



IKIRU

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Titles white on black; slow, rather melancholy music; then, a close-up of an X-ray negative while a voice is heard explaining.

NARRATOR

(Off)

This is an X-ray picture of a stomach; it belongs to the man this story is about. Symptoms of cancer are there but he doesn't yet know anything about it.

Cut to the City Hall, the desk of KANJI WATANABE, Chief of the Citizens' Section. He sits behind a desk piled high with papers and is busy putting his seal to various documents. Then he stops and looks at his watch.

Cut to the front office, the information desk; a number of WOMEN are talking with SAKEI, the Section Clerk. On the desk in the notice: ' THIS WINDOW IS FOR YOU. IT IS YOUR LINK WITH THE CITY HALL. WE WELCOME BOTH REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS'.

WOMEN

And my child got a rash from that water...It smells bad too...There are millions of mosquitos...Why can't you do something with the land? It would make a good playground.

SAKEI excuses himself and goes to WATANABE's desk, telling him that some petitioners from Kuroe-cho are there. WATANABE tells him to send them to the Public Works Section, then looks at his watch again.

NARRATOR

(Off)

This is the main character of our story, but he's not very interesting yet. He's just passing the time, wasting it, rather. It would be difficult to say that he is really alive.

WATANABE suddenly looks up at the sound of laughter.

Cut to the office where everyone is looking at the office-girl TOYO, who has suddenly broken into laughter. ONO, the assistant chief, speaks sharply to her, telling her to please watch her behavior during working hours.

Cut back to WATANABE, who takes off his glasses.

TOYO
But it was funny.

ONO
What was?

TOYO
This joke that someone passed
around.

ONO
Read it then.

Cut to TOYO standing up. She hesitates, then begins to read from a newspaper clipping.

TOYO
(Reading)
You've never had a day off, have
you? No. Why?! Are you
indispensable? No, I just want them
to find out they can do without me.

She laughs, but no one else does.

Cut to WATANABE, who has been listening. Now he puts his glasses on again and goes back to stamping papers.

NARRATOR
(Off)
This is pretty bad. He is like a
corpse, and actually has been dead
for the past twenty-five years.
Before that he had some life in
him. He even tried to work.

WATANABE wants to clean his seal and is looking for some paper. He opens a desk drawer full of old documents. The top one reads: 'A PLAN TO INCREASE OFFICE EFFICIENCY.' He tears off the first page, cleans his seal, throws the paper into the basket and goes on stamping, while the NARRATOR continues off.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
(Off)
But now he neither tries nor even
wants to. His ambitions have been
well smothered by City Hall. But,
he's busy - oh, very busy. Still,
he is doing little. He has to keep
busy simply to stay where he is. Is
this as it should be?

WATANABE seems to feel uncomfortable; he takes his tablets and drinks some water.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(Off)

But before he begins to think seriously, his stomach must get worse and more useless hours must accumulate.

Cut to the women from Kuroe-cho arriving at the office of the Public Works Section, where the CLERK in charge says that he is sorry, but this matter comes under the authority of the Parks Section.

Wipe to the Parks Section, where the CLERK is telling them that the matter seems to be concerned with sanitation, hence they had better go to the Health Center.

Dissolve to the center, where they are told that the Sanitation Section will take care of them; a lively fugue is built under these scenes, based on a motif from the opening music.

Wipe to the Sanitation Section, where they are told to go to the Environmental Health Section.

Wipe to that section, where they are told they must to the Anti-Epidemics Office.

Wipe to that office, where a CLERK, hearing it is about mosquitos, directs them to the Pest Control Section.

Wipe to that section, where a CLERK swats a fly before directing them to the Sewage Section.

Wipe to the Sewage Section, where a CLERK says that theirs was indeed formerly a sewage area but that a road ran over it, so, unless the Road Section approves...

Wipe to the Road Section, where they are told that since the City Planning Department's policy is not yet established, they had best go there first.

Wipe to the Planning Department, where they learn that the Fire Department had wanted the section reclaimed because of such poor water facilities, so they had better go there.

Wipe to the Fire Department, where the CLERK says that it is nonsense, they do not want dirty water, it would ruin their hoses. Now, if they had a swimming pool or something there, then the Fire Department might be interested.

Wipe to the Children's Welfare Officer at the Educational Section, who tells them that such a big problem as this should be taken up with the CITY COUNCILLOR.

Wipe to the COUNCILLOR's office. He is saying that he will give his personal introduction to the DEPUTY MAYOR.

Wipe to the office of that official, who is saying that he is truly happy when citizens take it upon themselves to make suggestions, and for that reason they have established a special Citizens' Section.

Wipe back to the Citizens' Section. SAKEI is again at the desk and does not remember them; he tells them to go to the Public Works Section. The WOMEN became angry.

WOMEN

What do you think we are anyway?
What does his sign here mean? Isn't
it your section's responsibility?
Don't worry, we won't bother you
again...

They start to leave. After a moment's hesitation, he runs after them and catches them at the door.

SAKEI

Just a moment, please. I'm sorry.
You see, our Section Chief is out
today. If you could possibly just
submit a written petition.

All the staff stand up to watch the WOMEN go.

Quick shot of WATANABE's empty desk.

Dissolve to the office. Two of the staff are eating their lunch and drinking tea as they talk, back to camera.

SAITO

It is certainly unusual for him to
be out.

ONO

Well, he hasn't been looking too
well lately.

SAITO

Yes, but it wouldn't be good if he
stays out too long.

ONO
Funny, though. Certainly he
wouldn't take sick-leave just for a
cold. Besides, I need his seal.

Cut to another part of the office. Two other members of the
staff are eating their lunch while they talk.

KUMURA
It's too bad though. Another month
and he'd have had thirty years
without one day off.

OHARA
Yes, but you notice that now he's
away, certain people seem a lot
happier. Well, everyone wants to
get on in the world.

Cut to another part of the office where they are also having
lunch.

SAKEI
Wonder what that medicine is he's
always taking.

TOYO
Something for his stomach. And
lately he hasn't been eating his
noodles for lunch.

NOGUCHI
That's another record. I've never
seen him eat anything else.

SAKEI
I wonder who the new Chief will be.

TOYO
What's the hurry? You have a long
way to go.

Cut to a long shot of ONO and SAITO. They have heard TOYO's
remark and look up, startled. ONO is assistant chief.

Cut to WATANABE's empty desk.

Cut to WATANABE walking down a hospital corridor.

Dissolve to WATANABE at the hospital drinking-fountain, in
the waiting room. WATANABE is trying to get a drink of water,
but a man gets there before him. WATANABE waits, then drinks
and then looks at himself in the mirror.

Cut to WATANABE sitting down. Another MAN a few chairs away comes and sits next to him.

MAN

Stomach troubles, eh? Me, I've got something chronic. Lately it's got so that I just don't feel right unless my stomach hurts.

A NURSE calls his name and the man, the same one that drank before WATANABE did, gets up and goes into the office.

MAN (CONT'D)

Now, that fellow there. They say it's ulcers, but I think it's cancer. And having cancer is the same as having a death sentence. But the doctors here always tell you it's ulcers, that an operation's unnecessary. They tell you to go on and eat anything - and when you hear that, you know you've got a year left, at the most. Your stomach always feels heavy, and it hurts; you belch a lot and you're always thirsty; either you're constipated or else you have diarrhea, and in either case, your stool is always black.

WATANABE is feeling more and more uncomfortable. Quiet sinister music. He changes seats, but the MAN follows him.

Shot of WATANABE becoming more and more uncomfortable.

MAN (CONT'D)

And you won't be able to eat meat, or anything you really like, then you'll vomit up something you ate a week ago; and when that happens, you have about three months left to live.

Cut to a long shot of WATANABE alone in the waiting room. The slow and melancholy music of the opening is heard. He is small in the distance, almost lost in the large waiting room. A NURSE suddenly calls his name; she calls it several time because he does not hear. He finally hears and rises. The music fades.

Cut to the X-ray room; two DOCTORS and a NURSE are waiting.

Cut to WATANABE entering, then a shot of their faces as they wait for him to sit down.

Quick close-up of the DOCTOR's face, then WATANABE's.

DOCTOR
Yes, please sit down. Well, it
looks as though you have a light
case of ulcers.

Cut to WATANABE's hands. He drops the coat he is carrying.
The music begins again.

Cut to their faces.

WATANABE
Be honest with me. Tell me the
truth. Tell me it's cancer.

The DOCTORS' faces; the NURSE's face; the back of the young
DOCTOR's head - he is looking at the X-ray picture. She picks
up WATANABE's coat.

DOCTOR
Not at all. It's just a light case
of ulcers, as I said.

WATANABE
Is an operation impossible?

DOCTOR
It's unnecessary. Medicine will fix
you up.

WATANABE
But what shall I eat?

DOCTOR
Anything you like, so long as it's
digestible.

Cut to WATANABE. Hearing this he lowers his head so that it
almost touches the desk.

Wipe back to the doctors.

YOUNGER DOCTOR
Will he last a year?

OLDER DOCTOR
No, six months at the most. What
would you do if you only had half a
year left to live? Miss Aihara,
what would you do?

NURSE

Well, there's some poison there on
the shelf.

The YOUNGER DOCTOR turns back to look at the X-ray negative.

Close-up of the negative, the sound of the buzzing of the X-ray machine is heard.

Cut to the street: trucks, cars, WATANABE walking, but all without sound. When he tries to cross the street, a truck races past and there is a sudden burst of sound. The traffic streams in front of WATANABE and he, small, on the opposite side of the street, cannot cross.

Wipe to the front of WATANABE's house at night. The camera slowly moves towards the front door. The sound of walking and of someone humming the song 'Too Young,' then the voices of WATANABE's son, MITSUO, and his daughter-in-law, KAZUE.

KAZUE

There's no lights on - power gone
off again, I wonder?

MITSUO

No, the neighbor's lights are on.

KAZUE

That's funny. Is your father out, I
wonder? Where's the key?

MITSUO

It's in your bag.

The camera has moved towards the door.

Cut from an extremely close-up of part of the door to the hallway from the inside. The two of them open the door and come in.

KAZUE

It was open. Did that maid forget
to lock up? Really, that woman
forgets everything.

MITSUO

She lives so far away, that's why.
It takes her so long to get home
that she forgets about everything
else.

KAZUE

It wouldn't cost that much more to
have her live in.

MITSUO

You know father. He'd never hear of it. Always the minor official.

Cut to the corner of the hallway. They are moving through the dark to the bottom of the stairs.

KAZUE

It's just as cold inside as it is outside - that's what's wrong with Japanese houses.

MITSUO

I always hate coming home. It would be nice to have a modern house.

Cut to the two of them on the stairs.

KAZUE

Well, we could build one for about five hundred thousand yen, couldn't we? Though we might have to use your father's retirement pay.

MITSUO

He'll get about seven hundred thousand, and a monthly pension too. And he's got about a hundred thousand saved up.

KAZUE

But do you think he'll agree?

Cut to the darkened upstairs rooms.

MITSUO

Well, he'll just have to live by himself if he doesn't. That will probably be the most effective way. After all, he can't take his money with him.

KAZUE laughs. MITSUO finds the light and turns it on. WATANABE is at his feet, he has been sitting there in the dark.

Cut to WATANABE's face.

Cut to MITSUO's face.

MITSUO (CONT'D)

Father, what's the matter?

WATANABE
(In despair)
Oh, nothing; nothing at all.

He stands up, confused, then goes downstairs to his own room.

Cut to MITSUO and his wife looking at each other. She begins to turn on more lights.

KAZUE
But he heard everything we said.
Really that was very rude of him.
And he shouldn't have come up here,
not while we were away. I call that
very impolite.

MITSUO
Why didn't he say what he wanted
to? Why did he run away like that?

Cut to WATANABE in his darkened room downstairs. He turns on the light. Pan with him as he goes to a small shrine in the corner of the room and opens it.

Cut to MITSUO upstairs; he is lying on his bed, and KAZUE is making him move to take off the bedspread. He looks at her, and she comes and sits on the bed. She then lies down beside him.

KAZUE
Don't look like that. Let's just
forget about your father and think
a little more about us.

They have turned on the radio and from it comes 'Too Young'. She turns towards him, hugs him and tells him to hold her.

Cut to WATANABE's room. He is sitting before the open shrine.

Cut to the small shrine and to the photograph of his dead wife inside it.

Close-up of the picture.

Close-up of WATANABE looking at it.

Big close-up of the picture.

Dissolve to a motor-hearse, seen through the rain-flecked windscreen of a following car. The sound of windscreen wipers.

Cut to the backseat: WATANABE, KIICHI, his brother, TATSU, his sister-in-law (all much younger), and MITSUO, as a child, are going to a funeral.

TATSU

And she was so young, too - oh, but
it must have been hard for her to
leave her little boy behind.

KIICHI

Stop crying.

Cut to the hearse ahead, turning a corner.

Cut to the little boy, MITSUO.

Cut to the hearse again, then back to MITSUO; the melancholy music of the opening is heard. (The hearse is always seen through the windscreen, its image cut by the wipers.)

MITSUO

We have to hurry. Mother is leaving
us behind.

Cut to the back seat. WATANABE is holding his son, tears in his eyes.

Cut back to WATANABE's room. From above comes the sound of the song as well as MITSUO and KAZUE's muffled laughter. He looks up to where the sound is coming from. They seem to be making love.

Cut to another room, where WATANABE and KIICHI, his brother, are talking. Both men are much younger.

KIICHI

You say you can't get married again
because of Mitsuo, but just wait.
When he grows up, he's not going to
be all that grateful; after he gets
married himself, you'll just be in
the way. And that is why you ought
to get married again now. My wife
says that you're naturally sloppy
and she says she can't stand the
idea of you living all alone and
getting more that way.

WATANABE has been absently turning the pages of a book while his brother has been talking. Now, however, he hears his son calling him.

Cut back to his room. Again he hears the voice, stands up, walks to the stairs, and starts going up them.

Cut from the top of the stairs. WATANABE is half-way up when MITSUO's voice continues, off.

MITSUO

(Off)

Good night. And lock up, will you?

WATANABE stops, then rests his head against a step, then starts back down into the darkness whispering 'Mitsuo'.

Cut to the hallway. He slowly crosses it and locks the front door. Then from the corner, he takes a baseball bat and jams it tight, as is apparently his habit, against one of the sliding doors so that it cannot be opened from the outside.

Cut to a close-up of the baseball bat; at the same time, the sound of a ball being hit; the roar of a crowd; the opening music, soft under the sound of the crowd.

Cut to WATANABE excitedly watching a baseball game. He turns to the MAN next to him.

WATANABE

Mitsuo! Wasn't that a wonderful
hit? See that? That batter is my -

Cut to the baseball game, flashpan of the young MITSUO running to the home plate.

Cut to WATANABE, who again shouts his son's name. Flashpan to the ball game. Something has gone wrong.

Cut to WATANABE and the MAN.

MAN

What's that guy think he's doing
anyway?

Cut to WATANABE in his room, sitting down, the camera descending with him.

Cut to WATANABE at the ball game, sitting down, the camera descending with him.

Cut to WATANABE and MITSUO, the latter on a stretcher, in a hospital elevator going up, the camera ascending with them.

WATANABE

You be brave now, Mitsuo; after
all, a little appendix operation
isn't anything at all.

MITSUO

But, aren't you going to stay?

WATANABE

I...I have some things to do.

The elevator door opens and the boy is wheeled out. WATANABE's voice is heard repeating his son's name over and over again, as throughout the following scenes, the music rises.

Cut to the hallway. He is still standing there, repeating his son's name to himself.

Cut to a railway station. It is wartime; the students have been mobilized and are being sent off. Hundreds of people are there: fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, all waving flags and throwing streamers.

Cut to MITSUO, now older, in his uniform. He is looking at his father, he calls his name and is very near to tears; he steps down from the train. The train starts; his father pushes him back onto it; he turns towards his father, searching for his face as the train pulls away. All of this time, the voice of WATANABE can be heard calling over, 'Mitsuo, Mitsuo, Mitsuo'.

Long dissolve from the boy's face to WATANABE in the hall. He starts to go up the stairs, but stops half-way.

Dissolve to his room. He hangs up his kimono; puts his trousers under the pallet to press them, winds his pocket watch and puts it on the table, reaches for the alarm clock and begins to wind, then drops it. All of this is obviously done by force of habit. Then he suddenly stops. He does not move; the seconds pass; then, without warning, he turns and crawls under the covers. He seems afraid and pulls the covers over his head. He begins to weep.

A wide shot of the room. Over the huddled WATANABE are two framed letters on the wall.

Cut to a close-up of one of them which reads: 'LETTER OF COMMENDATION. MR. KANJI WATANABE IS HEREBY GIVEN RECOGNITION FOR HIS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF DEVOTED SERVICE.' The sound of weeping continues.

Cut to the hallway of the house. It is daytime. SAKEI, the clerk in WATANABE's office, is at the door talking to the MAID.

MAID

But he always leaves for work at the same time.

SAKEI

Huh? He hasn't been to the office for five days, hasn't even sent in an absence report. I was told to come and see what had happened.

She goes into the house to call KAZUE.

Wipe to a telephone box. KAZUE is inside talking.

Cut to an office. MITSUO is on the telephone and we hear their conversation.

MITSUO

I can't believe it.

KAZUE

But it must be true, that man from his office said so.

MITSUO

But what could he be doing?

Cut to WATANABE's office. The others are talking.

Long shot of his empty desk.

SAKEI

It's true, and his family was really surprised.

TOYO

But this is awful.

ONO

Well, I can make all the decisions, of course, so long as he's not here.

TOYO

But you have to go and get his seal so that I can leave.

ONO

You mean you're resigning?

Cut to a close-up of TOYO.

TOYO

Yes - this work doesn't suit me.

Wipe to KIICHI's house. MITSUO is there. They are eating dinner.

MITSUO

And he's taken fifty thousand yen
out of the bank, too.

KIICHI

You don't say...Well, maybe he's
found himself a girl. Good for him
if he has.

TATSU

Now, now...

MITSUO

But that's impossible.

KIICHI

Not at all. It's men like him who
fall the hardest. Look, he's been a
widower for some twenty years now.
And he did it all for you, too. Now
he can't stand it any longer and so
he goes out and finds someone for
himself.

MITSUO

That's nonsense - why, he doesn't
look well at all. He's so thin, and
his skin's got so dry. Have you
seen him recently?

TATSU

Yes, about four days ago. One
morning he came over, seemed to
want to talk about something. But
you know how my husband is. He just
looked at him and asked if he'd
come for a loan.

KIICHI

I didn't think then that he'd come
wanting to talk about some woman,
not looking like that.

TATSU

Now, now. My husband, you see,
thinks that all men are as bad as
he is. Still, Mitsuo, are you
certain that something didn't
happen over at your house?

MITSUO

No, not that I know of.

But he is evasive and will not look at his aunt and uncle.

Cut to a railway crossing. It is evening, almost dark.

Cut to a black dog, hunting for food in the dark.

Cut to a small drinking-stall. Inside, a man is at a table writing. He finishes a page and turns to the STALL-KEEPER.

WRITER

Would you take this over to my house? And on the way back get me some sleeping tablets.

KEEPPER

But the chemist's closed.

WRITER

Is it that late?

KEEPPER

The shops close early round here.

WRITER

If I don't have those pills with my whiskey, I just don't sleep.

He hands the page to the STALL-KEEPER, crumpling the rest of the manuscript in his hand.

Cut to WATANABE over in a dark corner; he is hardly visible. He gets up and comes over towards the WRITER.

WATANABE

Excuse me, but I can let you have some.

He puts the bottle of pills on the counter in front of the WRITER, then goes back to his table. The STALL-KEEPER goes out and the black dog lopez in.

WRITER

Thanks, may I have them at the official price?

WATANABE

Oh, I was planning to throw them away anyway.

WRITER

Then let me pay for your drinks. You're a heavy drinker, aren't you? Here, let me give you a bit more.

WATANABE
No, I can't...I'd just throw it all
up. I have gastric cancer.

WRITER
(Concerned)
Cancer?

WATANABE
Yes.

WRITER
Then you shouldn't drink like this.

He puts his hand on WATANABE's shoulder.

WATANABE
I don't really want to talk about
it...

WRITER
But to drink, knowing that you have
cancer...it's like committing
suicide.

Cut to the WRITER looking at him.

Cut to WATANABE.

WATANABE
No, it's not that easy. I'd thought
of ending it all, but it's hard to
die. And I can't die just yet. I
don't know what I've been living
for all these years.

Cut to the WRITER.

WRITER
Do you have any children?

He receives no answer.

WRITER (CONT'D)
Well, does your stomach hurt?

Cut to WATANABE.

WATANABE
More than my stomach, it's...

He presses his chest.

WRITER

But there must be some reason for
all this.

A shot of both of them.

WATANABE

No, I'm just a stupid fool, that's
all.

He pours himself a cup of saké and drinks it.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

I'm...well, I'm angry with myself.
Up until a few days ago, I'd never
spent anything on drinking. It was
only after I found that I didn't
have much longer to live that I...

He pours himself another cup of saké.

WRITER

I understand, but you still
shouldn't drink. Does it taste
good?

WATANABE

No, it doesn't.

He puts down his cup.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

But it makes me forget. I'm
drinking this expensive saké now
because...well, because I never did
before. It's like drinking poison.
I mean, it seems like poison, yet
it's so soothing.

He smiles.

WRITER

I know what you mean.

This is some food on the table which WATANABE has not eaten.
He sees the dog, drops the food on the floor and the dog
bolts it down.

Cut back to the two men.

WATANABE

I have about fifty thousand yen
with me. I'd like to spend it
having a really good time.

(MORE)

WATANABE (CONT'D)

But, and I'm ashamed to admit it, I don't know how to. If you would...

WRITER

Are you asking me to spend it, to show you how?

A train passes very near, shaking the stall and making the bottles rattle.

WATANABE

Yes, this is what I wanted to ask you.

WRITER

But -

WATANABE

It took me a long time to save this money, but what I mean is that now I can spend it.

During the following speech, shots intercut between the two men.

WRITER

I understand. Look, keep your money. You'll be my guest tonight. Leave it all to me.

He goes across to another table to get his bottle of whiskey; he picks it up and comes back to sit down. He looks at WATANABE very closely.

WRITER (CONT'D)

You know, you're very interesting. I know I'm being rude, but you're a very interesting person. I'm only a hack writer, I write trashy novels, But you've made me really think tonight.

He pours himself a glass of whiskey.

WRITER (CONT'D)

I see that adversity has its virtues - man finds truth in misfortune; having cancer has made you want to taste life.

He drinks the whiskey.

WRITER (CONT'D)

Man is such a fool. It is always just when he is going to leave it that he discovers how beautiful life can be. And even then, people who realize this are rare. Some die without ever once knowing what life is really like. You're a fine man, you're fighting against death - that's what impresses me. Up until now you've been life's slave, but now you're going to be its master. And it is man's duty to enjoy life; it's against nature not to. Man must have a greed for life. We're taught that that's immoral, but it isn't. The greed to live is a virtue.

They have moved to the doorway; the sound of a train passing.

WRITER (CONT'D)

Let's go. Let's find that life you've thrown away. Tonight I'll be your Mephistopheles, but a good one, who won't ask to be paid.

He looks down at his feet.

WRITER (CONT'D)

Look, we even have a black dog!

He kicks at the dog and it yelps; over this is the sound of a celeste.

Cut to a close-up of a pinball machine, the ball bouncing to the sound of the celeste.

Cut to the two of them in the pinball parlor.

WRITER (CONT'D)

See this little silver ball? That is you; that's your life. Oh, this is a marvelous machine, a marvelous machine that frees you from all life's worries; it's an automatic vendor of dreams.

Medium shot of them playing the pinball machine. WATANABE looks very excited.

Wipe to the two of them in an enormous beer hall. They are sitting with enormous steins of beer in front of them.

The writer is just about to speak when trombones, apparently part of a band, are suddenly extended over WATANABE's head as he stands up. Deafening music begins.

Wipe to the streets; a number of fast pans follow the WRITER and WATANABE through the crowds.

Shots from behind of blinding neon signs and from behind the grille work of fences; a girl races up and snatches away WATANABE's hat; he turns and tries to chase her, but the WRITER stops him.

WRITER (CONT'D)

No...girls are the most predatory of all existing mammals. To get that hat back would cost you more than it's worth. But, anyway, you could buy a dozen new hats if you wanted to. Now we're going to buy you a new hat to say goodbye to your old life with.

Cut to them looking through an open-work screen into a small bar.

Cut to them at the entrance of the bar.

Medium close-up of the WRITER stopping to shape WATANABE's new hat.

Shot of them coming into the bar. From the record player can be heard Josephine Baker's recording of 'Jai Deux Amours'. The LANDLADY and barmen stand smiling. She welcomes them, says it has been a long time, and they sit at the bar. WATANABE has his new hat in front of him; when she tries to take it away from him, he, instantly suspicious, grabs it and holds onto it. The WRITER laughs; she smiles.

Camera remains on the LANDLADY, in medium close-up; the WRITER can be seen in the mirror behind her.

WRITER (CONT'D)

What's so funny? This man here has gastric cancer.

LANDLADY

Then he shouldn't be drinking, should he?

WRITER

Stupid - no, take a good look at him. See, he's God and he's carrying this cross called cancer.

(MORE)

WRITER (CONT'D)

Most people just die the minute
they learn this, but not him; he's
different. From that moment on, he
started to live.

She smiles again and the camera turns from them and pans over
their gasses to the mirror behind the bar. WATANABE has put
his hat back on, but his head is resting against the bar.

WRITER (CONT'D)

Isn't that right?

WATANABE slowly raises his head, looks at himself in the
mirror and suddenly smiles.

Wipe to a big glass-and-neon cabaret. The camera pans down
the great stairwell, up which the WRITER and WATANABE are
coming, forcing their way through the crowd. A couple is
dancing on the landing, very close together. WATANABE cannot
tear himself away from the sight; the WRITER pulls him on.

Cut to the top floor.

Cut to a close-up of the piano hammers playing Boogie-Woogie
music; a beer-drinking PIANO PLAYER, a dancing GIRL; she
takes WATANABE's hat, puts it on, dances around the room.

Close-ups of the piano keys: of the huge mirror which hangs
above the piano; of the girl dancing; of WATANABE following
her around the room; of the PIANO PLAYER, smiling from behind
the swinging bead curtain. WATANABE finally gets his hat
back; the girl goes off dancing, falls against the keys of
the piano, and the PIANO PLAYER turns.

PIANO PLAYER

You folks got any requests?

The girl comes over and sits on WATANABE's lap.

WATANABE

'Life Is So short'.

PIANO PLAYER

I beg your pardon...?

WATANABE

'Life Is So Short'.

He begins to sing.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

'Fall in love, dear maiden...'

PIANO PLAYER

Oh, that one - it's an oldie, isn't it? OK.

He rattles off an introduction, and then pours beer down his throat; couples collect on the dance floor.

Cut to the dance floor as seen through the swinging bead curtain. As it sways back and forth, the couples one by one stop dancing, turning to look.

Cut to the GIRL, she is moving slowly away from WATANABE's chair. The camera circles, in close-up, staying on WATANABE as he sings.

WATANABE

*Life is so short, Fall in love,
dear maiden, While your lips are
still red; Before you can no longer
love - For there will be no
tomorrow. Life is so short, Fall in
love, dear maiden, While your hair
is still black. Before your heart
stops - For there will be no more
tomorrow.*

Tears stream down WATANABE's face. There is silence. Suddenly, the WRITER stands up, springing into the frame.

WRITER

That's the spirit!

He takes WATANABE's arm, pulling him out of the dance hall.

Cut to a strip-show, a woman dancing on a lighted platform, slow, seductive music, the camera panning around her.

Cut to her feet as a garment drops. The camera moves towards the WRITER and WATANABE, both looking at the girl above them. They are both drunk.

WRITER (CONT'D)

That's not art. A strip-tease isn't art. It's too direct. It's more direct than art. That woman's body up there. It's a big, juicy steak; it's a glass of gin, a shot of camphor; it's hormone extract, streptomycin, uranium...

WATANABE gulps.

Wipe to the streets. Both are very drunk. WATANABE starts across the road and is almost run over, but the car stops in time. WATANABE takes off his coat as though he too were doing a strip-tease. He stops the traffic. The WRITER comes and pulls him out of the road.

Wipe to an enormous dance hall: a great crush of people struggling on the dance floor, cigarette smoke rising from the pack. The band is playing a mambo.

Cut as each section of the band strikes up: trumpeters, trombonists, percussionists, standing against the massed dancers.

Cut to WATANABE in the crowd, dancing with a GIRL who is chewing gum. She is merely discomfited by the crush: he is nearly frantic. The WRITER is almost asleep on his feet; his GIRL pinches him; he opens his eyes and yawns.

Cut to a speeding car, the camera travelling alongside it, reflections sliding over the surface. Inside are WATANABE, the WRITER and two GIRLS. The reflections slide over the window, past WATANABE's face. He looks very ill. One of the GIRLS is putting on lipstick; then she carefully removes her eyelashes. The other is counting a great roll of money. WATANABE looks at them, then out of the window.

WATANABE

Stop the car!

GIRL

Stop the car! Stop the car!

The car stops. WATANABE opens the door and runs into the shadows. The GIRL looks irritated.

WRITER

(Waking up)

What's the matter, have we got a flat?

GIRL

No, it's your friend; he's probably throwing up.

The WRITER gets out of the car. WATANABE is slowly coming out of the shadows. In the distance, over a loudspeaker, comes the sound of a mambo. There is the noise of a train. WATANABE smiles - or tries to. He and the WRITER look at each other - perhaps WATANABE is remembering what he heard in the hospital, that when you begin to vomit you only have three more months to live. Both men are now completely sober. They get back into the car; the car starts.

GIRL (CONT'D)

What are you so gloomy about? I
hate gloomy people. Come on, let's
sing something nice and gay.

The GIRLS start singing as loudly as they can; WATANABE and
the WRITER stare straight ahead.

GIRLS

*Come on'a my house, come on'a my
house. I'm a'gonna give you
everything. I'm a'gonna give you a
Christmas tree.*

Dissolve to a street near WATANABE's house. It is day; he is
on his way home, still wearing his new hat.

Cut to a close-up of the hat, the camera then panning down to
his face.

TOYO

(Off)

Mr. Watanabe!

Cut to the street. TOYO, the office girl, is running up
behind him. He turns and she catches up with him.

TOYO (CONT'D)

Your new hat almost fooled me.

He takes off his new hat.

TOYO (CONT'D)

I was just looking for your house.
Are you going to work?

WATANABE

No.

TOYO

Do you have your seal?

WATANABE

No, it's at home.

TOYO

I want to leave - and I have this
new job, so I'm sort of in a hurry.

WATANABE

Come home with me, then.

Cut to them walking side by side.

WATANABE (CONT'D)
Why are you leaving?

TOYO
The work is so boring. Nothing ever happens in that office. I've stood it for a year and a half now. The fact that you've not been here...

She looks at his hat.

TOYO (CONT'D)
...and your new hat - that's all that's happened in a whole year and a half.

Cut to the upstairs room of WATANABE's house. MITSUO is tying his tie; his wife is standing next to him.

MITSUO
Anyway, just don't say anything to him.

KAZUE
I've nothing to say to him.

MITSUO
Now, don't act like that. After all, it's your fault. If you hadn't started talking about his retirement pay...

KAZUE
Why blame everything on me? You were the one, if you remember, that started talking about money that night. He can't take his money with him, you said.

MITSUO
It's funny, though. Just because of that...he wouldn't start acting like this, just because of that. And he's always come home before. Last night was the first time he's ever stayed out all night.

KAZUE
Well, let's not talk about it anymore - we don't know what's wrong.

At that moment, they hear something. KAZUE runs towards the stairs.

Cut to the hall. TOYO and WATANABE are going into his room. The MAID takes his hat and stands looking at it.

Cut to his room. TOYO takes his coat and puts it on a hanger. He is watching her, then turns to the desk. She walks towards him and puts her letter on his desk. As she walks around the room, she sees the framed letter of commendation on the wall.

TOYO

Almost thirty years in that place,
think of it. It gives me the
willies.

She glances sideways at him.

TOYO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

WATANABE

That's all right. You know, lately,
when I look at that letter, well, I
remember that joke you read out
loud in the office once. It was a
very true joke. I've been there
almost thirty years and now I can't
remember one day, can't remember
one thing I did. All I know is that
I was always busy and always bored.

He bows his head. She looks at him, then she begins to laugh. Finally, he joins her.

TOYO

That's the first time I've ever
heard you talk like that. I didn't
even know you could feel like that,
I really didn't.

She laughs and impulsively stretches out her hands, takes his, shakes them. The door behind them opens and the MAID appears with the tea. She stops dead.

Cut back to the room upstairs.

MITSUO

Now don't be foolish. I know that
uncle said the same thing, but I
just can't imagine him being in
love with such a young girl...

They sit on the bed.

Cut to WATANABE's room. He is at his desk; the girl is kneeling politely some distance away. He looks up at her over his glasses.

WATANABE

But this is the wrong form.

He looks at her; she looks away; then he takes up his seal and stamps her letter of resignation anyway. He hands it to her; she smiles.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

Are you going to the office today?

TOYO

Oh, yes. I have to turn this in.

WATANABE

If you wait a minute, I'll make my absence report out. Would you take it in for me?

TOYO

Why don't you go to work yourself? Everyone in the office is talking about it, they say it's 'that time of life'. Are you really sick? You do look pale.

WATANABE

No, I...

TOYO

Where do you go every day when you pretend to be going to work? And don't lie, either. Did you know that Mr. Sakei came here yesterday to check on you?

She suddenly laughs.

TOYO (CONT'D)

But, don't worry. After thirty years, you deserve some kind of rest. I'm not going to talk about you the way Mr. Carp did.

WATANABE

Mr. Carp?

TOYO

That's just my name for him - but he is just like a carp, you know.

(MORE)

TOYO (CONT'D)

Full of airs, but he doesn't have any backbone at all, and he always acts so superior too - even with me. Just because he makes two hundred yen a month more than I do.

WATANABE laughs and she stands up, a bit embarrassed.

TOYO (CONT'D)

Well, I'll be going now.

She takes the letters and gets her coat. He looks at her.

Cut to TOYO. She has two large holes in her stockings.

WATANABE

Wait, I'll go with you.

Cut to the upstairs window, from the outside. MITSUO and his wife are looking out.

Cut to the front gate, WATANABE and TOYO are coming out, both smiling.

Cut to the couple in the upstairs window, watching.

Cut to the couple below. She stops him, straightens his tie for him.

Cut to MITSUO and his wife, She smirks; he looks down, worried.

Cut to the staircase. The MAID is on her way up to share the news.

Cut to the street. WATANABE and TOYO are walking and a waltz tune, played by strings and celeste, can be heard, over.

TOYO

But you're very lucky, living in a nice house like that. Why, at my place we have three families living in two rooms. You have a son, don't you?

WATANABE

Where can I buy some women's stockings?

TOYO

You want to buy some - they ought to be selling them somewhere around here.

(MORE)

TOYO (CONT'D)

They're for your son's wife, aren't they? Someone told me she was very pretty.

Wipe to a store. They are just coming out and she is holding a pair of new stockings all wrapped up, and is smiling.

TOYO (CONT'D)

I'm so excited. Why, I'd have to go without lunch for three months to buy these. But why did you get them for me?

WATANABE

You had holes in your old ones.

TOYO

But that didn't make *your* feet cold.

WATANABE

I just...

TOYO

I didn't mean that.

She turns and smiles.

TOYO (CONT'D)

I appreciate it a lot - very much. I only said that because I felt embarrassed.

Suddenly embarrassed, she walks behind him, then, laughingly, pushes him.

Wipe to a tea parlor. He looks at her, passes her his piece of cake. She smiles and helps herself to sugar, putting in lump after lump.

TOYO (CONT'D)

Want me to tell you something? Well, I've given everyone in our office a nickname. It was something to do, so I wouldn't get bored. Want to hear?

WATANABE

Yes.

TOYO

All right. Now, the first one is - Mr. Sea-Slug. Now, who is that?

(MORE)

TOYO (CONT'D)
Someone that's hard to pin down,
keeps squirming away.

He does not know. She giggles.

TOYO (CONT'D)
It's Mr. Ono!

WATANABE smiles, nods.

WATANABE
Of course.

TOYO
Next is Mr. Drain-Cover. Think,
now. Someone who's damp all year
round.

WATANABE
Mr. Ohara?

TOYO
That's right! And then there's Mr.
Fly-Paper. A very sticky person.
Come, you know. You don't? Mr.
Noguchi. And do you want to know
what I named Mr. Saito? He doesn't
have anything special about him and
yet he's the same all the time.

WATANABE
Saito? I don't know.

TOYO
Mr. Menu.

WATANABE
Menu?

TOYO
Yes, you know, like in cheap
restaurants. The menu is always the
same and it's never any good.

The both laugh.

WATANABE
What about Kimura?

TOYO
I call him Mr. Jello because he's
so weak and wobbly. I gave you a
nickname too, but I won't say it.
(MORE)

TOYO (CONT'D)

I won't because it wouldn't be nice to.

WATANABE

Please do. I wouldn't mind. Anyway, I'd like it if you made it up.

TOYO

All right. It's...it's Mr. Mummy.

She starts to laugh, then stops.

TOYO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

WATANABE

That's all right.

She begins laughing again, then he starts to laugh too.

Wipe to outside the shop.

TOYO

Well, thanks for everything.

WATANABE

Do you have to resign today? Can't you put it off until tomorrow? Won't you stay with me today?

Wipe to a pinball parlor; he is teaching her how to play and she is enjoying herself.

Wipe to an ice skating rink; she is teaching him how to skate - they both fall down.

Wipe to a fun-fair, they are eating noodles and laughing.

Wipe to an ice cream shot' she is eating; he smiles and gives her his portion.

Wipe to a cinema; apparently a cartoon is on the screen, because she is laughing and leaning forward in her excitement; he is asleep beside her.

Wipe to a Japanese-style restaurant; they are having dinner.

TOYO

But you don't eat at all - and you really do look exhausted.

WATANABE

No, I really enjoyed myself today.

TOYO

But, you fell asleep in the movie.
You were snoring just when the best
part came.

WATANABE

Well, last night...

He pauses and she laughs.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

I can't tell this to anyone, I'm
ashamed to admit it, but the reason
why I've been like a mummy for the
past thirty years...

She chokes on a glass of water.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

...Oh, don't misunderstand, I'm not
angry you called me a mummy. It's
true, and it couldn't be helped,
it's just that...the reason I
turned into a mummy was...well, it
was for my son's sake. But now he
doesn't appreciate it. He...

TOYO

Well, you can't very well blame him
for that.

She smooths her new stockings.

TOYO (CONT'D)

He didn't ask you to become a
mummy. Parents are all alike - my
mother says just the same thing.
She says: 'I have suffered because
of you.' But, if you think about
it, well, I appreciate being born,
I really do; but I wasn't
responsible for it.

She pauses.

TOYO (CONT'D)

But why are you talking about your
son like that to me?

WTA

Well, it's just...

Close-up of TOYO breaking into a smile.

TOYO
I know, you love him!

Close-up of WATANABE smiling.

Wipe to the street at night, WATANABE is returning home alone. The sad music of the opening, now sounding even more desperate.

Wipe to the interior of the house. WATANABE is sitting, head bowed, at one side of the table; his son is reading the newspaper on the other side; the wife is nearby, knitting.

MITSUO
It says here that the power
shortage will last for awhile.

WATANABE
Is that so?

Close-up of WATANABE, his head lowered, although he seems to want to say something.

Close-up of the son's newspaper.

Close-up of the wife, busy with her knitting.

Close-up of WATANABE raising his head.

MITSUO
(Off)
It says here that this is the
warmest winter in thirty years.

WATANABE does not hear, then realizing that something has been said, he looks up quickly.

WATANABE
Is that so?

Cut to all three of them. WATANABE leans forward. His hand shakes as he puts his cup down.

WATANABE (CONT'D)
If you don't mind, I'd like to talk
to you for a few minutes. I wanted
to tell you earlier, but it isn't a
very pleasant story and...

MITSUO
I don't want to hear it.

He suddenly puts down the paper.

MITSUO (CONT'D)

I've talked the whole problem over with Uncle today, and he thinks that it ought to be disposed of in a businesslike way as well. For example, I think that our right to your property should be made clear.

WATANABE

Mitsuo!

KAZUE gets up and leaves the room. MITSUO leans forward.

MITSUO

You've already spent over fifty thousand yen on her - girls nowadays!

WATANABE

Mitsuo, what are you...?

MITSUO

Father! We never meddle in your affairs. We've shut our eyes to your going out every night and doing I don't know what. I just now made a practical suggestion. But you must consider Kazue and her family's position in this. The idea - bringing a girl here, and holding hands too. I was terribly embarrassed when the housekeeper told me.

WATANABE stands up. The camera pans with him as he hurries across the room and over to the stairs. Fade out.

Fade in to WATANABE's office - his chair is vacant.

Cut to various scenes of the office workers talking to each other, whispering, smiling, smirking. Someone comes up to ONO and whispers. ONO, due to be promoted now that WATANABE is no longer there, laughs indulgently. Over all of this, the voice of the NARRATOR is heard.

NARRATOR

(Off)

The hero of our story has now been absent for about two weeks, and during this time, naturally, various rumors, various surmises have been repeated.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

All of these came to the single conclusion that Mr. Watanabe had been behaving very foolishly. Yet, to Watanabe, these same actions were the most meaningful of his entire life.

Cut to the window of a toy factory. The machinery hums; the windows rattle; the building shakes - toy rabbits are stacked in boxes along the wall.

Cut to outside. TOYO and WATANABE are talking. She is wearing a turban round her head and has obviously been working - also, she is angry.

TOYO

This isn't the City Hall, you know. You can't take a whole day to do one hour's work here. Every second wasted mean less money.

WATANABE

Meet me tonight - just tonight.

TOYO

I'm tired at night. I'd rather sleep. Besides, why do you want to go out with me every night? Let's just stop it. It's...it's unnatural.

WATANABE

Tonight - only tonight.

TOYO

No. This has to stop. Excuse me.

She turns and runs back into the factory. He walks away.

Cut to WATANABE alone among tables full of white mechanical rabbits. A door opens and she joins him.

TOYO (CONT'D)

All right, but tonight is absolutely the last time.

Wipe to the second floor of a large and fancy coffee shop. WATANABE comes in and sits at TOYO's table. In the rear, on the balcony, is a big group of boys and girls. A record player is playing Poldini's 'Waltzing Doll,' and the boys and girls talk excitedly as a large birthday cake is brought up the stairs. TOYO looks at the couple next to them, then at the birthday party, then she yawns. WATANABE looks at her, leans forward.

WATANABE
Let's talk a walk.

TOYO
No, thank you. After the walk would
be the noodle shop; and after that
would be the ice cream parlor.
What's the use? I know I'm being
ungrateful, but I'm really bored.
We don't have anything to talk
about.

Cut to WATANABE, looking at her. He lowers his head.

TOYO (CONT'D)
That look again...

Cut back to her, in a close-up.

TOYO (CONT'D)
You make me nervous. Why do you pay
so much attention to me?

WATANABE
It's because...

TOYO
Because why?

WATANABE
Well, I just enjoy being with you.

TOYO
I hope it isn't love.

WATANABE
No, it's not...

TOYO
Why don't you speak more clearly -
say what you mean!

Cut to WATANABE. He lowers his eyes. TOYO leans forward.

TOYO (CONT'D)
Are you angry?

WATANABE
No. I don't know myself...

Close-up of him.

WATANABE (CONT'D)
...why I like being with you. All I
know is that...

Cut to both of them at the table. The record player begins
'The March of the Wooden Soldiers.'

WATANABE (CONT'D)
...is that I'm going to die soon. I
have gastric cancer.

Cut to a close-up of her.

Cut to a close-up of him - he presses his hand against
himself.

WATANABE (CONT'D)
In here. You understand? I have
less than a year to live. And when
I found that out...then, somehow, I
was drawn to you. Once when I was a
little boy, I nearly drowned. It is
just that feeling. Darkness is
everywhere and there is nothing for
me to hold onto, no matter how I
try. There is only you.

Close-up of her - she looks very uncomfortable.

TOYO
What about your son?

Cut to a shot of both of them; TOYO with her back to the
camera.

WATANABE
Don't even talk about him. I have
no son; I'm all alone.

TOYO
Don't talk like that.

WATANABE
You don't understand. My son is
somewhere far away, just as my
parents were far away when I was
drowning. I can't bear to think
about it.

TOYO
But what help am I.

WATANABE

You...well, just to look at you
makes me feel better. It...it warms
this...

He looks down.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

...this mummy heart of mine. And
you are kind to me. No, that's not
it. It's because you are so young
and healthy. No, it isn't that
either.

He rises, comes to her side of the table, sits down; she is
repelled, and tries to move further away.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

You are so full of life and...and
I'm envious of that. If only I
could be like you for one day
before I die. I won't be able to
die unless I can be. Oh, I want to
do something. Only you can show me.
I don't know what to do. I don't
know how to do it. Maybe you don't
either, but, please, if you can,
show me how to be like you.

TOYO

I don't know.

WATANABE

How can I be like you?

TOYO

But all I do is work and eat -
that's all.

WATANABE

Really?

TOYO

Really. That and make toys like
this one.

She has a toy rabbit in her pocket. She takes it out, winds
it up, puts it on the table in front of them; it hops towards
him; she picks it up, starts it over again.

TOYO (CONT'D)

That's all I do, but it's fun. I
feel as if I were friends with all
the children in Japan now.

(MORE)

TOYO (CONT'D)

Mr. Watanabe, why don't you do something like that, too?

WATANABE

What can I do at the office?

TOYO

That's true. Well then, resign and find some other work.

WATANABE

It's too late.

Cut to her looking at him.

Cut to both of them with the mechanical rabbit between them.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

No, it's not. It's not impossible.

A shot of him, with tears in his eyes. She is afraid; she moves back - 'The March of the Wooden Soldiers' gets louder. He suddenly turns to her, smiling; she shrinks back.

WATANABE (CONT'D)

I can do something if I really want to!

He picks up the rabbit.

Cut to the boys and girls on the balcony, they are leaning over the rail.

BOYS AND GIRLS

Here she comes! Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!

Hurries past them down the stairs, the rabbit in his hand. The girl, whose birthday it is, comes up the stairs, smiling, while the others continue to sing 'Happy Birthday.'

Cut to TOYO sitting alone. The birthday party is noisy and happy but she doesn't turn to look. She stares straight ahead. Fade out.

Fade in to the Citizens' Section. ONO is coming into the office, followed by SAITO, the camera panning with them.

ONO

Oh, he'll resign soon enough - his son was here asking about his retirement pay.

SAITO

Well, then you'll be out new chief,
won't you?

ONO smiles, satisfied, yet trying to appear modest.

ONO

It's difficult to tell just yet.

He is about to hang up his coat, when they both see
WATANABE's new hat hanging there; they look towards his desk.

Cut to the desk. WATANABE is hunting for something, finds it
and sits down. ONO and SAITO look amazed. They both walk
towards WATANABE's desk. He looks up at them.

WATANABE

Here, Ono, take care of this.

He hands him a document on which is written: 'PETITION FOR
RECLAIMING DRAINAGE AREA - KUROE-CHO WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION.'
There is a notice attached which says" 'This petition is to
be forwarded to the Public Works Section.' WATANABE tears off
the notice.

ONO

But this petition should go -

WATANABE

No, unless we do something about
it, nothing will ever be done.
Everyone will have to cooperate,
the Public Works Section, the Parks
Section, the Sewage Section - all
must cooperate. Now call me a car.
I must make an inspection and
prepare a report today.

ONO

But this will be difficult.

WATANABE

No, it won't, not if you are
determined.

The camera pans with WATANABE as he hurries to put on his
coat. The noon siren is heard. ONO hurries to follow but
WATANABE is already out the door.

Cut to outside where a light rain is falling. The door swings
to and ONO follows, worried. The sound of trumpets playing
the final cadence of 'Happy Birthday' can be heard, over.

NARRATOR

(Off)

Five months later, the hero of this story died.

A picture of WATANABE on the funeral altar.

Cut to the entire altar. It is in WATANABE's room, which is now almost unrecognizable in its funeral trappings. Everything is still and there is very little movement. The entire office staff is there, as well as the DEPUTY MAYOR, and all of WATANABE's family. They are kneeling on cushions laid out on either side of the altar.

Cut to outside the window, looking in. They are drinking saké. The sound of a car driving up and stopping.

Cut to the DEPUTY MAYOR listening. MITSUO's wife gets up and goes to the hallway.

Cut to the hallway. A group of reporters has gathered there.

REPORTER

We'd like to see the Deputy Mayor, please, just for a few minutes.

Cut to the funeral room. ONO comes in and whispers to the DEPUTY MAYOR.

ONO

Sir, those reporters...

Cut to the DEPUTY MAYOR politely leaving the room.

Cut to the hall.

DEPUTY MAYOR

Now just what's the idea - my conscience is clear.

REPORTER

Are you sure? We've been finding out a few things.

2ND REPORTER

And though both you and the Parks Section are claiming all the credit, wasn't it really this Watanabe who made the park?

DEPUTY MAYOR

He was Chief of the Citizens' Section; parks fall under the Parks Section.

2ND REPORTER

We know that, but what we want to know is who did all the work? The people around there all think it was this Watanabe, and they think it funny that he died there.

DEPUTY MAYOR

What do you mean?

3RD REPORTER

They think something funny is going on. For example, in your opening speech you didn't even mention Watanabe. The people there say that this wasn't right.

DEPUTY MAYOR

If it wasn't, what would have been, then?

2ND REPORTER

Maybe it was a political speech.

The DEPUTY MAYOR tries to laugh. Just then, a flashbulb goes off. His picture has been taken. He is disconcerted.

3RD REPORTER

And Watanabe was given a seat way in the back and was ignored. These people think that his dying like that in the park means something.

DEPUTY MAYOR

Do they mean that he committed suicide in the park? Deliberately sat there and froze to death.

3RD REPORTER

Yes.

DEPUTY MAYOR

Things like that happen in plays and novels. We happen to know what killed Watanabe. It was gastric cancer.

2ND REPORTER

Cancer?

DEPUTY MAYOR

Yes, an internal hemorrhage. He died quite sudden and he didn't know that he was going to. If you doubt me, Mr. Ono here will...

He indicates ONO, who is now standing beside him.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

...Give them the name of the hospital that made the autopsy.

Cut to the DEPUTY MAYOR politely coming back into the room and sitting down. The sound on an automobile going away, dying in the distance. ONO returns and sits down. There is a silence; everyone feels rather uncomfortable. The DEPUTY MAYOR takes a cup of saké.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

The way that these reporters twist the facts.

He drinks his saké, then turns to the others around him.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

It's not nice to say, but they truly fail to understand the problems behind municipal projects.

They all bow, nod, smiling, agreeing.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

They simply don't understand organization. Now, that park, for example. They seem to think Mr. Watanabe built it all by himself. But that is just silly. It is probably rude of me to say this in front of his relative, but I'm certain that Mr. Watanabe didn't have this in mind - building a park all by himself. Of course, he worked very hard towards helping and, I must admit, I was impressed by his perseverance. But it was the work of the section too.

All the section clerks nod in agreement.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

And, in any event, it is complete nonsense for anyone who knows anything about the organization to say that the Chief of the Citizens' Section could go and build a park all by himself.

Everyone nods.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

I'm sure that the deceased himself would be amused.

Everyone laughs.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

But, then, none of us are exactly faultless, and in view of what I said at the time, perhaps we should have given more recognition to those truly responsible, since the park has now drawn so much attention. For example, the Chief of Parks...

That gentleman bows.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

...and his superior, the Chief of Public Works.

That gentleman also bows.

PUBLIC WORKS CHIEF

It is good of you to say that, sir, but it is my belief that the Chief of the Parks Section and myself only pushed the plan, in so far as paperwork was concerned. When I think of his honor's painstaking efforts to bring this plan to materialization, then I know that it is the Deputy Mayor himself who should be rewarded.

Everyone smiles and nods at this.

DEPUTY MAYOR

No, I've been criticized - criticized even for that speech at the opening of the park. One of them called it a political speech, didn't he, Ono?

He is about to say more when the HOUSEKEEPER comes in and tells MITSUO's wife that some WOMEN from Kuroe-Cho have come to pay their respects. A group of WOMEN, many of the same who came to the Citizens' Section before, now enter the room. They do not wait to be invited, but walk directly to the altar. Many are crying. They bow before the picture; they light incense. A baby on the back of one of them starts to cry.

Cut to MITSUO, looking at them.

Cut to his wife. It is not proper for her to remain standing in the middle of the room and so she kneels.

Cut to a view of the entire room. The officials are embarrassed and frowning: only one of them, KIMURA, is affected; he puts his hands to his eyes as though to hide tears. Then the WOMEN get up to leave the room. As the WOMEN go, they bow to the other guests and only one, KIMURA, bows in return. There is a lone silence.

Cut to WATANABE's picture.

Cut to a closer shot.

Cut to one even closer - the grain of the photograph is visible.

Cut to a view of the entire room. The wife, who has seen the women out, returns and sits down. The silence continues unbroken. Then the DEPUTY MAYOR nods to the PUBLIC WORKS CHIEF and the CHIEF OF PARKS. They kneel, bow to the shrine and altar, bow to the family, then politely and carefully take their leave. ONO, who has gone to see them out, returns.

ONO
It's cold, isn't it?

KIICHI
Have a drink.

He holds out a saké bottle.

KIICHI (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry. This saké is cold,
I'll go and get some warm. How
about everyone getting together,
sitting a little closer together?

There is a general movement, almost a scramble. ONO successfully gets the seat just vacated by the DEPUTY MAYOR. Others must be content with lesser positions. Old OHARA stands up too late, looks for a seat on the other side;

all are taken; he sits down, grumbling. Someone asks if they had gone off to their conference.

KIMURA

Yes, they couldn't bear it here any longer. Mr. Watanabe built that park, no matter what anyone says. And the Mayor knows it. That's why he...

ONO

Now, you're going to far. Mr. Watanabe just...

CLERK

It's not just because I'm in the Parks Section, but I know that our section planned and carried out the whole thing.

KIMURA

That's not what I mean.

SAITO

That's all right. We know how you feel, but why should the Chief of the Citizens' Section try to build a park anyway? It is outside his...his sphere of influence.

NOGUCHI

Anyway, no one built that park. It was just a coincidence. And no councilor would have done anything about it anyway, if it hadn't been that elections are coming up.

KIMURA is about to say something but NOGUCHI continues.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

And if it hadn't been for all the graft, come to think of it, work might not have gone so smoothly either.

OHARA

I just can't understand it.

He shakes his head, talking as though to himself.

OHARA (CONT'D)

Why should Mr. Watanabe change so - he changed so suddenly.

ONO
Yes, it was strange.

SAITO
That's it. Now that I think of
it...Mr. Watanabe knew about his
cancer. That's why.

Cut to ONO as he turns to MITSUO, who has just returned with
more saké.

ONO
We were just speaking of your
father - did he know he had gastric
cancer?

MITSUO
If he had, he would certainly have
told me. I think that father was
very fortunate in knowing nothing
about it. After all, to learn
something like that is just like
getting a death sentence.

KIICHI comes back into the room.

ONO
Then Saito's theory is wrong.

KIICHI
What's that?

ONO
Mr. Watanabe changed so in the last
five months, and he can't
understand why.

KIICHI
Oh, that. It was because of a
woman. You know, often an older man
tries to hold onto his youth by
keeping a mistress. His complexion
gets better, his eyes get
brighter...

His wife is looking at him.

KIICHI (CONT'D)
...Anyway, I think he was keeping
some woman.

ONO
Well, he did take to wearing a
rather elegant hat.

There are smiles and nods at this. SAITO turns and looks at the picture of WATANABE on the altar.

SAITO
That hat. It really surprised me.

Cut to the conclusion of the former scene, where WATANABE has handed the report to ONO. The dialogue is as before.

ONO
But this will be difficult.

WATANABE
No, it won't, not if you're determined.

The camera pans with WATANABE as he hurries to put on his coat. The noon siren is heard.

ONO
But -

Cut to a vacant lot in Kuroe-Cho; it is raining. WATANABE walks round in the rain, through mud, looking at where the playground will be. One of the women runs up to him carrying an umbrella, holding it over him.

Cut back top the funeral room.

SAITO
He seemed to be trying so hard. It just wasn't natural.

ONO
Well, that's true. Yet you know, it is hard to believe, that just the influence of a woman could have...

KIICHI
But...

TATSU
Don't.

OHARA
I just can't understand it.

PARKS CLERK
Well, there was a time when Mr. Watanabe's effort made things very difficult.

SEWAGE SECTION CLERK
 You're right, but what I can't understand is why a man who had been an official for the last thirty years should -

KIMURA
 That's because -

PARKS CLERK
 And he really shouldn't have gone around trying to talk all the other sections into it like that. Naturally, they didn't like it - my chief in particular. He felt that the parks were all his own responsibility.

Cut to the Section of Parks. WATANABE is offering a petition. The CHIEF OF PARKS turns wearily.

CHIEF OF PARKS
 Now, we have many park projects.

WATANABE
 Please. The conditions here are terrible.

CHIEF OF PARKS
 But it just isn't as easy as your plan here makes it seem.

Cut to the same location, some time has apparently passed. WATANABE is sitting to one side; the CHIEF OF PARKS is trying to work, but cannot. He keeps glancing at WATANABE, who is sitting there, his head bowed. Finally, the CHIEF OF PARKS takes the petition and, with deliberation, stamps it and puts it in the 'out-going' basket, then turns and looks at WATANABE, who does not move.

Cut back to the funeral.

SAITO
 Mr. Watanabe just hung on until the Chief finally gave in.

PUBLIC WORKS CLERK
 Now that you say so, it was just the same with my boss. That Watanabe, he just wouldn't give in. Why, my chief used to turn and run when he saw him coming.

Cut to a corridor in the City Hall. The PUBLIC WORKS CHIEF sees WATANABE coming, turns and hurries away, but it is too late: WATANABE has seen him and starts after him.

Cut to the funeral - most of the men are getting drunk.

SANITATION CLERK

But what surprised me most was the way that he, a big chief like that, acted towards clerks like me.

Cut to the Sanitation Section. WATANABE is going up to each member of the office and bowing. Each must stand and return his bow. With each bow, WATANABE murmurs 'Please' as the embarrassed clerks bow back.

SANITATION CLERK (CONT'D)

(Off)

And we finally gave in to.

Cut to the funeral.

PUBLIC WORKS CLERK

We all felt sorry for him.

NOGUCHI

But it was you General Affairs Section people that gave him the most trouble.

GENERAL AFFAIRS CLERK

Oh, you think so?

ONO

It's true. I went round with him for almost two weeks. I'll never forget it.

GENERAL AFFAIRS CLERK

I'm sorry, sir.

SAITO

But what surprised me most was that incident when...

SAKEI

Oh, that. That was really surprising.

Cut to the stairway leading past the Citizens' Section. WATANABE is walking at the head of a number of women, the wives from Kuroe-Cho. He goes directly up the stairs, his own clerks staring at him.

In the corridor at the top, he takes off his coat, gives it to one of the women to hold, and goes into a door marked 'DEPUTY MAYOR'S OFFICE.'

Cut to the funeral.

ONO

And that wasn't all.

SAITO

What happened in the Mayor's office?

ONO

Well, I just doubt that anyone ever stood up to the Mayor like he did.

Cut to the DEPUTY MAYOR's office. WATANABE is bowing; ONO stands behind him.

DEPUTY MAYOR

I personally don't mind you pushing this park project through like this, but some people might think that you were looking for publicity. The City Council has a lot of problems. It would be best if you'd just forget about it.

This taken care of, he turns back to his friends and continues an apparently interrupted conversation.

DEPUTY MAYOR (CONT'D)

And so I attended that party last night, but, really, the geisha nowadays are no good at all. One of them didn't open her mouth all night, and later I heard that she's a geisha only at night, it's a kind of sideline.

FRIEND

How amusing!

WATANABE

Would you please reconsider?

WATANABE has gone on bowing. ONO is trying to make him go. The DEPUTY MAYOR turns, incredulous; his friends look up.

DEPUTY MAYOR

What did you say?

Cut to WATANABE. He is bowing, yet looking the DEPUTY MAYOR full in the face.

WATANABE
About that park.
Please...reconsider.

Cut to the DEPUTY MAYOR staring at him.

Cut back to WATANABE, staring, and ONO trying to pull him away.

Cut back to the funeral. There is silence, then laughter. Most of the men are now really drunk.

SAITO
Yes, judging from the results, it
wasn't such a bad plan.

SAKEI
No, it was dangerous. Just think of
all the...the spheres of influence
at the City Hall.

Cut to KIMURA.

KIMURA
But the Mayor reconsidered, didn't
he?

NOGUCHI
Oh, that. It was some councilor's
idea. He made him do it. The whole
thing was a sort of accident, you
see, a kind of coincidence - you're
just sentimental, that's all.

There is some laughter at the word 'sentimental.'

SAKEI
Yes, that's it, sentimental.

KIICHI
I don't think so. If you can't try
to understand a man like Mr.
Watanabe without being thought
sentimental, then the world is a
dark place indeed.

NOGUCHI
And so it is - very dark.

KIMURA

I don't know what it was that was keeping Mr. Watanabe alive, but sometimes I was almost afraid for him.

Cut to a corridor in the City Hall. KIMURA has stopped at the top of the stairs and looks at WATANABE in the far distance. He is leaning against the wall, with apparently no strength left. Then, very slowly, he pushes himself along the wall in the direction of the DEPUTY MAYOR's office.

Cut to a close-up of WATANABE.

Cut back to the funeral.

PARK SECTION CLERK

And, come to think of it, there was that day at the park site.

Cut to the park site. Dust, gravel, a leveller. It almost runs over WATANABE. One of the women hurries up, pulls him back. She and several others take him to one of the houses, offer him a glass of water. He takes it and drinks some water.

Cut to a close-up of WATANABE looking at the park site.

PARK SECTION CLERK (CONT'D)

(Off)

When he looked at that park...

Cut back to the funeral, the CLERK speaking.

PARK SECTION CLERK (CONT'D)

...his face just glowed. It was...well, it was like a man looking at his own grandchild.

KIMURA

Naturally, it was just that to him.

ONO

So, that's why...

KIMURA

That's why, no matter what anyone says, it was Mr. Watanabe who built that park.

NOGUCHI

But if the Mayor and the councilors hadn't done anything, there wouldn't have been any park.

(MORE)

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
He just didn't take into
consideration all of those...those
spheres of influence up above.

ONO
Oh, I wouldn't say that.

NOGUCHI
No?

ONO
You remember what happened? With
that big combine that wanted to put
up a cabaret where the park is?

Cut to a corridor. WATANABE and ONO are walking along it.
Several men are lounging against the wall. One steps forward,
taking off his dark glasses.

MAN
You chief of the Citizens' Section?

WATANABE
Yes, I am.

MAN
Wanted to see you. Look, mister,
just don't poke your nose in
anymore, OK?

He smiles, flicks WATANABE's lapel; WATANABE looks at him.

WATANABE
Why? Who are you?

The MAN grabs the lapels of WATANABE's coat, tightens his
grip.

MAN
Don't act stupid, I'm telling you,
see? You just cut it out and don't
do anything dumb anymore.

Cut to WATANABE. He is smiling.

Cut to the group; the MAN releases him. WATANABE turns to go
into the DEPUTY MAYOR's office. Just then, another MAN,
obviously one of them, comes out and looks at WATANABE.

MAN (CONT'D)
This is Watanabe - remember him,

He stares hard at WATANABE, who smiles back, and then goes
into the office. The gang begins to move off.

ONO stands looking after them. The second MAN - the threatening killer - turns and looks at ONO, who turns and hurries into the office.

Cut to the funeral. Everyone is now drunk. Old OHARA is thinking, his head to one side.

OHARA

But it's strange. I just can't
understand why he changes like that
- he must have known he had cancer.

ONO suddenly sits up, drunk, makes a gesture.

ONO

I just remembered!

Cut to a staircase in the City Hall. ONO is obviously lecturing WATANABE, who leans, drawn and tired, against the railing.

ONO (CONT'D)

Now, this is too much. You've been
doing this for two weeks now. The
least they could do is tell you
whether they have the money or not.
And the way they treat you. At
least they could do it nicely - it
should make you angry to be
insulted this way.

WATANABE

But it doesn't. I don't have time
to be angry with anyone.

He goes on down the stairs.

Cut to the funeral. A general commotion, each person remembering something.

ONO

And then...

SAITO

Now that you mention it, I remember
once when...

Cut to a bridge above the park site. It is sunset. WATANABE and SAITO are walking across it.

WATANABE

Oh, how beautiful...

He looks up.

WATANABE (CONT'D)
...For thirty years I have never
watched a sunset. Now there's no
more time.

Cut back to the funeral.

SAITO
It's all clear now...

NOGUCHI
He knew he didn't have long to
live.

SAITO
That clears everything up, explains
everything. Now I understand why he
acted that way, it wasn't strange
at all, it was normal.

ONO
We'd all do the same thing
ourselves.

Cut to KIMURA.

KIMURA
We'll all die ourselves one day.

A general shot of the group. A pause, then OHARA moves
forward.

OHARA
Look here, Ono. Now, I don't mean
that...I mean Mr. New Chief of the
Citizens' Section, that's what I
mean. Look here, can't you hear me?

Cut to ONO, drunk, pleased, and irritated, all at the same
time.

ONO
I haven't been appointed yet.

OHARA
All right then, Ono, what did you
just say? That we'd have done the
same thing ourselves? Don't make me
laugh.

He drunkenly points to ONO.

OHARA (CONT'D)

You fellows couldn't do what Mr. Watanabe did. Don't make me laugh. Me, I only went to night school, and that's why I'll never be chief of any Citizens' Section. But, you, Ono, someone like you! Well, just don't make me laugh.

SAITO tries to stop OHARA; then, struck with a sudden thought, stops.

SAITO

Compared with Mr. Watanabe, all of us are just...

OHARA

We're trash, that's what, trash. And you're trash too.

SAKEI

We're all trash. Oh, there are some fine men at the City Hall, but after you've worked there for a long time, it changes you.

NOGUCHI

Yes, that's the place where you don't dare even think. If you do, you're dangerous. You must only act as though you're thinking and doing something.

PUBLIC WORKS CLERK

That's right.

GENERAL AFFAIRS CLERK

Yes, that's right.

SAITO

You can't do anything. Why, to get permission for a new trash-can, you have to make out enough documents to fill up that trash-can.

SAKEI moves forward excitedly, then suddenly begins to cry.

SAKEI

And you have to put your seal on everything; stamp, stamp, stamp!

NOGUCHI

The way we live is by stealing time
- people complain about official
corruption, but that's nothing
compared with our criminal waste of
time.

ONO crawls on all fours into the middle of the room and waves
his arms.

ONO

Listen, fellows! I know how you
feel. I think about it too, but
what can you do with such a big
organization - anyway, there's time
to think.

OHARA

You fool!

They all look round at him.

SAITO

But, look, Ohara. In this
organization where you can't do
anything, Mr. Watanabe did
something, and he did it because he
had cancer.

SAKEI

That's just what I wanted to say.

He begins sobbing.

NOGUCHI

Oh, it makes me mad.

SAKEI

Me too!

NOGUCHI

And Mr. Watanabe never got any
reward at all.

They are all crawling about on the floor.

SAITO

Oh, but when I think of what Mr.
Watanabe must have felt...

NOGUCHI

Whoever went and took the credit
isn't even human.

OHARA

Oh, come out and say it's the Mayor.

NOGUCHI

Now, you be careful what you say.

There is a pause. SAKEI is crying softly.

SAKEI

But I just wonder what Mr. Watanabe felt when he was dying out there all alone in the park - just to think of it makes me feel awful.

Most of the men begin to cry now. Among those who do not is KIMURA.

Cut to WATANABE's picture on the altar.

Cut to the doorway. The MAID appears carrying WATANABE's hat. It is now crushed and dirty.

MAID

Excuse me, but a policeman just brought this. He found it in the park.

Cut to a close-up of the hat in her hands. Everyone turns to look at it.

MAID (CONT'D)

And he said he wanted to come in and pay his respects.

Cut. A young policeman comes in, bows, goes to the altar, prays and then gets up to go.

KAZUE

Thank you for coming.

KIICHI

Won't you sit down and have a drink?

He indicates a cushion and pours the POLICEMAN a cup of saké. The POLICEMAN is ill at ease, takes the saké, puts it down. He is apparently deciding whether to speak or not.

POLICEMAN

I...I saw him in the park that night. It was about ten. No...

He looks at his watch.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
...it was closer to eleven, I
guess. He was sitting on one of the
children's swings. I thought he was
probably drunk, but I didn't do
anything. If I had, then maybe all
of this wouldn't have happened. I
am truly sorry.

The POLICEMAN bows.

Cut to MITSUO looking at the hat, which he now holds.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
But, he looked so, well, so happy.
How can I say it? And he was
singing...and it was in a voice
that, well, moved me.

Cut to the park. In the distance, behind a children's maze,
is WATANABE sitting on a swing; snow is falling. He is
singing. The camera pans along the maze, tracking in nearer.

WATANABE
*Life is so short, Fall in love,
dear maiden, While your lips are
still red; Before you can no longer
love - For there will be no more
tomorrow.*

Dissolve to WATANABE's picture over the altar. The song
continues.

Cut to the funeral.

Shots of various faces.

Shot of MITSUO standing up. Overcome, he goes into the
corridor. KAZUE, followed by MITSUO's uncle, goes out to him.

MITSUO
And I found a box with my name on
it, on the stairs that night, and
in it were his bank book and his
seal, and his retirement allowance
papers.

KAZUE
He must have left them...

MITSUO
But that was bad of him! If he knew
he had cancer, why didn't he tell
us?

He begins to cry; his uncles comes forward.

KIICHI

And his mistress, why didn't she
come to the funeral? Maybe there
wasn't any mistress.

Cut to a close-up of a packing-case. In it are the framed
letters of commendation, an alarm clock, and a white toy
rabbit.

Cut back to the funeral. The men are now sitting close
together, very drunk, very excited. During the scene, KIMURA
leaves them and goes to kneel in front of the altar, looking
up at WATANABE's picture.

SAKEI

We must work hard.

NOGUCHI

Yes, with the spirit that Mr.
Watanabe showed.

SAITO

We mustn't let his death be
meaningless.

ONO

Me - I'm going to turn over a new
leaf!

NOGUCHI

That's the spirit. Me, I'm going to
work for the good of the public!

They are all shouting, waving their arms. Only KIMURA at the
altar is still and silent. Fade out.

Fade in to the Citizens' Section as it was at the beginning
of the film, only that ONO is now at WATANABE's desk. SAKEI
deferentially, glancing back at the information counter,
comes to his side.

SAKEI

Excuse me, but they say that the
sewage water has overflowed in
Kizaki-cho.

ONO

Well, send them to the Public Works
Section.

Cut to KIMURA looking up sharply at these words.

Cut to ONO, who stares back.

Cut to KIMURA. There is the noise of a chair being pushed over as he stands up. ONO can be seen, glaring at him.

Cut to KIMURA. He slowly picks up the chair and sits down. As he sits, the camera descends with him. His face is obscured by the documents on his desk. It is as though he is being buried alive in them.

Cut to SAKEI, apologetic at the counter.

SAKEI

Would you please go to the Public
Works Section with this?

Cut to the bridge above the park. It is sunset. KIMURA comes across the bridge on his way home. He stops to look.

Cut to the park. Children are playing there and their mothers call them in for dinner.

Cut to KIMURA watching them. He turns and starts off, the camera panning with him. The top of the swing comes into view. The tune 'Life Is So Short,' played on a solo flute, is heard, over. KIMURA walks away. Fade out.

THE END