

FADE IN:

EXT. TOKYO - SHINJUKU SHOPPING DISTRICT - DAY

SASAKI YUJI (20), an attractive Japanese music student, navigates a sea of shoppers, business-types, and tourists. He carries a violin case.

BRIAN (20), an attractive American college student, backpack slung over his shoulder, follows Yuji.

Yuji glances back several times at Brian.

Brian smiles shyly. Yuji shows no facial expression, but his spark of desire is in his eyes.

INT. TOKYO DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Another sea of people, but normal conversational tones and PIPED-IN MUSIC.

Yuji heads up a flight of stairs. He pauses at a landing. Brian starts up the stairs. Their eyes meet.

Yuji heads into a restroom. Brian stops at the door. He glances around the environs briefly; then, too, heads in.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

Brian walks to the sink, where Yuji stands washing his hands. Several glances in the mirror between them.

Yuji pats his hands on his shirt. He picks up the violin case, walks to the stalls, checks them -- all empty -- and enters the far stall.

Brian heads to the stalls.

INT. STALL - DAY

Brian and Yuji explore each other's bodies, until they hear POUNDING on the door, and the booming voice of a SECURITY GUARD (40s).

[NOTE: DIALOGUE THROUGHOUT SCREENPLAY IS IN JAPANESE, WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED]

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)

Out! Out!

Yuji pushes the door open, picks up the violin case, and hurries out of the restroom.

Brian zips up, glances at the scowling security guard, and leaves.

INT. TOKYO DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Brian follows Yuji.

INT. TOKYO RAIL STATION - DAY

Commuters flow around Yuji on the platform.

Brian approaches Yuji and smiles. Yuji meets his gaze, looks away.

BRIAN
(in English)
I didn't... I didn't expect that
guy would...

Yuji gestures toward the tracks.

YUJI
(in English with Japanese
accent)
You transfer. Um... You can take
Keiyo Line.
(beat)
For Shin-Kiba. Place for... it's
for... us.

A hopeful smile from Brian.

BRIAN
(in English)
I can just follow you.

Yuji shakes his head, his expression serious. He points to Brian's backpack.

YUJI
(in English with Japanese
accent)
Map?

Brian pulls out a map. Yuji sets down the violin case, takes the map, and turns it over twice. He taps a spot.

YUJI
(in English with Japanese
accent)
Here. Hatchobori Station, here, to
Shin-Kiba. On Keiyo Line.

A train pulls into the station.

YUJI
(in English with Japanese
accent)
I must go now. I... wish you a...
goodbye, right?

Yuji picks up the violin case and walks to the train.

BRIAN
(in English)
You'll meet me there? Is that what
you mean?

YUJI
(in English with Japanese
accent)
No Brian. We have only meet for a
short time. For just fun. I must
say goodbye now.

Yuji is swallowed up by the throng of boarding commuters. He
locks eyes with Brian until the train pulls out.

INT. TOKYO GAY BAR - NIGHT

A dark enclave of older Japanese men and beautiful young
Japanese call boys.

Yuji, in gray slacks and a lavender shirt, emerges from a
service door.

JUN (40s), sharply dressed, well groomed, but unattractive,
makes a beeline to Yuji.

JUN
This is the third time this week!
One more tardy, and you're out!

Jun points to a table where TAKAHISHI AKIO (80s) sits, a
drink in front of him. Akio's face is scarred.

JUN
Luckily for you, he's returned. And
not yet lost interest.

Yuji shakes his head at Jun's reprimand and walks to the
table. He sits opposite Akio.

Akio looks up. He studies Yuji's face; strokes Yuji's cheek.

AKIO
You are such a serious boy.

Yuji shrugs a shoulder.

AKIO
You've thought about my proposal?

Yuji nods.

AKIO
And?

Yuji nods.

AKIO
So, you will call me just before
your train arrives.

Akio writes something on a slip of paper and hands it, along
with an envelope, to Yuji.

AKIO
There will be a white Lexus LS460
waiting to pick you up.

Yuji fingers the envelope. He slides out the contents just
enough that he can see the edges of a stack of yen notes.

INT. TOKYO COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Yuji and MIHO (20s), an attractive Japanese woman, sit at a
corner table. Miho has an iced drink; Yuji's is hot.

Miho wears business attire. Yuji sports a red tee-shirt under
an open blue plaid shirt.

MIHO
What kind of project? I don't
understand.

YUJI
It's a special lesson. A very
important instructor.

MIHO
You can't find special instructors
here? Or is it that Nagasaki has
musically superior violins?

Miho smirks, then takes a sip of her drink.

MIHO
And you'll be there for three days?

Yuji shrugs.

YUJI
It's hard to explain. It's a rare
opportunity.

MIHO
I see. You can't possibly explain
your music lessons to your stupid
girlfriend.

Yuji winces at the word "girlfriend."

MIHO
You're always so serious.

INT. JAPANESE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Yuji, seated, stirs awake.

He puts up his feet. He checks a wad of yen notes in his
pocket.

A Japanese woman (60s), across the aisle, glares at Yuji.

Yuji plants his feet back on the floor. He rests his head
against the seat and closes his eyes.

EXT. NAGASAKI - TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Yuji exits the station, and spots the Lexus. He walks over
and hands the driver (30s) the slip of paper. The driver
opens the rear door, and Yuji climbs inside.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Yuji stares out the window at the lights of the buildings and
homes as the car heads up the street.

MIHO (V.O.)
Where will you be staying? When do
you come back?

AKIO (V.O.)
I have a very comfortable guest
room.

MIHO (V.O.)
Promise you'll call and text me.

AKIO (V.O.)
You'll feel as if you've escaped
from the world.

The driver turns on the radio. CLASSICAL MUSIC. Yuji's
fingers move in time with the music.

EXT. NAGASAKI - AKIO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A 2-story house with a bamboo fence. Yuji follows the driver to the front door.

INT. AKIO'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Yuji sits down on the bed. He runs his finger along the edge of the nightstand. He falls onto the bed, his hair flopping backward. He closes his eyes.

INT. AKIO'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT (A FEW HOURS LATER)

Yuji wakes suddenly. He glances at the clock. It reads 3:45.

He props himself up on his elbows. He spots a silhouette against the window.

MIKAYE TORU (20s), steps closer. He is a strikingly beautiful young Japanese man, one eye smaller than the other, a metal stud in his nose and another on his bottom lip. He sports a tight purple v-neck shirt.

Toru climbs onto the bed.

TORU

Your whispers are like a different language.

YUJI

Who are you?

Toru traces Yuji's lips with his finger.

Yuji turns on the nightstand light.

YUJI

Who are you?

TORU

Mirake Toru.

Yuji traces Toru's mouth, stopping short of the stud.

TORU

And what's your name? Your real name, if you dare.

YUJI

Sasaki. Sasaki Yuji. I always use my real name.

(beat)

I have nothing to hide.

Toru kisses Yuji with tongue.

TORU

You smile, yet you frown at the same time.

YUJI

What? I don't understand.

TORU

Your mouth. At one angle you're pleased, but at another you're serious. Like... like an optical illusion.

Toru brushes the hair from Yuji's eyes.

YUJI

I'm ecstatic about being dour, perhaps.

Toru bursts out laughing. Yuji raises an eyebrow.

Toru rubs his hands along Yuji's arm.

TORU

This is a perfect shirt for you.
Very sexy. Very much a boy.

Toru slides his hand under Yuji's shirt.

TORU

There's something about your eyes.
(whispering)
You are such a beautiful boy.

Toru nudges Yuji down onto the mattress. He rubs his hands along Yuji's chest. They fall into an embrace.

INT. AKIO'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

A branch SCRAPES against the window.

Yuji and Toru are entwined, nude, asleep. Yuji opens his eyes. He stares at the window.

Another SCRAPING sound. This one rhythmic and regular. Yuji lifts his head. Toru grunts, rolls, faces the wall.

Akio, seated, draws in a sketchbook.

AKIO

Lie back, lie back.

Toru grunts again.

TORU
(eyes closed; weakly)
What? What is it?

AKIO
Turn him, please.

YUJI
Turn him?

AKIO
To face you, as you were before.

Yuji puts his hand on Toru's arm and gently nudges him. Toru turns over and buries his face in Yuji's shoulder.

AKIO
Good, good.
(beat)
So, then, was he pleasing?

YUJI
Pleasing?

AKIO
Last night. Here. You both were
cuddled together so tightly this
morning.

Toru lifts his head.

TORU
It was very pleasing.

Toru kisses Yuji's cheek.

AKIO
I am almost done here. We can have
breakfast shortly.

TORU
Will you give us enough time?

Akio laughs.

AKIO
You can minimize time. The bath
fits two.

Toru kisses Yuji's forehead.

TORU
Oh, a bath too. That's a very good
idea.

Akio laughs again.

INT. AKIO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The three men eat at the breakfast table. Toru is silent. He
eats slowly, his eyes downcast.

AKIO
It takes him some time to fully
wake up.

Toru nods, like a small child.

AKIO
Sasaki Yuji, you -- I must admit --
required all my effort to discover.
As for Miyake Toru here, I found
him rather quickly after I'd
decided to embark on this project.

Toru slurps from his miso.

YUJI
What is... the project?

Toru turns and looks into Yuji's eyes.

TORU
We are models.

YUJI
Of good behavior?

Toru laughs.

AKIO
Miyake Toru and I will head out
after breakfast. You enjoy a
relaxing afternoon.

Yuji studies both Akio and Toru, unsatisfied that his
question remains unanswered.

INT. AKIO'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Yuji lies on the bed.

From outside: CAR DOORS SLAMMING, a MOTOR REVVING, GRAVEL
CRUNCHING.

Yuji sits up.

Toru's knapsack rests against the wall.

Yuji lies back down. He sits up again, eyeing the knapsack once more. He stands and walks over to it. A tattered journal inside catches his eye. He slides it out.

He walks over to the bed. He sits down and reads the first page.

AKIO (V.O.)
I'd been granted freedom other boys
hadn't.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. SENDAI CITY STREET - DAY

Spring, 1945. YOUNG TAKAHISHI AKIO (15) walks through a grove of cherry trees. Petals rain down on him.

EXT. SENDAI CITY PARK - DAY

Young Akio, covered in cherry blossom petals, watches boys aged 8-9 years perform military exercises. They use bamboo sticks.

Young Akio scowls.

AKIO (V.O.)
Still I felt imprisoned. As though
I had no control of my life.

EXT. SENDAI CITY STREET - DAY

Young Akio, now free of petals, walks past shops, some empty, some shuttered.

He approaches a bookstore. He gazes in the window.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Young Akio enters. The store is in disarray, with many empty shelves.

The male shop OWNER (70s) nods to Young Akio.

OWNER
Irasshaimase.

Young Akio doesn't acknowledge the man. Instead he spots two diaries on a shelf. He walks over. He picks one up. He removes coins from his pocket. Counts them out.

Young Akio looks over his shoulder. The shop owner is busy with paperwork.

Young Akio puts the diary beneath his shirt. He turns, and walks past the owner.

EXT. SENDAI CITY STREET - DAY

Young Akio races down the sidewalk. The owner steps out of the shop.

SHOP OWNER
Come back here! I'll report you! Do
you hear me?

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

A large, stylish house.

Young Akio approaches from a pathway.

He stops when he spots TWO WOMEN (40s) at the front door speaking to his mother REI (30s).

Young Akio walks quickly around to the side of the house. He squats down and waddles along a row of shrubbery until he's within earshot of the women.

WOMAN 1
We'll be gone just over a week. And
if your son could come over once a
day.

WOMAN 2
We'd be so appreciative.

REI
Of course. He'd be more than happy
to.

WOMAN 1
Thank you.

WOMAN 2
You're so kind.

The women bow. They turn and walk away from the house, in the direction opposite where Young Akio is.

Rei glances to her side.

REI
What have I told you about
eavesdropping?

Young Akio is shocked, then defeated. He rises, and stares at the ground.

Rei motions him inside.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

A comfortable, tastefully decorated living space.

Young Akio stands in a sitting room. He holds the diary.

His mother arranges an ikebana.

YOUNG AKIO
It's not fair.

REI
Do you think you're above everyone
else?

YOUNG AKIO
Not necessarily.

REI
If it weren't for your uncle you'd
be out there training with the
other boys.

(beat)
All you're being asked to do is
spend twenty minutes a day. For
just a week. Water a few plants.
Pull a few weeds. And you're
finished. What's the point of
theatrics?

YOUNG AKIO
It's not the work.

REI
Then what? What is it?

YOUNG AKIO
It's that you didn't ask me. That
you ...

Young Akio trails off. Exasperated, he tosses his diary to
the floor.

REI
Enough!

EIJI (30s), Akio's father, limps into the room with the help
of a crutch. He has a withered left arm, and a right club
foot.

EIJI
(to Young Akio)
Explain yourself!

Young Akio looks to the floor.

REI
He's having a tantrum about helping
the sisters next door.

EIJI
Help them do what?

REI
They've been given permission to
travel to Sakai for a week. They
merely asked if your son could come
over and work in their gard --

EIJI
(to Young Akio)
And so why the argument?

YOUNG AKIO
I ... I don't mind doing it. I just
... I wanted to point out that it
would have been ... that ... if I'd
been asked first, so I could --

EIJI
So you could what? Clear your
schedule?

Young Akio attempts a brave glance at his father, but can't
meet his eyes.

EIJI
Do you think our pilots and seaman
get asked whether or not they want
to go to war? Do you think I have
the luxury to say no when something
goes wrong at the factory?

YOUNG AKIO
No, sir.

Eiji uses the crutch to slide the diary. It stops at Akio's
feet. Eiji limps to the adjoining room, bumping a table,
knocking a vase askew.

Rei studies the vase. She looks to Young Akio.

REI
Go clean up. Your uncle is coming
for lunch.

Akio bends down and picks up the diary. Rei studies it.

REI
How much?

AKIO
Affordable.

REI
Your uncle spoils you.

Akio thumbs through the empty pages of the diary.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

Young Akio kneels on the ground. He uses a jagged rock to etch a tree in the damp soil. He glances up now and again at the sleek touring car parked in front of the house. And at the handsome driver (16), who stands near the car.

Akio's twin sisters, MICHU and HANAKO (14), emerge from the house, pretending to be oblivious to the driver but clearly putting on a show for him with their slow walk, tilted heads, whispers.

Young Akio watches their antics to the point of exasperation.

YOUNG AKIO
My sisters have fleas!

The girls and the driver all stare at Young Akio.

Rei steps outside. She glares at Young Akio. No words need be spoken. Young Akio drops the rock. He stands up, brushes himself off, and begrudgingly walks toward the house, discreetly studying the driver before entering the house.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

The family is seated for lunch. HIFUMI (40s), Akio's uncle, and Eiji are at the ends of the table. Young Akio sits next to Michi on one side; Rei and Hanako opposite them.

Young Akio studies the meager portions of fish and rice. He's not pleased.

HIFUMI
And so, the building would be
completed in record time, given the
necessity. And it would ...
(MORE)

HIFUMI (CONT'D)

I think it would benefit us to stay
fixed in a ... rather than ... to
...

Everyone stares intently at Hifumi, surprised by his
stammering.

HIFUMI

What I'm proposing, what would be
expected of us, is relocating.

REI

Leave Sendai?

EIJI

For how long? And how soon would --

HIFUMI

Until we win this war. Which I'm
sure we can all agree will be a
short time.

Intra-family looks are exchanged, excluding Hifumi.

EIJI

Why ... what purpose would it serve
to waste time and cost moving me?
(more a hopeful
dissuasion)

A man with a limp and a stub? To
help you build and run an entire
factory? No, brother, I'm content
to stay in Sendai and continue to
do the books for the company here.
You go. You don't need a burden.
We'll stay here.

HIFUMI

A burden?

HANAKO

(forced optimism)
It ... it could be an interesting
change.

HIFUMI

How can you, after all this time,
think of yourself as a burden?

Eiji looks away.

HIFUMI

You know I can't do it without you,
Eiji-kun.

Hifumi's eyes well with tears.

Rei gestures to the children. She and the children rise and exit the dining room, leaving Hifumi and Eiji in shadow.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Akio lies prone on a mat. Moonlight filters through a window. He stares at the ceiling.

Indecipherable CONVERSATION between his parents on the other side of the wall. A heated debate.

Young Akio sighs and rolls to his side. He runs his fingers along the cover of the diary.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

Young Akio sits on the ground a good distance from the house. Two teenage boys are loading luggage, books, and some crates into a wooden cart.

Hifumi's car is parked behind the cart. The teenage driver stands next to the car.

Young Akio sketches the scene on the first page of his diary. He turns his back to the house.

A shadow overtakes Young Akio. Young Akio speaks without turning.

YOUNG AKIO
Hello, uncle.

HIFUMI
Suppose it had been --

YOUNG AKIO
But it wasn't. No fish aroma, so it wasn't Mother. And I know my father's walk. And my sisters want nothing to do with me.

HIFUMI
You've always been the clever one. You'll need cleverness in this lifetime.

Young Akio stops sketching and looks up at his uncle, with one eye closed to block the glare of the sun.

HIFUMI
Let's go for a walk.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Hifumi and Young Akio stroll along a path.

Hifumi stops and places his hand on Young Akio's shoulder. He points to a spot to their left.

HIFUMI

We'll sit.

They walk to the spot and sit. Hifumi searches the sky. Young Akio studies him.

HIFUMI

I hope you're not angry at the prospect -- at the news I relayed at lunch.

YOUNG AKIO

I have no right to be angry.

HIFUMI

Is that what you believe, or what you think I want to hear?

Young Akio shrugs.

HIFUMI

(whispering)

Beautiful blue. The sky.

(beat)

It's challenging, I know, living in a time of war. So many things are uncertain. So many things are asked of you.

(beat)

I need to be able to count on you. To protect your mother and your sisters. To watch over them. For your father's sake.

Young Akio looks to the ground.

HIFUMI

Will you promise that?

YOUNG AKIO

I'll do what I'm capable of.

Hifumi reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a new diary. He hands it to Young Akio, who is confused and stunned.

HIFUMI
No more stealing.

Eyes downcast, Young Akio takes the diary.

HIFUMI
You won't understand this, Akio-kun. But I made a bargain many, many years ago. With the gods. The gods sometimes demand a steep price.

YOUNG AKIO
I ... don't understand.

HIFUMI
When your father was a baby, he and I were separated. I thought I would never see him again. I prayed for his return. I told the gods I would accept any price if they would reunite us one day.

(beat)

A woman found your father beneath a snow monster. She brought him to the orphanage that had taken me in. But it cost us. It cost us your father's arm and his foot. And our mother's life.

Akio's eyes narrow in anger.

YOUNG AKIO
Will I ever know the real truth about our fam --

HIFUMI
Akio-kun, please. I know we've kept some things from you and your sisters. Please just --

YOUNG AKIO
Why are there suddenly so many secrets? So many surprises? I ... I don't understand. Why ...

HIFUMI
Promise me you'll watch over your mother and sisters. I can't ... I can't oversee things the way I ... the way you've all been used to. Listen to me, nephew. There will be change. All of you will have to show strength.

(MORE)

HIFUMI (CONT'D)

And above all else, a sense of duty.

(beat)

Do you understand?

YOUNG AKIO

Uncle, why are --

HIFUMI

Promise me!

Young Akio studies the diary.

YOUNG AKIO

I ... promise.

Hifumi closes his eyes. He rocks gently back and forth. He softly hums a tune.

Young Akio turns the diary over in his hands.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

The wooden cart is loaded. The two teenage boys stand each with a handle in their grasp, ready to pull.

The teenage driver stands at attention next to Hifumi's car.

The family stands in a group.

HIFUMI

We'll join you in a few week's time. After we've completed a smooth transition here. And your father and I attend to some business in Tokyo.

EIJI
Tokyo?

REI
Tokyo?

EIJI

Brother, you made no mention of Tokyo.

HIFUMI

An urgent matter has come up. Now come, come, you'll miss your train.

Hifumi glances at Young Akio. Akio's eyes are narrowed. *More surprises. More secrets.*

Hifumi gestures to the driver, who opens a rear passenger door.

Eiji and Rei gaze at one another. They say goodbye with their eyes.

HANAKO
Father? I --

EIJI
Go, go now. The time will pass quickly. And be on your best behavior. I'm counting on you to help your mother.

HANAKO
Yes father.

MICHI
Of course.

Young Akio turns away. He stares out into the countryside.

Eiji limps over to him. He places his hand on Akio's shoulder. A well of tears in Akio's eyes bursts forth, but he squeezes his eyes tight to suppress them.

YOUNG AKIO
I don't like all these secrets.

EIJI
I'll be there as soon as I can.
There's nothing to worry about.

Young Akio looks to his father. His father gives him a reassuring nod.

Rei and the girls climb into the car. Young Akio glances once more at his father and uncle, then climbs in. The driver closes the door.

Young Akio stares out the window at the two men as the car pulls away.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Young Akio stares out the window at the clouds drifting past.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Eiji and Hifumi are being drawn in a rickshaw. Eiji stares up at the clouds drifting past.

INT. JAPANESE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - DAY

Young Akio watches the scenery.

INT. JAPANESE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - DAY

Eiji watches the scenery.

[NOTE: THIS IS NAGASAKI; AUGUST 1945. BUT SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT THE LOCATION WON'T BE REVEALED YET. WE SIMPLY KNOW WE'RE IN A JAPANESE CITY]

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A car pulls into the drive a stylish house and comes to a stop. The house is far smaller, however, than the Takahishi house in Sendai.

A uniformed official approaches the car, opens the passenger door, and helps Rei and the girls out.

Young Akio climbs out after. They all stare at the house, their expressions clearly giving away their disappointment in the size of the house.

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

A factory bearing the Takahishi name. A car pulls into a drive and parks. A uniformed official approaches the car. Hifumi exits. He offers his arm to Eiji, who struggles out.

The driver comes around the other side of the car with Eiji's crutch and hands it to him.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Young Akio wanders the empty hallways and rooms.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Hifumi and Eiji stand in an office, speaking with several military officers.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Young Akio takes in the view of the city from one of the large windows.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Eiji and Hifumi stand at a window overlooking the factory floor. They observe a parade of American POWs being escorted through to the work area.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Young Akio stands on a stone wall. He watches a group of boys (15-16) engaged in military exercises.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

Young Akio walks past mostly empty stalls of rotting fruits and vegetables; some dried fish; cloth; and pottery, several pieces chipped.

He spots a stall with books and stationery. His eyes light up. He walks closer. He fixates on a notebook. He glances up. The merchandiser (50s) is helping a woman (30s).

Young Akio wiggles his fingers. He goes in for the strike. He snatches the notebook and sprints through the crowd.

EXT. PATHWAY - DAY

Young Akio happily thumbs through the blank pages of the notebook as he walks. He feels the paper with the palm of his hand. He smells the leather.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

A car is parked in front of the house. Young Akio stops walking when he sees it.

Two uniformed officials exit the house, followed by Rei.

The officials climb into the car, and drive off.

Young Akio looks down at the notebook. He grows uneasy.

He hides the notebook behind a tree.

He approaches the house. Rei is reading a letter. She hears Young Akio and looks up. She holds out the letter.

Young Akio approaches and takes the letter. He reads it.

YOUNG AKIO
Is it punishment?

Rei shakes her head with disappointment.

REI
Have I raised such a lazy child?

YOUNG AKIO
I don't know anything about
farming.

REI
You'll learn.

YOUNG AKIO
I don't understand why I was
chosen.

REI
We're all doing our part!

Hanako steps outside.

HANAKO
You'll have it easy compared to us.
As usual.

Young Akio studies the letter again.

YOUNG AKIO
(incredulous)
Tomorrow? It begins tomorrow?

REI
And you'll be on time.

HANAKO
For once.

REI
Enough.

YOUNG AKIO
This is worse than school!

Young Akio crumples the letter and throws it down.

He darts back along the pathway.

EXT. PATHWAY - DAY

Young Akio picks up the notebook and continues running.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Akio lies on his tatami mat. He stares at the ceiling.

He rolls over to one side. He sighs. He rolls over on the
other side.

He sits up. He reaches for his diary. He opens to a page
marked with a pencil.

He takes the pencil and writes an entry.

INSERT DIARY ENTRY

Which reads:

Tomorrow will be the worst day of my life. I hate war.

BACK TO SCENE

Young Akio closes the diary. He flings it across the room. It strikes a wall.

MICHI (O.S.)
Be quiet!

YOUNG AKIO
Tend to your fleas!

HANAKO (O.S.)
Grow up!

REI
Everyone to sleep! Now!

Akio turns onto his stomach. He punches the floor.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Summer 1945. A plot of land outside the city proper, where crops are growing.

The sun beats down on Young Akio, UCHIDA-SAN (60s), and MATSUO GENKEI (15), a beautiful boy whose right eye is smaller than his left.

Uchida-san paces back and forth, studying the boys. He stops and motions them forward. The three form a triangle, the boys standing rigidly, facing Uchida-san as he speaks.

Young Akio clenches his fists. He glowers at the field of crops.

UCHIDA-SAN
And so let us begin. Matsuo Genkei,
take the left-most row; work north
to south. Takahishi Akio, the
right; south to north. I'll begin
in the middle. At noon, we'll break
for lunch. We work until sundown.
(almost as an
afterthought)
For our Emperor. For the glory of
the Japanese Empire.

Young Akio glances in Genkei's direction several times. But Genkei doesn't notice. Or pretends not to.

The three begin their field work, kneeling in the soil, picking pests off vegetables, and weeding.

EXT. FIELD - DAY (LATER)

Young Akio, Genkei, and Uchida-san lunch beneath the shade of a tree.

Young Akio and Uchida-san have meager portions of rice and dried fish. Genkei has two crickets and a slice of radish well past its prime.

UCHIDA-SAN

In honor of one of us ...

Uchida-san glances at Genkei.

UCHIDA-SAN

The following: The bee emerging
from deep within the peony departs
reluctantly.

Genkei studies Uchida-san, confused.

GENKEI

Am I being compared to a bee?

Uchida-san laughs.

UCHIDA-SAN

No, my boy. The poet. Matsuo Basho.
He shares your name.

Uchida-san turns to Young Akio.

UCHIDA-SAN

And for you: Time was when I
despised my youth, as only boyhood
can. What would I give for boyhood
now, when finishing life's span an
old decrepit man.

YOUNG AKIO

A poet named Takahishi?

Uchida-san laughs.

UCHIDA-SAN

No, no. Fujiwara No Kiyo-Suke Ason.
But I chose that particular poem
because I think you must learn to
smile.

Young Akio is puzzled.

UCHIDA-SAN

Your expression is so serious. So brooding. At least I can tell by studying Matsuo Genkei he has smiled before.

(beat)

And perhaps will again.

The boys glance at one another. Genkei is on the verge of smiling. Young Akio remains stoic. But he's enthralled by Genkei's eyes.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Akio lies on his tatami mat, a fringed mofu bunched at his feet.

He stares at the moonlight streaming through the window.

He hums the tune his Uncle Hifumi was humming as the two of them sat in the countryside in Sendai.

His sisters' MUFFLED VOICES come through the wall. The volume increases. They GIGGLE.

An AIR RAID SIREN sounds.

Young Akio covers his ears.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The sun beats down. Young Akio, Genkei, and Uchida-san lunch under the shade of a tree.

They each have the same menu as before, except that Genkei has only one cricket.

Young Akio uses a twig to etch a building into the dirt.

UCHIDA-SAN

Taki no oto wa; Taete hisashiku;
Narinuredo; Na koso nagarete; nao
kikoe kere.

He studies the boys. They are unmoved.

UCHIDA-SAN

A waterfall, is, I think, nature's most perfect work of art. In its imperfection. Our poet, Fujiwara no Kinto, obviously felt the same.

Uchida-san points to Akio's dirt sketch.

UCHIDA-SAN
A future artist in our midst.
(To Genkei)
And what are your aspirations?

Genkei studies the sky.

GENKEI
I want to build a ship to the
stars.

Uchida-san nods.

UCHIDA-SAN
Perhaps tomorrow you can provide a
design idea to Takahishi Akio and
he can sketch it for us.
(beat)
So, then, we have our first space
explorer and an artist. The
Empire's future looks bright.

The boys glance at one another. They smile. Young Akio offers
Genkei a few bits of dried fish.

Genkei shakes his head.

YOUNG AKIO
Please. I can't eat any more.

Genkei hesitantly accepts.

EXT. JAPANESE CITY STREET - NIGHT

Ghostly vacuousness, with several shops boarded up.

Young Akio trails several paces behind Genkei as they walk
along the street.

Genkei's gait is quick and determined.

Young Akio is fascinated with the boy.

They approach an intersection. Genkei turns left. Young Akio
gathers his courage and catches up to him.

YOUNG AKIO
I ... I like your idea. A ship to
the stars.

Genkei stops walking and faces Young Akio.

GENKEI
It's just dumb fantasy.

YOUNG AKIO
Fantasy is necessary.

Genkei shrugs.

GENKEI
I liked your drawing.

YOUNG AKIO
My dirt drawing?

Genkei nods.

Young Akio taps the heel of his shoe against the curb.

YOUNG AKIO
What part of the city do you live
in?

GENKEI
The most destitute part.

Young Akio is silent.

GENKEI
Are you related to the
industrialist?

Young Akio looks away.

YOUNG AKIO
He's my uncle.

GENKEI
My uncle worked at the factory in
Tokyo. Before he was called to the
Navy. He said Takahishi-san is very
kind.

YOUNG AKIO
Yes. I like working for him too.
(beat)
I'm employed as his nephew.

Genkei laughs.

YOUNG AKIO
I get to tell Uchida-san that
something more than your smile is
back.

GENKEI
When will I be able to tell him the
same about you?

Young Akio draws his lips tight.

YOUNG AKIO
Soon. Maybe.

GENKEI
Thank you for sharing your lunch
with me.

A MAN (40s) approaches. He stops next to the boys. He folds his arms.

MAN
Do you boys have a specific place
to be?

GENKEI
We just finished work at the small
farm, under Uchida --

MAN
Then proceed to your next
destination. No loitering.

Young Akio scowls.

GENKEI
Yes, sir.

The man walks on.

GENKEI
I'll see you tomorrow.

Genkei turns and hurries up the street. Young Akio watches him.

YOUNG AKIO
(calling out)
Do you ... my mother ... she ...

Genkei stops and faces him as Young Akio trails off.

YOUNG AKIO
My mother always makes more lunch
than I can eat. Do you ... I mean,
I can bring ...

Genkei takes a few steps closer.

GENKEI
No one has more than they can eat
these days. Not even the wealthy.

Young Akio looks down.

Genkei steps closer and touches Akio's arm. Young Akio tenses.

GENKEI
I didn't mean that harshly.

Genkei draws his hand away. It trembles.

GENKEI
That was kind, Takahishi Akio. But
I'm not ashamed --

YOUNG AKIO
No, no. Please. We ... we're ... I
wasn't ...

GENKEI
(playfully)
Crickets are wonderful things.

YOUNG AKIO
I'm sick of dried fish. That's all.

The man appears in the distance.

MAN
Boys!

GENKEI
I have to go.
(beat)
Tomorrow. We'll combine our lunch.
Okay?

YOUNG AKIO
Have I offended you, Matsuo Genkei?

GENKEI
You've made me happy. You're the
first boy who hasn't been mean to
me since we moved here.

Genkei turns and hurries up the street.

The man points to Young Akio. Young Akio frowns, and walks on.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The table is set with small portions of dried fish and rice.

Young Akio and Rei are seated on pillows on one side of the table; Michi and Hanako sit opposite them.

MICHI

It's not fair. Why me? What's the reason? Why separate us?

HANAKO

I can ask permission to go with you.

REI

No. Don't. Do as they tell you. Now's not the time to ask questions or be insubordinate.

MICHI

It feels like I've done something wrong.

HANAKO

Factory work is no easier than picking up bricks.

MICHI

That's easy for you to say. Now.

YOUNG AKIO

Our administrator used to be a teacher. I like him. He's been very nice.

Rei barely manages a smile. Michi purses her lips. Hanako rolls her eyes.

YOUNG AKIO

And I work with another boy. Matsuo Genkei. He's interesting. I think he could be a good friend.

REI

You need friends.

YOUNG AKIO

(to Michi)

And don't worry about your new assignment. People say the war will soon be --

MICHI

I don't need your input!

REI

Don't snap at your brother.

The room falls silent. Young Akio pokes at his food. He looks up at Rei.

YOUNG AKIO
How come we've had no word from
Father?

Rei pushes away from the table. She stands up. She pads across the tatami mat and leaves the room.

MICHI
You're so stupid.

YOUNG AKIO
Don't you care? Don't you wonder?

Hanako's eyes fill with tears.

YOUNG AKIO
What? Is there a secret I don't
know? Don't hide things from me!

Rei appears in the doorway.

REI
Akio-kun!

YOUNG AKIO
What? Why am I in trouble? I just
want to know why we haven't heard
from Father or Uncle since Sendai!

Michi reaches over and pinches Akio's arm.

MICHI
Just keep quiet!

Young Akio pushes his toes into both sisters' shins. He rises and runs from the room.

REI
Akio-kun!

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Young Akio runs hard and fast.

REI (O.S.)
Akio-kun!

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Young Akio, Genkei, and Uchida-san are back at their shade-tree lunch spot.

UCHIDA-SAN
Yasurawade; Nenamaji mono wo;
Sayofukete; Katabaku made no; Tsuki
wo mishi kana.

GENKEI
That poem I really like.

UCHIDA-SAN
You haven't liked the others?

Uchida-san laughs heartily.

GENKEI
Can you repeat it?

Young Akio glances at Genkei, at his eager expression. His graceful posture. Glistening hair.

Uchida-san sits taller, head high. An actor on the stage.

UCHIDA-SAN
I'd be delighted!
(beat)
Waiting and hoping for they step;
Sleepless in bed I lie; All through
the night, until the moon; Leaving
her post on high; Slips sideways
down the sky.

Genkei shakes his head in awe. He outstretches his arm.

GENKEI
Goosebumps.

UCHIDA-SAN
The poet, Akazome Emon, would be
glowing. That he touched your soul
and stroked your heart.
(to Young Akio)
And what did you think?

Young Akio studies some blades of grass. He tilts back his head, toward the clear sky.

YOUNG AKIO
I think that I'll always see the
moon a certain way now. Travelling
sideways. It's changed my view of
the universe.

Young Akio touches Genkei's arm.

YOUNG AKIO
Hurry up with your sky ship.

Uchida-san studies the boys with a look of contentment.

Genkei taps Young Akio's thigh. He holds out three crickets.
Young Akio reaches into his lunch box and takes out a piece
of dried fish. They exchange.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The boys walk side by side, wordlessly, in the twilight.

GENKEI
When will you draw my sky ship?

YOUNG AKIO
When you give me your vision.

GENKEI
You don't always seem ...
approachable.

Young Akio knocks into Genkei's arm.

YOUNG AKIO
You seemed like the unapproachable
one at first.

GENKEI
I didn't trust you. At first.

YOUNG AKIO
Why? What did I do?

GENKEI
Nothing. That's why I didn't trust
you.

Young Akio laughs.

YOUNG AKIO
I'll draw your ship tomorrow.

GENKEI
And I'll tell Uchida-san your laugh
has returned.
(beat)
Did you like the crickets?

YOUNG AKIO
They weren't so bad.

GENKEI

See? It's not a burden to eat them.

The boys walk past a stand of trees.

YOUNG AKIO

You liked today's poem.

GENKEI

It was wonderful.

YOUNG AKIO

You're ... you're very interesting.

Genkei stops. He takes Young Akio by the wrist and leads him toward the stand of trees. Young Akio resists.

YOUNG AKIO

What? What are you doing?

GENKEI

The moon will be up soon. I want to watch it move sideways.

Genkei tugs harder on Young Akio. Young Akio gives in.

They enter the small enclave formed by the trees, and kneel on the ground.

Genkei studies the sky. Young Akio studies Genkei.

EXT. JAPANESE CITY STREET - NIGHT

Young Akio walks stealthily along the street, past shuttered shops.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Akio cautiously approaches the house, which is dark.

He tiptoes toward the front door. He gingerly slides it open.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - GENKAN - NIGHT

Young Akio slips off his shoes. He slides them into the getabako. He puts on his slippers. As he's about to step forward, a light comes on.

Rei, arms folded, appears taller than normal as she glares at her son.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Young Akio sleeps in fetal position.

Rei leans in the doorway.

REI

Wake up! This is your last warning.

Young Akio rolls onto his back, his eyes still closed.

HANAKO (O.S.)

Mama! We must go!

REI

I'm coming.

(to Young Akio)

Up! Now. And you're to be home at curfew tonight. Is that understood?

HANAKO (O.S.)

Mama!

Young Akio grunts. Rei shakes her head. She turns and leaves.

CHATTER from Rei, Hanako, and Michi. The FRONT DOOR can be heard sliding open, then closed.

For several seconds there is little sound, except for the CHIRPING OF BIRDS. Young Akio lies still.

He suddenly bolts upright. He glances at a clock on his nightstand. It reads 8:02. He scrambles to his feet, takes off his nightshirt, slides on a shirt and pair of trousers.

He races from the room.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Genkei is on his knees, picking insects from cabbages.

Young Akio races up the pathway. He stops at the edge of the field, bends over, catches his breath. He's dripping with sweat.

Genkei looks up and smiles. It's a smile of relief. He says nothing, and goes back to work.

Young Akio looks around. No Uchida-san. He then heads to a spot opposite Genkei and begins picking insects.

GENKEI

Please don't miss the insect on
Leaf 24 in Sector B.

Young Akio laughs.

GENKEI

Isn't it nice for both of us to
have our smiles back? Does it hurt?
Your skin cracking like that?

YOUNG AKIO

Your jokes are the only pain I
feel.

Uchida-san appears on the horizon. He wipes his face with a
cloth. His gait is labored.

Uchida-san reaches the edge of the field. He crouches down,
wipes his face, and takes a deep breath.

The boys watch him with confusion and concern.

UCHIDA-SAN

I'm sorry for being late. Thank
you. Thank you boys for being ...

Uchida-san's voice trails off. He falls to the ground.

The boys stand and hurry to him. Young Akio kneels beside
him, and puts his hand on Uchida-san's shoulder. Uchida-san's
body trembles.

Genkei kneels on the other side.

UCHIDA-SAN

(strained and weak voice)
My son. My only son.
(reciting, as if a line of
poetry)
Uchida Daisuke has served the
Emperor nobly.

Uchida-san convulses in sobs.

EXT. PATHWAY - NIGHT

Young Akio and Genkei walk in silence as the sun sets and he
first stars appear.

Genkei stops when they reach the stand of trees.

GENKEI

Do you want to watch the moon rise
again?

Young Akio stops.

YOUNG AKIO

Yes. But ... the curfew. My mother
was ... she'll be very harsh. And
if an administrator catches us -

GENKEI

I keep thinking about Uchida-san's
son.

Genkei searches the sky.

GENKEI

He'll never see another a moonrise.

EXT. ENCLAVE - NIGHT

A waning crescent moon shines through the tree branches.

Genkei studies the sky. Young Akio studies Genkei.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Young Akio eats his dinner at the table, as Rei, Hanako, and
Michi sit with him, scrutinizing him.

YOUNG AKIO

It has to do with certain insects
coming out at night. It requires us
to work a little longer.

Hanako and Michi exchange looks of doubt.

REI

Then you should have written
permission to show to an
administrator. This is not a game.

A KNOCK on the door. The entire family stiffens.

Rei rises and pads to the other room.

MICHI

Now you're in real trouble.

YOUNG AKIO

Maybe it's news about father!

The weight of Young Akio's words falls on the twins. They
grow somber and worried.

MUFFLED VOICES from the other room. Young Akio, Hanako, and
Michi strain to hear, but they can't decipher what is being
spoken.

Rei returns to the room. She kneels at the table. She closes her eyes.

HANAKO

Mama, don't. Please don't tell us that -

REI

No! Don't start unnecessary panic.

MICHI

Then what? Who was it? Why do you look so worried?

REI

Don't. Don't ... put thoughts into your head. It's all the same, all the time. No one know for certain what's truth and what's rumor. It seems everything is laced with rumor.

MICHI

I wish ... I'm sorry, Mama, but I wish we'd hear from father.

Rei rises and hurries from the room.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Kanji etched in the dirt, but with amazing clarity:

Dear world, today is my birthday. Matsuo Genkei, possible descendant of the great Matsuo Basho.

Young Akio approaches the message, and studies it.

Genkei, on his knees in the field, calls out.

GENKEI

You're late!

Young Akio glances about.

YOUNG AKIO

Where is Uchida-san?

GENKEI

He won't be with us today. He went home sick. He noted your tardiness.

Young Akio points to the kanji.

YOUNG AKIO
What's this then?

GENKEI
It's truth.

YOUNG AKIO
It must have taken you hours to do
this.

GENKEI
I'm not illiterate.

YOUNG AKIO
Yet to be determined.

GENKEI
These weeds won't pull themselves.

Young Akio goes to work.

EXT. ENCLAVE - NIGHT

Young Akio and Genkei study the night sky.

GENKEI
My father was conscripted into the
Navy. He wanted to go to China. He
hates the Chinese. He wants them
gone.
(beat)
I hate his views. Does that make me
a bad son?

Young Akio looks at Genkei.

GENKEI
And I hate this war. I'm not afraid
to say it. They can arrest me.

Young Akio picks up a stone.

Leaves rustle overhead.

YOUNG AKIO
My father is in Tokyo. I don't know
what he hates. He never shared much
with me. My uncle didn't either.

Genkei sits up on his knees.

GENKEI
How do you draw?

YOUNG AKIO
What do you mean?

GENKEI
The mechanics. How do you know what to do?

YOUNG AKIO
I don't know. I just do it.

GENKEI
When the war is over, will you study art? Will that be your career?

YOUNG AKIO
Is art a career? I don't know. My father drops hints about me following in the family business. I love cars and trains. Are car and train parts art?

GENKEI
The poems. I see their rhythm in lines. Does that make sense? The moon slipping sideways down the sky. I see the arc. White lines and deep blue.

YOUNG AKIO
Maybe you're meant to be an architect. You can help rebuild Tokyo.

Genkei looks about. He takes a deep breath.

GENKEI
I don't want to leave this enclave. I want to stay here all night.

YOUNG AKIO
Won't your mother worry? Don't you think she's worried now?

GENKEI
She won't notice.

YOUNG AKIO
That's not true.

GENKEI
Maybe it is.

Young Akio studies Genkei's face intently.

GENKEI
What? What is it?

YOUNG AKIO
Your eye.

Genkei slams his palms to the ground. He pushes himself up to a crouching position.

GENKEI
I wondered how long it would take.
I'm sorry for being a monster.

Genkei stands and starts for the pathway.

Young Akio leaps up and chases after him. He grabs Genkei's arm.

YOUNG AKIO
Wait! I didn't mean that at all. I
like your eye.

Genkei stops. He looks to the ground.

YOUNG AKIO
Did you hear me?

GENKEI
I'm sorry I reacted so harshly.

Young Akio lets go of Genkei's arm.

YOUNG AKIO
I don't understand why you got so
angry.

Genkei turns to face Young Akio.

GENKEI
They all make fun of my eye. The
other children. Here, and back in
Matsue before we moved. I hate it.
They treat me like a demon
sometimes. Even my father makes
jokes.

YOUNG AKIO
I like your eyes. I like them a
lot.

GENKEI
Why are you being so nice to me,
Takahishi Akio?

YOUNG AKIO
I don't know. I like your ... ways.

Genkei laughs. Young Akio smiles, delighted by this laugh.

GENKEI
My ways? What are my ways?

Young Akio shrugs.

GENKEI
Maybe that's the term I couldn't
figure out myself. Your ways. I
like your ways, too.

YOUNG AKIO
What are my ways then?

GENKEI
Your artistic skills. Your voice.
Your mouth. One corner up. One
corner down.

They stand silently, gazing at one another as a gentle breeze
sweeps past.

GENKEI
(whispering)
I see you watching me in the
fields.
(beat)
But I always thought it was because
I'm a monster.

YOUNG AKIO
Stop it. It makes me mad. That you
think that way.

His hand trembling, Young Akio gently strokes Genkei's cheek.

Genkei closes his eyes and sighs.

YOUNG AKIO
Are we wrong?

Genkei opens his eyes and stares deeply into Young Akio's.

GENKEI
I don't know.
(beat)
I don't know. Nothing makes sense.
This is the first thing that's made
me happy.

Young Akio leans in. They kiss. They embrace.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Akio approaches the house.

A light is on. He stares at it nervously. Then he spots the moon. He smiles.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Young Akio rolls over on his mat. He looks at the clock.
8:36.

He springs to his feet, flings off his nightshirt. He grabs his shirt and trousers and stumbles about as he hurriedly puts them on.

He races out.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Young Akio, Genkei, and Uchida-san lunch under the shade tree.

Young Akio and Genkei perform their customary fish/cricket exchange.

UCHIDA-SAN

The rain, which fell from passing showers, like drops of dew, still lies upon the fir-tree needles, and the mists of evening rise up to the autumn skies.

(beat)

My favorite. Jaku-Ren. Fujiwara no Sadanaga. Autumn will be here soon, won't it? The last full month of summer. We'll push through and welcome cooler days. Bright leaves.

Young Akio uses a stone to outline a tree in the dirt.

EXT. FIELD - DAY (LATER)

Young Akio, Genkei, and Uchida-san work on their knees in the field.

Uchida-san stands. He brushes himself off. He leaves without speaking.

Young Akio and Genkei stand. They watch Uchida-san disappear along the path.

GENKEI
It will take him some time.

Young Akio nods.

AKIO
I wonder if this means we're done
for the day?

Akio and Genkei stare at one another.

Akio glances at his watch. He looks to Genkei once more.

Devious smiles form on their faces.

EXT. PATHWAY - DAY

The boys run to the enclave.

EXT. ENCLAVE - DAY

Young Akio and Genkei step inside. They kiss.

EXT. ENCLAVE - NIGHT

Young Akio and Genkei sit, staring at the moon through the
tree branches.

GENKEI
What does this mean?

YOUNG AKIO
What? What does what mean?

Genkei lifts their intertwined hands.

Young Akio takes a deep breath.

YOUNG AKIO
I don't know, Genkei-chan. But it
makes me happy.

GENKEI
That's the first time you called me
that. I like it. I like it a lot,
Akio-chan.

YOUNG AKIO
I don't care even if it's wrong and
we have to spend the rest of our
lives in an enclave. Does that make
me strange? Does that make us
outcasts?

GENKEI
After this stupid war, I'll build
my ship and we can settle on our
very own planet.

Young Akio squeezes Genkei's hand.

YOUNG AKIO
You always have good answers.
You'll make a good ship's captain.

GENKEI
You have disappointed me though.

Young Akio tenses.

YOUNG AKIO
Why? What did I do?

GENKEI
It's what you didn't do.

YOUNG AKIO
Tell me.

GENKEI
Even though I wrote my message, and
you read it, you didn't acknowledge
my birthday.

Genkei smiles. He nudges Akio's arm.

YOUNG AKIO
I ... I didn't ignore it. I just
needed more time.

GENKEI
For what?

YOUNG AKIO
For your gift.

GENKEI
Are you telling the truth?

YOUNG AKIO
I never lie.

They stare at one another. They kiss. They lie back. They
kiss more passionately. Young Akio moves on top of Genkei.

Genkei unbuttons Akio's shirt.

Young Akio unbuttons Genkei's shirt.

There's a brief hesitation on both their parts. But they lock eyes. They smile. They kiss yet again.

YOUNG AKIO
We're not wrong.

GENKEI
(passionate whisper)
We're not wrong.

They make love.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Akio sits cross-legged on the floor. He picks up a sketch pad. He opens it.

One sheet of paper remains. He feels it between his fingers.

He puts the sketchbook down. He sighs. He picks it up again and opens it. He scans the blank paper. He picks up a pencil.

The tip hovers above the paper.

He starts to sketch.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The clock reads 2:15. Young Akio has sketched the moon above the enclave, with two silhouetted figures in an embrace.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The clock reads 4:35.

Young Akio finishes the last kanji of the phrase "The moons slips sideways down the sky."

He lies back on his tatami mat. He stares up at the ceiling, pleased with himself. His eyes close. He drifts off to sleep.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Young Akio sleeps in fetal position. The clock reads 7:50.

And AIR RAID SIREN sounds in the distance. Akio's eyes open. He covers his ears. He rolls over.

YOUNG AKIO
(weak voice)
Mama? Mama?
(beat)
Flea sisters?

There is no response. Young Akio looks at the clock. He moans. He covers his ears.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - YOUNG AKIO'S BEDROOM - DAY (LATER)

The clock reads 10:45.

Young Akio is sprawled out on his tatami mat. His eyes slowly open. He orients himself. He struggles to a sitting position. He spots his sketch on the nightstand. He smiles.

He looks at the clock. The smile vanishes. He stands in utter panic.

YOUNG AKIO

No. No!

He flings off his nightshirt. Stumbles as he dresses. He picks up the sketch and carefully rolls it up. He races from the room.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

Young Akio runs down the path. He sweats. He struggles to catch his breath.

He stops. He bends over. He vomits.

He stands up, and wipes his forehead.

He stares ahead, then looks back at the house. He turns, and starts along the path again. He stops. He bends over and vomits again.

He looks at his watch. He shakes his head. He turns and walks back toward the house.

He removes his shoes just outside the door. He places the rolled-up sketch in the crook of his arm.

A flash of white.

Young Akio is propelled into the house.

A cloud of dust and debris engulf the house.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Young Akio runs through smoke and fire.

He shouts the same word over and over, but we hear only silence.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. AKIO'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Yuji sits against the headboard, engrossed in the journal.

From outside CAR DOORS SLAM.

Yuji stands, hurries over to the knapsack, and slides the journal inside. He races back to the bed.

FOOTSTEPS and LOW VOICES.

Toru bounds in and plops next to Yuji.

TORU
Did you miss me?

YUJI
Yes.

Toru kisses Yuji.

TORU
I thought about you all day.

YUJI
Where were you?

Toru rolls onto his back and snuggles next to Yuji.

TORU
The life of a model can be so boring. So tedious.

YUJI
What do you mean by 'model'? What are we doing here?

Toru strokes Yuji's cheek, then rises from the bed and walks over to his knapsack. He pauses. He drops to one knee and sighs.

TORU
Sasaki Yuji, have you been looking through my things?

Yuji tenses.

Toru slides out the journal.

TORU
I always face the binding outward.

YUJI
I just wanted --

TORU
It's okay. Actually, now I know you
care about me.

Toru jumps back onto the bed.

TORU
I'm right, aren't I? You like me.

Yuji is silent.

TORU
You like me.

Yuji smiles. He nods.

TORU
I like you too.
(beat)
Very much.

Toru scrunches down and rests his head on Yuji's lap. He
massages Yuji's leg.

Akio enters, sketchbook in hand.

TORU
(whispering)
Is it okay with you?

Yuji doesn't answer.

TORU
Today he's adding wrinkles to us.

Yuji shakes his head, confused.

TORU
You know now, don't you?

Akio sits down in the chair. He sketches.

TORU
My eye reminds him of Matsuo
Genkei. You have the serious yet
smiling mouth of Takahishi Akio.

AKIO
It whirls around in my mind like an
endless film.
(beat)
What might have been.

Toru puts his hand on Yuji's cheek. They stare into each other's eyes.

TORU
(whispering)
You won't leave me, will you?

Toru leans in. They kiss. The pencil moves back and forth in a very pleasing rhythm.

INT. JAPANESE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - DAY

Yuji rests his head against the window. He stares at the countryside drifting past.

TORU (V.O.)
When will I see you?

YUJI (V.O.)
Come to Tokyo.

TORU (V.O.)
Come back to Nagasaki.

Yuji stares down at a sketch on his lap. It is of Yuji and Toru, their foreheads touching.

YUJI (V.O.)
Tomorrow.

TORU (V.O.)
What about tomorrow?

YUJI (V.O.)
We'll meet in our enclave.

Yuji closes his eyes and listens to the HUMMING OF THE TRAIN.

EXT. NARA TRAIN STATION - DAY

Yuji walks out of the station, his backpack slung over his shoulder.

EXT. NARA PARK - DAY

Yuji strolls along a pathway. He stops and with a child-like smile pets a deer.

Yuji walks on. He slides his phone from his pocket and glances at it. He looks to the sky.

Yuji approaches a bench. He sits. He takes out one of Akio's journals. He runs his hand along the cover. He opens it.

AKIO (V.O.)
I had a few nibbles. Some
publishers liked it.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. TOKYO OLYMPIC STADIUM - DAY

October 1964. A crush of athletes and journalists. Many
interviews happening simultaneously.

Akio (mid-30s), his face scarred from the atom bomb, works
his way through the crowd, a camera clutched in his hand.

AKIO (V.O.)
My first trip to Tokyo. I knew I
couldn't compete with the
photographers from the major
magazines and newspapers. But I had
other designs. A series of
photobooks that would delve deeper
into the Games of the Twenty-Eighth
Olympiad. And Japan's great return
to the world stage.

Akio stops. He turns. He snaps a photograph of the sea of
people, with the Olympic Stadium rising above them.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - GINZA DISTRICT - DAY

Akio walks along a street of gaudy opulence. A few
pedestrians on occasion stare at Akio's scars.

A group of five attractive young men (20s), in a pack,
hurries by.

Two women (20s) dressed in brightly colored outfits saunter
by. They smoke cigarettes. They hold their heads high, aware
of the men who watch them.

Akio turns a corner. Four foreign journalists (30s) are
standing around a YOUNG MAN (20s) and an OLD MAN (70s), who
are engaged in a heated debate.

YOUNG MAN
-- stubborn devotion to the
Emperor!

OLD MAN
You know nothing of what it was
like then! How can you possibly --

YOUNG MAN
-- never would have seen the
destruction --

Akio picks up his pace as he passes by the arguing men, and rounds another corner.

A group of women (20s) on the opposite block catches Akio's eye. He snaps a picture.

The women squeal and shriek. Overlapping shouts of "Cary-sama" and "Carygrant" echo against buildings.

Akio spots a man, ISHIDA KAZUKI (late 30s), with a clipboard and a walkie-talkie. The man speaks into the walkie-talkie. He scans the crowd.

He spots Akio watching him. Their eyes lock.

Akio walks over to Kazuki. Kazuki smiles and nods. He briefly glances at Akio's scars.

Akio notices. But he holds his head up.

Three of the woman shout "Carygrant" in unison.

Akio tilts his head toward the crowd.

AKIO
The actor?

KAZUKI
They're filming a movie here. A
story set against the Olympics.

Akio nods to Kazuki's clipboard and walkie-talkie.

AKIO
And you're the director?

Kazuki laughs.

KAZUKI
No. Oh, no. I'm part of the
official delegation to help the
crew sail through the choppy sea
that is Tokyo.

AKIO
And do you get to meet Carygrant?

KAZUKI
Probably I'll meet him when I buy
my ticket at the movie theater.

Akio smiles.

KAZUKI

And you? Why the camera? Are you a tourist or a journalist?

AKIO

Yes.

KAZUKI

Ah, well, then. Pleased to meet you. I'm Ishida Kazuki. Should you ever need someone with superior tourist guide skills, I'm your man.

AKIO

Takahishi Akio. Photographer with a dream.

A GARBLED VOICE CRACKLES from the walkie-talkie.

KAZUKI

(into the walkie-talkie)

Twenty-five minutes.

(to Akio)

I'm afraid I must go.

AKIO

I'm at the bar of the Hotel Okura most days, usually around five. If you have nothing better to do. If Carygrant will set you free.

KAZUKI

The Hotel Okura. Impressive.

AKIO

Even more so after a drink. Although I must confess, I just hang out at the bar. I'm not staying there. I haven't sold that many photographs yet.

Akio gives Kazuki a parting smile. He walks on a few feet, then turns to look back at Kazuki, who is in turn watching him.

INT. HOTEL OKURA BAR - DAY

Akio sits at a corner table. The bar is populated mostly by foreign journalists and tourists.

Akio sips a glass of whiskey.

He notices a GREEK MAN (30s), sipping beer at a nearby table, studying him. Defensively, Akio puts a hand to his cheek, over the scars. He shakes his head, angry with himself for having done this.

He removes his hand. The Greek man continues to stare. Akio looks away. He takes another sip of his drink.

The Greek man stands. He adjusts the tuck of his shirt. He starts toward Akio.

Akio tenses.

The man slows his pace past Akio, and deliberately brushes against Akio's arm.

Akio stares at the man's beer glass. He turns, and spots the Greek man standing near the entrance of the men's room. The Greek man fiddles with his shirt again, his eyes locked on Akio's.

He enters the restroom, never taking his eyes off Akio.

Akio stares down at his drink. He bites his lip. He takes a breath. He wipes his brow. He looks back at the restroom door.

INT. HOTEL OKURA RESTROOM - DAY

The Greek man stands at a urinal.

Akio enters. He walks to the sink. He looks at the Greek man's reflection in the mirror.

The Greek man's right arm is moving gently back and forth. The Greek man turns slightly. Turns a little more. Glances over his shoulder.

The men lock eyes. The Greek man turns around halfway. Akio's eyes drift down to the man's cock.

Akio turns and walks over to adjacent urinal. He is coy, pretending only that he's about to use the urinal.

The Greek man moves closer, and offers his cock.

Akio touches it. Strokes it. He drops to his knees. He takes the cock in his mouth. He brings the Greek man to orgasm.

Akio stands. He undoes the fly of his trousers. The Greek man nudges him out of his way.

Akio takes hold of the man's wrist. The Greek man slides his hand around so he's now clutching Akio's wrist.

He angrily jerks Akio's arm forward, then jerks him back. He puts his other hand on Akio's shoulder and pushes Akio into the wall.

Calmly, with hubris, the Greek man walks to the mirror. He checks his look.

He exits without regarding Akio.

Akio zips up his pants. He walks to the mirror. He looks down at the sink, and takes several deep breaths. He gazes into the mirror. He stares at his scars. He closes his eyes.

INT. HOTEL OKURA BAR - DAY

Akio walks back to his table. His whiskey is still there. He looks at the Greek man's table, but now sitting there is a Japanese couple (30s).

KAZUKI (O.S.)
Carygrant has freed me.

Akio looks up. He smiles.

INT. HOTEL OKURA BAR - DAY (LATER)

A waiter sets two glasses of whiskey before Akio and Kazuki.

KAZUKI
Nagasaki? A long journey by train.
At least I assume you came by
train.

Akio nods.

AKIO
Long, but I'm able to amuse myself.

KAZUKI
You were born there?

AKIO
No. Sendai.

KAZUKI
Will you visit Sendai after the
Olympics?

AKIO
No. No ties there anymore.

KAZUKI
Does work keep you in Nagasaki?

Akio chuckles.

AKIO
You make it sound as though I were
trapped there.

KAZUKI
Oh, no. No. I didn't mean --

AKIO
I'm teasing. But to answer your
question, I could do what I do
anywhere, really. You may have seen
some of my work on the back of
magazines. And some newspapers.

KAZUKI
Has photography always been your
passion?

AKIO
No.
(beat)
No.
(beat)
I had dreams of becoming a painter
of some note. But, well, childhood
dreams fade away.

Kazuki nods.

KAZUKI
I had grand delusions of a career
as a diplomat. To see the world. To
become ambassador in some great
nation.

Akio stares into his drink. Kazuki looks over the crowd.

AKIO
You've noticed. Obviously.

KAZUKI
Noticed?

AKIO
I watch your eyes. I can't help
myself. I'm drawn to the eyes.

KAZUKI
I'm afraid I don't understand.

Akio touches his face. He slides his fingers along his scars.

KAZUKI

I --

AKIO

No, no.

Akio shakes his head.

AKIO

It was rude of me to bring it up
like that. I've just been ... I'm
so accustomed to being ... to
people being adverse to --

Kazuki rises.

KAZUKI

I'm afraid... I'm afraid I should
be...

Kazuki trembles. He holds the back of his chair. He turns. He
hurries through the bar, knocking into patrons.

Akio rises. He hurries after Kazuki.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

Akio navigates his way through the throngs of pedestrians. He
searches left and right. A block ahead he spots Kazuki,
slumped against a building wall.

Akio's shadow falls over Kazuki.

KAZUKI

(whisering)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

INT. AKIO'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Akio and Kazuki sit on the bed. Akio rests against the
headboard, his arms wrapped around Kazuki.

KAZUKI

I still see his face at night.

(beat)

I wish I'd died that day.

Akio holds Kazuki tighter.

AKIO

Sh. Sh. It's all right ...

KAZUKI

I just ... I can't rid myself of the shame.

(more confessional than to Akio)

He was just fifteen. They pulled him from his home. Called him a Chinese dog as they dragged him by his hair.

(beat)

It was my turn. It was my turn to prove I was a worthy soldier.

(beat)

The first strike hit the back of his head. Some of my troop laughed, but this angered our commander. He shouted, louder and louder as my blows kept missing. The boy was bleeding, howling in pain ...

Kazuki chokes as he sobs.

AKIO

It's okay. You don't have to say anything more. I --

KAZUKI

And finally the commander grabbed the sword from my hand. But ... but it was the way the boy looked at me with this ... this anguish and disbelief. And a second later ... the sword ... the sword cut through ...

Kazuki is consumed with sobs.

Tears stream down Akio's cheeks as well.

INT. AKIO'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Akio and Kazuki are in the same position as earlier. Kazuki is asleep.

Akio stirs slightly. Kazuki awakes.

They are silent a moment.

Kazuki takes a deep breath.

KAZUKI

Will you hold me until sunrise?

AKIO
I will hold you for as long as it
takes.

Kazuki closes his eyes. Akio holds him tightly.

AKIO (V.O.)
I could hear the long-ago voice of
Uchida-san just then, reciting the
poem of the Archbishop Gyoson. 'In
lonely solitude I dwell, no human
face I see --

END FLASHBACK

EXT. NARA PARK - DAY

Yuji wipes a tear from his cheek.

AKIO (V.O.)
And so we two must sympathize, oh
mountain cherry tree. I have no
friend but thee.

Deer walk past Yuji. Yuji stares off in the distance, in
another world.

INT. SASAKI HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Yuji stands against the island, and sips a glass of water.

YUJI'S MOTHER (40s) stands at the counter and slices
radishes, her hand unsteady.

YUJI'S MOTHER
You must bring Komatsu Miho with
you next time.

Yuji doesn't respond.

His mother turns.

YUJI'S MOTHER
Huh? Don't you think?

YUJI
This trip was last-minute.

Yuji's mother goes back to slicing radishes. She cuts her
finger.

Yuji hurries over. Yuji's mother grabs a cloth and wraps it
around her finger.

YUJI'S MOTHER
It's fine. Don't fuss.

Yuji takes over radish duty.

YUJI'S MOTHER
No, no. Go rest.

YUJI
I napped on the train.

YUJI'S MOTHER
But I --

YUJI
Can't I just help?

Yuji's Mother steps back. She shrugs a shoulder.

YUJI'S MOTHER
Why not? Your father won't let me
near the tea shop anymore. Now I
can't even function in my own
kitchen.

YUJI
Mama.

YUJI'S FATHER (50s) enters. He carries fresh fish. He spots
the cloth around his wife's finger.

YUJI'S FATHER
Have you already attacked your
mother?

Yuji smirks.

YUJI'S MOTHER
Stop.

Yuji's father sets the fish on the counter.

YUJI'S FATHER
(to Yuji)
You should go rest before dinner.

YUJI
I'm not an invalid.

YUJI'S MOTHER
(to Yuji)
Neither am I.

Yuji's father accidentally knocks the fish off the counter. It slides across the floor.

Yuji and his parents stare at one another.

They all burst into laughter.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Yuji and his parents dine. A pleasing, quiet ambience.

YUJI'S FATHER
And so your studies go well?

Yuji looks down. He chews his lip.

YUJI'S MOTHER
What? Tell us.

Yuji glances at them. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a folded piece of paper. He hands it to them.

They read it.

YUJI'S FATHER
Washington?

YUJI
The Kennedy Center. Visiting artist program. Yamada-sensei chose me over all his other students.

Yuji's parents exchange glances.

YUJI
Trust me. It's good. It's excellent news. It's an amazing honor.

YUJI MOTHER
The United States.

YUJI
Yes.

YUJI'S FATHER
Well, if you say this is a good thing, then ... it's a good thing! We're proud of you.

He hands the paper back to Yuji. Yuji takes it. His smile has vanished.

YUJI'S MOTHER
You'll take lots of pictures. Your
brother --

She turns to face her husband.

YUJI'S MOTHER
You remember how much he wanted to
visit America. New York. He wanted
to see New York.

Yuji's father stares down at the table. He raps his knuckles
lightly in a nervous gesture.

YUJI
(hesitantly)
He wanted to see Los Angeles too.
Maybe more than New York. He always
said --

YUJI'S MOTHER
Yes, that's right. I remember I
asked him, I asked him one
afternoon. I said, 'Sakito --

YUJI'S FATHER
(barely above a whisper)
Enough.

Yuji and his mother stop talking.

Yuji raps his knuckles nervously, like his father.

YUJI
(hurriedly)
Father, I --

YUJI'S FATHER
Don't.

YUJI
I ... you don't even know what I
was going --

YUJI'S FATHER
Don't take me for a fool.

YUJI
(quiet pleading)
It's time. Time enough has passed.

YUJI'S FATHER
I said not to bring this up.

YUJI

Then let me do it. Just me. He
deserves a proper ceremony.

Yuji's father stands up, knocking his chair to the floor.
Diners turn and stare.

YUJI'S FATHER

Don't speak of this again, do you
understand me? A son who disgraces
his family deserves nothing!

Yuji's father storms out of the restaurant.

A waiter hurries over and picks up the chair.

Yuji and his mother are quiet, each staring off in different
directions.

INT. SASAKI HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Yuji sits on the bed. He spots on the nightstand an envelope
with his name written on it. He picks it up. Feels the
contents.

He stares at his backpack on the floor. He reaches down and
stuffs the envelope inside. He then pulls out one of Akio's
journals.

He opens it. He lies back and starts reading.

AKIO (V.O.)

I must have made a sound, some
audible reaction when I saw him for
the first time, for Azuma Kaho
turned to look at me. She seemed
rather astonished at my level of
shock.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Nagasaki. A few months earlier. Paintings by Takahishi Akio
line the walls.

Behind a curtain, in a small alcove, Akio (80s) sits on a
stool. Pacing about is the gallery director, AZUMA KAHO
(50s).

Two MEN, who we see only from the back, and who Akio is
unable to see from his vantage point, examine the paintings.

Both men are dressed formally.

It's clear one man is young and Japanese. The other is tall, Caucasian, with a clean-shaven head.

KAHO
(hushed tone)
It helps when you engage with them.

AKIO
(hushed tone)
They're here for the art. Not the artist.

KAHO
Takahishi Akio is the art.

Akio shakes his head.

Kaho sighs. She turns and approaches the two men. Before she can speak, the tall man, ANDERS (30s), turns.

ANDERS
(in Dutch-accented English)
It's so refreshing to see art here in Nagasaki that isn't tied to the genshi bakadan. Or the hibakusha.

Kaho nods, and it's not entirely clear how much she understood.

ANDERS
(in Dutch-accented English)
Although some of the subjects border on the ... they don't surprise shall we say.

Kaho gives him a blank stare.

ANDERS
(mangled Japanese)
The some pictures are sleepy. Not so ... awakening.

Akio shifts in his stool. He starts to stand. Stops.

ANDERS
(mangled Japanese)
Prices ... the cost ... high it seem for a painter of novice.

Akio stands. He peeks around the curtain at the same instant the Japanese man, who we now see is Toru, turns.

Akio gasps. Kaho turns. Akio fixates on Toru's face.

Akio nods in embarrassment, and retreats back to his alcove. He wipes his face with a cloth. He takes several deep breaths.

He steps from the alcove and approaches the men.

AKIO
(broken English)
Excuse me, to please. I'm sorry to
bother you in a way such, but ...

Akio glances at Anders, but then directs his attention to Toru.

AKIO
(in Japanese)
I'm sorry to bother you this way,
but I'm Takahishi Akio, the artist.
I hope you'll believe I've never
done this before, to approach a
random stranger, but ... how do I
ask this? Is there any remote
chance you'd be willing to sit for
one of my drawings?

ANDERS
(in Dutch-accented
English)
What? What's going on?

TORU
(to Akio; in Japanese)
I'm not sure. What ... what's
involved?

AKIO
Let me give you my card. Call me,
and we can chat about it. Over tea?
Lunch? I don't want to keep you
from your evening.

Akio glances at an angered Anders. He walks over to a shelf, picks a card out of a glass dish, and hands it to Toru.

AKIO
I'd be humbled if you would agree.

Toru studies the card. He looks up at Akio.

TORU
Miyake Toru.

AKIO
Miyake Toru.

Akio nods to Anders, then he retreats back to his alcove.

Kaho follows him.

KAHO
What was that all about?

AKIO
A beginning.
(beat)
A beginning to an ending.

Akio smiles.

INT. AKIO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Akio sits in a chair.

Toru, dressed in jeans, a scarf, blue sneakers, and a blazer, sits on the sofa. But his eyes are bloodshot.

Tea and snacks are spread out on a table in front of the sofa.

TORU
I assumed when you asked me to sit
for a drawing, you were interested
in my ... services. I thought it
was a code. There's always a code.
(beat)
So would I appear in a gallery? The
Louvre?

Akio smiles.

AKIO
If you could get me into the
Louvre, I'd sell you my soul.

TORU
There's always a market.

Akio laughs.

AKIO
You're so much like him.

TORU
Like who?

AKIO
Let me fill you in on the exact
detail of this little project I've
been contemplating.

Toru nods. He picks up his cup of tea and takes a sip.

TORU
I have just one rule.

AKIO
Fair enough.

TORU
I don't answer personal questions.
And if I do, it's probably a lie.
(beat)
But I have no criminal background.

AKIO
Well, we have one thing in common.
I also have no criminal background.

END FLASHBACK

Yuji closes the journal. He lies back on the bed and stares
up at the ceiling.

AKIO (V.O.)
But I'm about to tell you every
detail of my life.

EXT. NARA PARK - DAY

Yuji, his backpack on his shoulder, strolls through the park.

EXT. NARA TRAIN STATION - DAY

Yuji sits on a bench outside the station. He reaches in his
pocket and slides out an envelope.

He shoves it back in his pocket.

INT. JAPANESE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - DAY

Yuji stares out the window.

He turns, and slides the envelope from his pocket.

He tears it open. He thumbs through the yen notes.

He slides out a photograph.

INSERT OF PHOTOGRAPH

Two boys, ages 8 and 6. Beneath the older boy is written "Sakito." Beneath the younger, "Yuji."

BACK TO SCENE

Yuji takes out a note. He reads it.

INSERT HAND-WRITTEN NOTE

It reads:

Gomennasai, yurushite kudasai.

BACK TO SCENE

Yuji folds the note.

INT. JAPANESE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - DAY (LATER)

Yuji stands in the space between his car and the next. He takes out his phone.

INSERT OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

A "Contacts" entry that reads "Mom & Dad".

His fingertip hovers over the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

He shoves the phone in his pocket.

He stares out the train door's window at the countryside speeding past.

He takes his cell phone out again.

INSERT OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

A "Contacts" entry that reads "Miyake Toru".

His finger gently traces the name.

BACK TO SCENE

He shoves the phone back into his pocket. He closes his eyes. He slumps against the wall. His body moves with the swaying of the train.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

Yuji crosses a busy street. He heads to an apartment building.

Miho sits on the front stoop.

Yuji smiles when he sees her. Not a happy smile, but an expected smile.

Miho stands. She doesn't smile.

YUJI
It's good to be home.

Miho makes a fist with her right hand and pounds Yuji in the right shoulder.

YUJI
Ouch!

MIHO
You coward.

YUJI
That hurt! What's going on?

MIHO
You coward.

Her body trembles. In her left hand is a crumpled piece of paper. She throws it in Yuji's face.

She puts her hand under Yuji's chin, gently lifts his face, and looks him squarely in the eyes.

MIHO
(angry whisper)
Coward.

She turns, thrusts her hands in her coat pockets, and walks a few feet. She sprints across the street, down the sidewalk, and disappears around a corner.

Yuji bends down and picks up the paper. He unfolds it.

INSERT ADVERTISEMENT

An advertisement for Jun's establishment, with a "List of Available Boys" and Yuji's picture prominently displayed.

BACK TO SCENE

Yuji slumps down on the stoop and buries his face in the crook of his arm.

INT. CROATIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

An nicely appointed coastal house near Dubrovnik.

A party in full swing. Gay men ranging in age from 19-60.
Loud MUSIC. Laughter and conversation.

A buffet spread. A bar. Men drink and snack.

On a sofa sits Anders, Toru, and a MAN (50s).

Toru is dressed provocatively in tight clothing.

Anders, Toru, and the man take turns doing lines of cocaine.

Toru is mildly high. He flirts with the man, who explores
Toru's body with his hands.

A YOUNG MAN (20), drunk, sits next to Anders. He leans over
and kisses Anders, who doesn't resist.

Toru reaches out and tries to nudge the young man away.

The young man pushes Toru's arm away.

Toru uses both hands to pull on the young man's arms.

Anders angrily pushes Toru away. He then kisses the young
man.

Toru picks up a half-full drink and dumps the contents on
Anders and the young man.

YOUNG MAN
(in Croatian)
What the fuck?

ANDERS
(in Dutch-accented
English)
You asshole.

The man next to Toru laughs uproariously.

Toru stands up. He sways.

TORU
(to Anders; in Japanese-
accented English)
I'm not good enough for you now?

ANDERS
(in Dutch-accented
English)
Very original. Fuck off. I'm tired
of your moods.

Anders stands and takes hold of the young man's hand. The young man stands and he and Anders walk off.

TORU
(in Japanese)
His cock tastes like rotting fish!

The man next to Toru reaches up and takes hold of Toru's arm.

Toru jerks his arm free. He storms through the crowd, knocking into men and furniture.

EXT. CROATIAN COAST - NIGHT

Crashing waves.

Toru runs along a walkway. He climbs over a low wall. He stumbles through the sand.

He falls face first. He rolls onto his side, sand stuck to his skin.

He laughs to tears. He cries.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A KEY being turned. The door opens, and Toru walks in.

Dresser drawers are open, some clothes hanging over the side. The closet door is open, luggage toppled.

Toru sighs. He falls onto the bed.

He rises. He kicks the dresser drawers closed.

EXT. CROATIAN BEACH - DAY

Toru, in a bathing suit, lies on his back on a towel, in the shade.

A sexy young man, BARTOLOMEJ (19), walks over to a sunny spot nearby. He sets down a towel.

Toru opens a blood-shot eye.

Bartolomej looks at Toru.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian-accented
English; short 'a' sound;
soft 'th' sound)
Moon-bathing?

Toru sits up.

TORU
(in Japanese-accented
English)
Pardon?

Bartolomej points to the sun.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian-accented
English)
You are allergic?

Toru holds up his arm.

TORU
(in Japanese-accented
English)
I have tan enough.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian-accented
English)
You speak English then. I should
have asked.

TORU
(in Japanese-accented
English)
I'm okay.

Bartolomej turns and jogs toward a cafe.

Toru watches him with a confused expression. He glances at the towel left behind, then back toward the cafe. He shrugs his shoulders, and lies back down.

BARTOLOMEJ (O.S.)
(in Croatian)
He's Japanese, I think.

Toru opens his eyes and sees Bartolomej approach. He's on a cell phone.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian)
Yes, yes, come over here. See you
in a few minutes.

Bartolomej ends the call.

BARTOLOMEJ
(to Toru; in Croatian-
accented English)
(MORE)

BARTOLOMEJ (CONT'D)
My friend is coming here. He wants
to meet you.

Toru's confused expression deepens.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian-accented
English)
I am Bartolomej, by the way.

TORU
Miyake Toru.

Bartolomej walks over, hand extended. Toru rises. They shake
hands.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian-accented
English)
You are Japanese?

TORU
(in Japanese-accented
English)
Yes.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian-accented
English)
Okay, I thought so.
(in Japanese)
But I am never very sure sometimes.

TORU
(in Japanese)
You speak Japanese?

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian-accented
English)
Not so well. But my friend who
wants to meet you has studied it
hard.

Bartolomej's phone chirps. He answers.

BARTOLOMEJ
(in Croatian)
Yes, okay, fine. I'll bring him.
See you in a minute.
(to Toru; Croatian-
accented English)
Emerik wants to meet us at the
cafe. To take a coffee.

Toru nods.

EXT. BEACHSIDE CAFE - DAY

Toru, Bartolomej, and EMERIK (22), chiseled and attractive, sit at a table on the deck, in the bright sun.

A waiter brings 3 cups of espresso.

EMERIK

(in Japanese)

And so I lived in Kyoto for two years. And I studied Japanese for four years in high school.

Bartolomej sips his coffee. He people-watches.

TORU

(in Japanese)

And where do you live now?

EMERIK

(in Japanese)

In San Francisco. But every summer I come here to see my grandmother. She refuses to travel.

Bartolomej finishes his coffee. He stands.

BARTOLOMEJ

(in Croatian-accented English)

I must go. I'm sorry.

(to Emerik)

Florian is going back to Berlin today.

Bartolomej kisses Emerik on both cheeks.

BARTOLOMEJ

(to Toru; in Croatian-accented English)

It was a pleasure to meet you.

Toru starts to rise, but Bartolomej gestures for him to sit.

Bartolomej hurries past tables, then jogs along the sand.

EMERIK

(in Japanese)

He's like a rabbit.

Toru smiles.

EMERIK
So what's you plan here? In
Croatia?

Toru looks down.

TORU
They've ... changed a little.
(beat)
My ... friend ... had to leave.

EMERIK
If you need a guide, let me know.

TORU
You mean you?

EMERIK
Of course me. Who better? Are we
on?

TORU
On? Yes, okay. If it wouldn't be
boring for you.

EMERIK
Part of that responsibility falls
on you, doesn't it?

Toru gives Emerik a blank stare.

EMERIK
I'm in Room 8.
(beat)
Whenever you feel like a tour.

Toru smirks.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM - PATIO - NIGHT

Toru sits in a rusted metal chair, staring out at an
abandoned Soviet-era building.

He picks up his phone from a rusted table.

INSERT OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

A "Contacts" entry that reads "Sasaki Yuji"

BACK TO SCENE

There's a THUMP from inside his room. Another THUMP. A loud
POUNDING.

Toru rises and walks into room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Toru walks to the door. He hears LAUGHTER.

Toru pulls open the door. A COUPLE (20s), very drunk, laugh when they see Toru.

MAN
(in Hungarian)
Well this isn't our room!

The couple stagger away.

Toru sees Emerik standing outside his room.

EMERIK
(in Japanese)
I guess they knocked on every door.

Toru turns and watches the couple disappear.

EMERIK
Have you had dinner?

Toru looks at Emerik. He shakes his head.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Toru and Emerik dine on seafood at a table with an ocean view.

EMERIK
(in Japanese)
So I graduated, with two degrees,
and two minors, and I have no idea
what I want to do.

TORU
So many degrees. That's very
impressive.
(beat)
I never went to college. I don't
think I could sit still that long.

Toru smiles.

TORU
Maybe I am like your friend. The
bunny.

Emerik laughs.

EMERIK

Well, technically I didn't do it
all on my own. Drinking was my
biggest study aid. It definitely
helped me get through.

(beat)

What's your long-term goal then?
Where do you see yourself in, say,
five years?

Toru looks away.

TORU

I guess ... like you. I don't
really know.

(beat)

Maybe just to be alive.

Emerik laughs.

EMERIK

Well, yeah, that's good goal.

(beat)

Anyway, I guess we both have plenty
of time to decide.

TORU

(softly; disbelieving)

Yes. Lots of time.

Toru stares at the reflection of the moonlight on the water.

TORU

It's like an entire ship full of
diamonds spilled over.

Emerik follows Toru's line of sight.

EMERIK

That's a great image. Maybe poetry
is your future. Are you a poet?

TORU

If I am, I'm a very bad one.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Emerik and Toru walk along the beach, shoes in hand. They're
both tipsy.

TORU

You know, maybe I am a poet after
all.

EMERIK

How so?

TORU

I think I will remember this moment, this moment right here, for the rest of my life. The beauty of it. The crashing waves. The moonlight. The smell of the sea. Those are things a poet notices, right?

Emerik nods.

EMERIK

Yes. That is a ... very poetic way of looking at things.

Toru stops walking. Emerik walks a few feet ahead, then stops. He turns to Toru.

EMERIK

What is it?

TORU

A sudden inspiration.

Toru motions Emerik to come nearer.

Emerik walks over.

Toru leans in and kisses Emerik. The kiss grows more passionate.

EMERIK

(whispering)

Do you want to, maybe, go back to my room?

TORU

Mine is closer.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Toru and Emerik are nude in bed. Emerik is fast asleep. Toru studies him.

Toru carefully, cautiously climbs out of bed. He walks to the closet. He pulls the door open. He checks to make sure Emerik is still asleep.

Toru reaches into his suitcase and pulls out a pair of pants rolled into a ball.

He tiptoes to the bathroom. He closes the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Toru locks the bathroom door. He unrolls the pair of pants. He reaches into the pocket and pulls out a tightly wrapped plastic bag.

Toru carefully opens the plastic bag.

It's filled with white powder.

Toru stares at his reflection in the mirror.

TORU
(whispering)
One last time.

Toru leans against the wall. He slides down to a sitting position. He buries his face his hands.

INT. RYOKAN - PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kazuki (now 80s) and Akio, both dressed in yukatas, sit at a table upon which lies the remains of a sumptuous feast.

KAZUKI
Have you decided if you'll be
attending the gallery opening in
person?

AKIO
You're determined to send me to
Paris, aren't you?

KAZUKI
You've made it, my dear friend.
Takahishi Akio's art is showing in
Paris! It's your lifelong dream.
The ultimate reward for all your
efforts. Don't pretend it isn't.
How can you not attend in person?

Akio shakes his head.

AKIO
No one understands. People should
be transported by idyllic scene on
canvas. No one needs to see my ugly
face.

Kazuki throws up his hands.

KAZUKI

You're right. Why do I bother? Why try logic and reason with you?

AKIO

There's one bit of logic you're ignoring. The fact that we're both having so much difficulty walking down a hallway these days, let alone me travelling to another continent.

KAZUKI

I suppose there's that.

(beat)

Shall we limp over to the baths now?

AKIO

Are we staying out until sunrise?

KAZUKI

Only if there's been a change in tradition.

EXT. RYOKAN - OUTDOOR BATH - NIGHT

Akio and Kazuki sit in the bath, steam rising from the surface.

Akio stares up at the moon.

KAZUKI

I still can't believe it. My closest friend. His art showing in Paris.

AKIO

Look how far you've come. A world-renowned ryokan. I would guess you make people far happier than my paintings do.

KAZUKI

I have one advantage. Food is primal.

Akio studies the moon.

AKIO

(whispering)

A waning crescent moon.

KAZUKI

Would you like to move to the other bath? I've always liked the view better.

AKIO

In a few minutes.

Akio tears himself away from the moon, and looks at Kazuki.

AKIO

I've left something in my room for you.

KAZUKI

Let me guess. At long last, one of your masterpieces for the walls of my ryokan?

Akio coughs.

AKIO

In my room. You can't miss it. I left it near the bottle of champagne you give me every year; the one I never touch.

(beat)

And please, remember, my dear friend, that I haven't lost my mind. It was all done in a perfectly legal way.

KAZUKI

Now you've really confused me.

Akio coughs. He starts to stand.

KAZUKI

To the other bath?

Akio falls forward. Water splashes over the sides of the bath.

Kazuki stands.

KAZUKI

No. No. Oh, no, please...

INT. NARITA AIRPORT - DAY

Yuji sits in the waiting area. The departure sign reads Washington DC 5:55 P.M.

His violin case is at his feet.

Yuji wears ear buds. His eyes are closed. He moves his fingers to the music.

His phone vibrates. He takes it from his pocket. He removes an ear bud.

AKIO (V.O.)
When my father left us for Tokyo, I
knew he would never return.

Yuji speaks into the phone. He nods.

AKIO (V.O.)
What you and I had, Ishida Kazuki,
was not romantic love, nor
something of a purely physical
nature. We healed one another. The
scars never disappeared, but we
closed up gaping wounds.

Yuji stands. He paces back and forth. He glances at the departure board.

AKIO (V.O.)
I won't miss you, Ishida Kazuki.
For I know I will see you again.
And I know I will see him soon. I
believe that's why I am not sad.
(beat)
Matsuo Genkei.

Yuji hangs up. He sits down in his seat. His lip quivers.

AKIO (V.O.)
He and I have so much to learn
about one another. Things we were
never given the time to discover.
(beat)
Now we'll have time. Endless time.

Yuji stands. He picks up the violin case. He jogs away from the gate toward an escalator.

AKIO (V.O.)
I can't begin to describe the sheer
joy, the glowing warmth inside of
me that the thought of seeing him
brings me.

EXT. NARATIA AIRPORT - DAY

Yuji hails a cab.

AKIO (V.O.)
Just the utterance of his name --
Matsuo Genkei -- means more than
any poem, any piece of music, any
work of art.

Yuji climbs in the cab. It pulls away.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

The cab maneuvers through Tokyo traffic.

AKIO (V.O.)
There are two young men I've met
recently. I see in them ...
Takahishi Akio and Matsuo Genkei.

EXT. TOKYO TRAIN STATION - DAY

The cab pulls up to the curb.

Yuji steps out, violin case in hand.

AKIO
Remember I was of sound mind when I
did this. I don't want them robbed
of time, as we were.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A train speeds along the tracks.

AKIO (V.O.)
Robbed of all the hours two boys
might have spent in their enclave.
I have no doubt Sasaki Yuji and
Miyake Toru will truly understand
this.

EXT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - DAY

A cab pulls into the driveway.

A sleepy Yuji exits, violin case in hand. He pays the driver
as Kazuki, using a cane, steps outside.

Yuji looks at him uncertainly.

Toru then steps outside.

Yuji smiles warmly.

INT. TAKAHISHI'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Yuji, Toru, and Kazuki sit at the table, sipping tea.

KAZUKI

Once a year he'd come to my ryokan.
I'd close it to the public for that
weekend, for just him and me, to
spend a few days together. To
forget about the world. It was my
way to thank him. He rescued me
many years ago, and though I wish I
could say I did the same for him,
I'm afraid there's one thing that
Takahishi Akio was never able to
forget.

With a trembling hand, Kazuki rises.

KAZUKI

Now if you'll excuse me, I have
only so much energy left in me.
Please feel free to stay up as long
as you wish. Takahishi Akio was
adamant that this be a celebration
of life.

Kazuki exits.

Toru reaches under the table and takes hold of Yuji's hand.

TORU

I wasn't sure I'd ever see you
again.

YUJI

Why do you say that?

TORU

Just a feeling I had.
(beat)
You never called me.

YUJI

I meant to.

TORU

Why didn't you?

YUJI

I was waiting for you to call me.

TORU

Is that true?

YUJI

It's true.

Toru releases Yuji's hand. He picks up a key from the table.

TORU

Ours.

He looks at Yuji.

TORU

(disbelief)

Ours. Can you believe it?

YUJI

How can we possibly accept this house? It's impossible. It can't be legal. There must be forms to fill out. A will.

TORU

Ishida-san says it's all been legalized.

Yuji stands. He paces the room.

YUJI

These are all the wrong roads.

TORU

What do you mean?

Yuji kneels next to Toru.

YUJI

Have you ever had a dream die?

TORU

I ... I don't know. I guess yes. Probably many times.

YUJI

I've been failing Yamada-sensei for a long time. I practice and practice and practice. I try so very hard. But I never feel good enough for him. And I don't enjoy performing anymore.

TORU

Then maybe it's time for a change. Maybe you're meant to be here.

YUJI
It's crazy. What would I tell my
parents? How can I tell Yamada-
sensei I'm quitting?

TORU
You just tell them.

Yuji looks around.

YUJI
It is a very nice house.

Toru nods.

TORU
You could be happy here. I've
always said wonderful things about
Nagasaki.

YUJI
Are you offering yourself up as my
tour guide?

TORU
If I could.
(beat)
But I won't stay here. I won't be
in Nagasaki.

YUJI
But ... wait. You said ... you made
it sound like --

TORU
I didn't mean to make you think
that. I wasn't trying to put any
pressure on you to move here.

Toru stands. He leaves the dining room.

YUJI
Wait!

Yuji follows him.

INT. TAKAHISHI HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Toru enters and lies down on the bed, facing the wall.

Yuji enters. He studies Toru. Toru's body trembles.

YUJI
Please talk to me. What's going on?

TORU

I can't.

Yuji sits on the bed.

YUJI

Can't what? Tell me! Please?

Toru doesn't move.

YUJI

Toru-chan! Please!

Toru rolls over.

TORU

(whispering)

I don't know how to stop.

YUJI

Stop what?

TORU

I have a problem.

(beat)

Such a problem.

(beat)

Anders ... he ... he and I met when
he lived in Nagasaki two years ago.
I was one of his hires. I was with
him the night I met Takahishi-san.
He's taken me all over the world.
He's very rich. And powerful. He
threw many parties. All the men
there, they had ... They made me
use them. So many. Pills. And
'precious white powder.' That's
what Anders called it. They said
all of it would increase my
pleasure. And so now ...

Yuji lies down next to Toru.

TORU

I can't stop using them.

(beat)

I've tried so hard.

YUJI

We can get help.

TORU

Where? How? I have no family. And
no one wants to see this in Japan.

(MORE)

TORU (CONT'D)

I am nothing. I have nothing. I am
worth nothing.

Yuji buries his face in Toru's shoulder.

YUJI

Don't say that. And don't leave.
Where would you go?

Yuji starts to sob.

YUJI

I don't want you to get hurt.
(strained voice)
There's already been so much pain.

TORU

I couldn't stop thinking about you.
(beat)
How can I care so much about
someone I spent only a weekend
with?
(beat)
I really did wait for you call.
Every day.

Yuji holds Toru tighter.

TORU

I need your help, Yuji-chan.

YUJI

I'll help you, Toru-chan.

They embrace.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Yuji carries a small metal tube and a cloth sack. Toru has a
backpack slung over his shoulder. He navigates with a map.
They walk along the edge of a field.

TORU

Here. I think it's here.

They stop. Before them is a stand of trees, in a different
configuration from decades ago, but similar.

Yuji looks around.

YUJI

It's so quiet here.

Toru takes hold of Yuji's sleeve. He leads him through a maze of tree trunks and shrubbery into an enclave.

EXT. ENCLAVE - DAY

Yuji and Toru stand in the enclave, and look up at the swaying tree branches.

TORU
Another world.

Yuji kneels. He opens the sack and takes out a small shovel.

He digs a small hole.

Toru kneels next to him.

Yuji opens the metal tube. Toru opens the backpack.

Yuji takes out a rolled piece of paper. Toru takes out a journal.

Yuji unrolls the paper. Toru thumbs through several pages of the journal.

Yuji holds out the paper. It's the drawing Young Akio was to give Genkei for his birthday. It's tattered, burned at the edges, and torn. Still--

YUJI
It's beautiful.

Yuji reaches into the sack. He pulls out a stone -- young Akio's sketching stone.

Yuji's shoulders drop. He bites his lip.

TORU
You look worried.

YUJI
I know he's here.

Yuji pats the ground.

YUJI
Matsuo Genkei. But there's nothing physical. They're supposed to be together.

Toru pats the ground.

TORU
This. All this. He's here. It's
like they'll be melding.

Yuji rolls up the sketch. He places it back in the tube. He places the tube in the hole.

Both Yuji and Toru take hold of the sack. They set it into the hole.

They take turns adding soil until the items are buried.

EXT. ENCLAVE - NIGHT

Yuji rests against a tree. His arms are wrapped around Toru, who rests against him. They stare at the moon.

TORU
I think it's time.

YUJI
Yes.

Toru holds up the journal. He tilts it so that the moonlight makes it easier to read.

YUJI & TORU
Waiting and hoping for thy step,
sleepless in bed I lie, all through
the night, until the moon, leaving
her post on high, slips sideways
down the sky.

They look up at the moon.

FADE OUT