probably died back out there  
at Izu, before the rental cottages  
were ever built.

**ASAKAWA:**



daughter?

**RYUJI:**

(nodding)

Ikuma smuggled her out in secret. His relationship with Shizuko was already a scandal, and one of the reasons he got drummed out of the

**ASAKAWA:**

(excitedly)

Is that going to break the curse? Will Yoichi be all right?

**RYUJI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Just one more day...

Ryuji puts his arm around Asakawa.

Ryuji stands on deck, looking out over the water. He heads down

**RYUJI:**

have it out for us after all.

Long pause as Mr. Yamamura says nothing.

**YAMAMURA:**

Shizuko... she used to -speak- to the ocean, just ramble away. One

conversations.

Mr. Yamamura pauses again.

Asakawa has climbed out on deck and is looking up towards the sunrise.

Ryuji races out of the store, loaded down with supplies. He holds a pair of BUCKETS in one hand and a CROWBAR and SHOVEL in the other. A length of ROPE is coiled over his left shoulder. He runs towards a RENTAL CAR, passing by Asakawa who stands at a PAYPHONE, receiver in hand.

YOICHI (O.S.)

Hello?

**ASAKAWA:**

Ryuji shoots a look at her over his shoulder.

YOICHI (O.S.)

go back to school.

**ASAKAWA:**

(smiling)

to talk like that.

YOICHI (O.S.)

**ASAKAWA:**

Asakawa pauses, her voice hitching. She seems about to lose her composure.

**ASAKAWA:**

see you tomorrow.

YOICHI (O.S.)

**ASAKAWA:**

Say hello to grandpa for me, OK?

Ryuji stands by the car, scowling over at Asakawa. He shuts the DOOR just short of a slam. CUT to Asakawa hanging up the phone. She half-runs towards the rental car and enters the passenger side, staring

SEATBELT.

**RYUJI:**

What time was it when you first watched the video?

Asakawa glances at her watch.

**ASAKAWA:**

Seven or eight minutes past seven. PM. No more than ten minutes past.

**RYUJI:**

If the rumors are true, that time is gonna be our deadline.

Asakawa buckles up as Ryuji steps on the gas.

Asakawa sits in the passenger side. Her face is almost angelic, with the faintest hint of a smile. Ryuji shoots a questioning look at her.

The white rental car tears past the SIGN reading Izu Pacific Land. The car continues into the LOT, screeching around corners before coming to an abrupt halt. Asakawa, her face still oddly expressionless, gets out of the passenger side. Ryuji exits as well, the hint of a shudder running through him as he regards the series of rental cabins.

**RYUJI:**

-Here-.

CUT to Asakawa and Ryuji walking up the gravel PATH towards the rental cabins. Ryuji looks back over his shoulder as both he and Asakawa stop before cabin B4. The cabin is on STILTS, its underbelly fenced off by wooden LATICework. Ryuji drops most of his supplies to the ground, but keeps hold of the PICK. He raises the pick over one shoulder and begins smashing away at the latticework. When he has cleared enough space for passage, he begins picking up supplies and tossing them hastily within. When finished, he holds a hand out for Asakawa. The two enter the earthen basement.

UNDER COTTAGE B4 - DAY

Ryuji pulls a FLASHLIGHT out, flicks it on. The BEAM arcs outwards, illuminating what looks more like an old mine shaft than a modern rental cottage. The beam halts when it suddenly encounters an old STONE WELL. The well is badly chipped on one side, and sealed off with a solid-looking stone LID. Ryuji rushes quickly towards it.

**RYUJI:**

I knew it! The well.

He squats down beside the well, setting the flashlight on the lid. Asakawa sinks slowly down beside him.

**ASAKAWA:**

The well...

hands onto the lid, and together they begin lightly tracing the surface of the lid with their free hands. Asakawa closes her eyes in concentration... and suddenly, as with the incident on the beach,

**FLASH:**

The picture is black and white, grainy like old film. A YOUNG GIRL in a WHITE GOWN walks slowly towards an open well. She places her hand on the LIP of the well, peers curiously down.

**FLASH:**

Asakawa looks up, her eyes wide open.

**FLASH:**

:

There is now a second person in the vision, an ELDERLY MAN in an old-fashioned tweed SUIT standing behind the young girl. He suddenly produces some BLADED OBJECT, and strikes the girl savagely across the back of the head.

The girl falls forward. The man drops to the ground, grabbing the girl behind the knees and hoisting her limp BODY over the lip and into the well. The body falls into its depths.

Panting heavily, the man leans forward and grasps the lip of the well with both hands, looking down. He flashes a guilty look in either direction, checking that his crime has gone unnoticed, and as he does so Asakawa realizes that she knows this face. The image from the videotape, like a face in the moon: it had been Sadako inside the well, looking up to see this man staring back down at her.

This man whose name is Professor Ikuma Heihachiro.

**FLASH:**

**ASAKAWA:**

Her own father!

The energy seems to drain out of Asakawa in a rush, and her body crumbles. Ryuji catches hold of her.

**RYUJI:**

It was Ikuma who put this lid on.

Ryuji stands quickly, takes hold of the crowbar. He inserts it under the lid and begins trying to pry it off, face scrunched with effort. Asakawa digs her fingers in and lends her own strength as well. Slowly, the lid begins to move. Ryuji tosses the crowbar aside and the two lean the combined weight of their bodies into it. The lid slides off, dropping to the earth with a dull THUD. Ryuji sits to one side, winded with effort, as Asakawa takes hold of the flashlight. She shines it down into the well, but it only seems to intensify the gloom. What WATER she can see looks fetid and brackish. Ryuji sees her expression and begins removing his JACKET.

**RYUJI:**

He walks off, leaving Asakawa alone.

CUT to an overhead shot of the well. A ROPE is fastened to one side, and Ryuji has already begun lowering himself down. His eyes wander over the grime-smearred WALLS, and with a shudder he begins to pick out human FINGERNAILS. Torn loose and spattered with blood, countless fingernails line the sides of the well.

**RYUJI:**

climb her way out.

way down the rope again, finally SPLASHING to rest at the bottom of the well. He holds his flashlight above the brackish water, calls up to Asakawa.

**RYUJI:**

Lower the buckets!

Asakawa nods and lowers two plastic BUCKETS fastened to a rope. Ryuji grabs one and scoops up a bucketful of water, tugging on the rope when finished.

**RYUJI:**

Take it up!

Asakawa hoists the bucket up to the rim of the well. She walks a small distance and tosses the contents out onto the ground. She happens to glance through the wooden lattice to the outside, and with a start

realizes that the sun has already started to set. A nervous glance at her WATCH later and she is back at the well, lowering the empty bucket to find another full one already awaiting her.

**RYUJI:**

Take it up!

In the well, Ryuji glances at his watch. He looks at it for a long

Time passes as Asakawa pulls up bucketload after bucketload, her strength beginning to fade. She half-stumbles, glances up... and is shocked to realize that NIGHT has fallen.

CUT to Asakawa slowly pulling up yet another bucket, her strength almost gone. She looks at her watch and sees that it is now past

**6:**

**ASAKAWA:**

**RYUJI:**

(explosively)

I know! Hurry up and TAKE IT UP!!

The bucket slowly jerks into motion. Asakawa pulls it up to the rim of the well, holds it unsteadily. She takes one faltering step and

CUT to Ryuji in the well, standing ready with another bucketful.

**RYUJI:**

Take it up!

Nothing happens.

**RYUJI:**

Asakawa!

The bucket begins moving, even slower than before. CUT to Asakawa,

keep her body moving. She glances behind her, sees through the wooden lattice that it is now pitch black. A look of resignation crosses her face and she releases her hold on the bucket, her body crumpling and falling in on itself.

**:**

CUT to the bucket splashing back into the well, narrowly missing Ryuji.

**RYUJI:**

(fuming)

What the hell are you doing? Trying to get me killed?

CUT back to Asakawa, her face dead. Ryuji calls out from the well.

RYUJI (O.S.)

Hey!

Asakawa falls backward onto the ground, arms splayed. CUT to the rim of the well. Ryuji pulls himself up over the rim, catches sight of Asakawa.

**RYUJI:**

Asakawa!

She lifts her head up but says nothing as Ryuji walks over to her.

**RYUJI:**

to keep this up.

Asakawa suddenly springs into life. Her voice is frantic, fearful.

**ASAKAWA:**

No!

**RYUJI:**

Who do you expect to pull up these buckets, then?

**ASAKAWA:**

any good...

Ryuji strides forward and slaps Asakawa painfully across the cheek. He begins shaking her roughly for good measure.

**RYUJI:**

And what about Yoichi, huh? Is his mother not coming to pick him up after all?

He releases his hold on her. The two stare at each other a long time, saying nothing.

CUT to an overhead shot of Asakawa being lowered into the well. CUT now to Asakawa inside the well, her face and clothes covered with grime, body simultaneously limp with exhaustion and tense with fright. Unable to resist the impulse, Asakawa slowly looks over her shoulder and down into the well. The dankness, the claustrophobia seeps in

and she draws in her breath in the first signs of panic.

**RYUJI:**

She returns her gaze, cranes her neck upward. CUT to Ryuji leaning over the rim of the well, peering down at her. For an instant,

if the blow to the back of her head has finished her off. CUT to Asakawa, her eyes wide with fright.

Asakawa comes to rest at the bottom of the well. A FLASHLIGHT hangs from another rope, but its beam has almost no effect on the darkness. Asakawa crouches forward, hands moving searchingly through the water. She calls out pleadingly.

**ASAKAWA:**

Where are you? Please, come out.

Asakawa straightens, unties herself from the rope. A full bucket already awaits. She tugs on the rope and Ryuji pulls it up.

She scoops up a second bucket, but something stops her from sending it up. Instead, she begins running her arms through the water again, her voice close to tears.

**ASAKAWA:**

Please. Where are you?

Asakawa continues her blind fumbling, which sends up little splashes of stagnant water. With a start, she realizes that her fingers have caught something. Seaweed? Asakawa draws her hands close for a better look... and sees that is HAIR. A thick clump of long, black hair.

Suddenly a pale, thin ARM shoots out from beneath the water, catching

like moaning as something slowly rises from its watery slumber. It is a GIRL, her face completely hidden by long, black hair. CUT to a

oddly placid. She regards the fearsome thing before her with an almost tender look. Asakawa reaches out, lightly strokes that long hair.

**ASAKAWA:**

She strokes the hair again, and abruptly it peels right off the head with a loud SQUELCH. Revealed is not a face at all but a SKULL. Its sockets are at first menacingly empty, but then begin to ooze the



green SLUDGE it has pulled up from the bottom of the well. Like a mother comforting a frightened child, Asakawa pulls the skeletal remains to her breast, strokes the bony head comfortingly. Her eyes begin to glaze.

CUT to Ryuji racing up to the rim of the well, leaning down intently.

**RYUJI:**

minutes past seven! We did it!

Down in the well, Asakawa continues staring blankly ahead. Her body suddenly falls forward, limp.

Three POLICE CARS are parked outside the rental cottages, crimson headlights flashing. A few COPS walk by, two of them carrying something off in white PLASTIC BAGS. CUT to Ryuji and Asakawa sitting on the curb. Asakawa is staring off at something, a BLANKET draped over her shoulder.

**ASAKAWA:**

Why would Ikuma have killed her?  
His own daughter...

**RYUJI:**

**ASAKAWA:**

What?

**RYUJI:**

which he suddenly takes and holds close to his face. The ugly bruise where Sadako had grabbed her has disappeared.

**RYUJI:**

He shakes his head, clearing his analytical mind of their ordeal.

**RYUJI:**

Ryuji stands, pulls Asakawa to her feet.

get out, regard each other from opposite sides of the car. There is a long moment where neither of them says anything.

**RYUJI:**

Get some rest.

He flashes her the slightest of grins.

I still have a thesis to finish.

CUT to a shot of Ryuji and Asakawa, the car creating an almost metaphoric distance between them.

**ASAKAWA:**

...thank you.

Ryuji nods silently by way of reply. He gets into his car and drives off. Asakawa watches him go, and then walks towards the entrance of her apartment.

Asakawa walks into her room, sits on the edge of her bed. It is now morning, and she sits dazedly watching the sun come up.

Ryuji sits busily scribbling into a NOTEBOOK. He stops writing a moment to regard his notes while taking a sip of COFFEE. He glances over at his BLACKBOARD for confirmation when a small scowl to himself.

**RYUJI:**

That girl...

prank with a single chalk stroke.

Asakawa emerges, taking in the dawn. At first her face is calm and tranquil... but her features change as the sun almost noticeably darkens and a WIND begins to kick up her hair. She now looks very anxious.

**NOTE:**

translation before watching the movie, do yourself a favor; STOP reading this now and watch the scene for itself.

Ryuji is busy scribbling away at his notes again. His hand suddenly ceases, eyes dancing worriedly as he hears a faint...  
No.

Breath rattling fearfully in his throat, Ryuji spins around to face the TELEVISION SET. He gets out of his seat for a better look, falling to his knees on the tatami.

The image that fills the screen is the last scene from the videotape; the shot of the well.

The SOUND from before comes louder now, more insistent, a metallic screeching that both repulses and beckons him closer. Ryuji crawls on all fours towards the SCREEN, stares at its unchanging image with terrible foreboding.

There is a flash of MOTION as something shoots out of the well. A hand. First one, and then another, as Sadako, still in her grimy white dress, face hidden beneath long, oily strands of hair, begins slowly pulling herself out. The television screen jumps unsteadily, fills with static as if barely able to contain her image.

CUT back and forth between Ryuji, who is beginning to visibly panic, and the television, which shows Sadako lurching ever closer.

**RYUJI:**

(almost frantic)

Why?!

The TELEPHONE rings, and Ryuji spins round towards it, breath catching in his throat. He looks at the phone, over his shoulder at the television, back to the phone.

**RYUJI:**

Ryuji scrambles wildly towards the phone. He takes the receiver but is unable to do more than clutch it fearfully as his gaze is drawn

the entire screen... and then, television popping and crackling, she jerks forward and emerges from the television onto the floor of

**RYUJI:**

Aaargh!

Sadako lies prone, collapsed, hair splayed out like a drowned corpse. Only her FINGERS are active, crawling, feeling. The TIPS of her fingers are little more than bloodied stumps, not a single fingernail on them. She uses the strength in those fingers to pull herself forward, coming jerkily to her feet. The joints of her body twist unnaturally, more insect-like than human.

Ryuji flings the phone aside and begins scrambling about the apartment as if looking for cover. The strength has already begun to fade from his body, however, and his movements are clumsy, exaggerated. He falls

to the floor, panting heavily.

Sadako turns to regard him, and for just an instant we can see beneath her impenetrable shroud of hair; a single EYE burns with manic, unbridled hatred.

SCREAMS loudly.

**FLASH:**

Yoichi sits on the lawn, doodling into a large SKETCHPAD. He  
death.

:

Asakawa clutches the RECEIVER to her ear. She can still hear the sounds of metallic SCREECHING coming from the video, though they are now becoming softer.

Asakawa comes running down a side street, turning the corner and

single GUARD posted at the entrance. He reaches out, catches Asakawa lightly by the arm.

**GUARD:**

**ASAKAWA:**

The guard drops his hand, and Asakawa makes for the entrance.

**GUARD:**

taken the body away.

Mai is there, slumped against one wall. Asakawa comes running up, dropping to her knees and grasping Mai by the shoulders.

**ASAKAWA:**

What happened?

Mai shakes her head dreamily.

**MAI:**

When I got here he was just lying there...

**ASAKAWA:**

Did he say anything to you? About a videotape?

Mai shakes her head again, shakes it harder until the breath catches in her throat.

**MAI:**

His face...

Mai falls into silence, curls up on herself. Asakawa leaves her

The front DOOR opens wildly, noisily forward. Asakawa comes rushing in, eyes darting about the apartment. She thinks frantically to herself.

ASAKAWA (VO)

Ryuji... why? Does this mean that Yoichi will die, too? Is the curse not broken yet?

Her gaze falls to the television set. She dives forward, presses the eject button on the VCR. Sure enough, the TAPE is still in the deck. She takes the tape and leaves.

Asakawa walks slowly, dreamily forward. She drops the videotape loudly onto the coffee table and slouches into a CHAIR. Her eyes fall to the framed photographs of Yoichi on one of the shelves. This snaps Asakawa out of her daze and she begins whispering intently to herself, thinking.

**ASAKAWA:**

I was the only one to break

Asakawa gives up, lowers her face into her hands. When she looks up again, she happens to glance at the television screen-- and its GLARE reveals that there is someone ELSE in the room with her. It is the figure from the videotape, the silent accuser with the cloth draped over its face. With a start, Asakawa realizes that

**ASAKAWA:**

Ryuji?!

The figure had been pointing towards her BAG. She stands, rummages in her bag to produce her copy of the cursed videotape.

between the two tapes.

**ASAKAWA:**

version of the tape, plainly marked COPY.

**ASAKAWA:**

What broke the curse was that I copied the tape and showed it to someone else!

CUT to Asakawa slowly pulling her VCR from the television stand. A look of almost frightening resolve etches her face.

phone.

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

CLOSEUP on the VCR in the passenger side. CUT to Asakawa at the wheel as time spirals forward, the decisions of the present already become rumor of the future.

GIRL A (VO)

alive after you watch the video.

show it to somebody else inside a week.

GIRL B (VO)

But what about the person you show it to?

GIRL A (VO)

Well, then they make a copy and show it to somebody else. Again, inside a week.

GIRL C (VO)

(laughing)

GIRL A (VO)

to the direction of menacing-looking STORM CLOUDS.

FADE TO BLACK as the CAPTION turns blood red.