

"MR. BASEBALL"  
~~"TOKYO DIAMOND"~~

an original screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PHOENIX STADIUM - DAY

Number 36, SCOTT CHASE, knocks the dirt from his spikes, steps up to the plate, raises his bat and grins. Scott's in his thirties, but still has a lot of the boy in him.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
Stepping up to the plate is Scott Chase. And what a season he's having. 37 home runs and 63 RBIs.

SECOND ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
It still amazes me how consistent he is with that stance.

Scott adjusts his feet, his hips, his elbows. He's never still. His bat is never still. He's twitchy, jumpy. The grin never leaves his face.

SECOND ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
He never stops moving. You wonder how he can concentrate.

The pitch comes. Scott swings. Halfway through the swing the picture goes into silent slow motion.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Scott is sitting on the floor, holding a remote control device. He watches himself on a large screen T.V. that towers over the bed. Slowly, his bat meets with the ball.

SCOTT  
God, I'm good. Bingo.

Scott releases the remote and the picture returns to normal speed. The ball sails out of the park.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
Well, he concentrated that time and put it right in the last row of the upper deck. Number 38 for Chase.

Basically, this bedroom is a disaster area. There are stacks of boxes everywhere, spilling their contents. Fast food containers, empty beer bottles, dirty clothes abound. Not to mention the parts of a girl's bicycle all over the floor. Scott is putting it together.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
He tipped his hat to the pitcher! That takes nerve.

SECOND ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
He's a pretty cocky guy. He seems  
to think he can do anything.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
I'd say the kid's on a roll.

Scott picks up a piece of the bicycle. He has no idea where it  
goes. He looks at the bicycle instructions and he frowns.

INSERT

Of the instruction sheet. It isn't too helpful. It's in  
Japanese.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

Another television and VCR on the counter and a stack of video  
tapes. On the screen, a press conference. The T.V. Scott is  
being interviewed. The real Scott is shaving.

REPORTER #1  
Scott, you ever worry about having  
a slump?

T.V. SCOTT  
Nah. What I do is so simple. I  
put a bat on a ball. Anybody in  
this room could do it.

REPORTER #1  
You're saying I could be Rookie of  
the Year and Most Valuable Player?

SCOTT  
Well, maybe not you, but anyone  
else in this room.

Laughter.

REPORTER #2  
Scott, how do you respond to  
people who say you don't take  
baseball seriously enough?

T.V. SCOTT  
I don't.

REPORTER #2  
You don't respond or you don't  
take it serious?

T.V. SCOTT  
Both. Lighten up, folks. It's  
only a game.

The press conference is over. Flashbulbs pop, reporters shout more questions. The real Scott picks up a can of shaving cream and speaks to himself in the mirror.

SCOTT

How do I get ready for a big game?  
Lather Plus.

He notices that his fingers are covering the label. He adjusts the can so the label can be seen.

SCOTT

'Cause I want all my close shaves  
in here, not out on the field.

He grins.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

The kitchen is even more of a disaster than the bedroom. Scattered around are pots, pans, dishes, glasses, an empty bottle of tequila with just the worm left, you name it. Scott has the phone to his ear and is making breakfast. Another baseball game is playing on yet another VCR. All this equipment is Japanese: Mitsubishi, Toshiba, Sony, etc.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

With a batting average hovering  
around the 250 mark. Scott Chase  
is having a disappointing year.

SECOND ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

He could be past his prime,  
Charlie.

Scott opens the freezer compartment of the refrigerator and takes out a carton of frozen eggs. He rips it open, removes the solid yellow block and drops it in a frying pan.

SCOTT

Yeah, Roy, I'm still holding.  
What's the story on Lather Plus?

INT. ROY'S OFFICE - MORNING

ROY is a real "fat cat". His stomach bulges. He's eating a big breakfast: Eggs Benedict, croissant, exotic fruits, the works. His office walls are covered with autographed pictures of sports stars.

ROY

You didn't get the commercial.

SCOTT'S VOICE  
Who got it?

ROY  
What does it matter? They're  
slime.

Roy scoops eggs into his mouth.

SCOTT'S VOICE  
What reason did they give?

ROY  
Scott, these are ad people. They  
don't have reasons. They don't  
have brains. Forget them. We  
have another offer.

Roy pours coffee from a silver urn.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Scott pours boiling water from a saucepan into a cup filled  
with instant coffee. It splashes over and he jumps back to  
avoid getting burned. The yellow block of frozen eggs is  
smoking in a fry pan.

SCOTT  
Are you out of your mind? I've  
got a five-year-old girl! I'm not  
posing for an underwear ad!

Scott takes a piece of bread from a bag, tears off a moldy  
corner and pops the rest in the toaster.

SCOTT  
Is it boxer shorts or jockey  
shorts? ... Bikini! Roy, just  
sign me up for a G-string ad, why  
don't you?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

The bicycle is wrapped in newspaper and "For Dinah" written in  
big letters. Scott is standing in front of a full-length  
mirror, getting dressed. He rehearses a speech.

SCOTT  
Look, Melanie, I've been a jerk.  
I treated you like crap. Stupid  
affairs. I don't know what I was  
doing. But that's all over. I  
want to get back together and  
start anew.

He looks at himself, dumbfounded.

SCOTT

Anew? Anew?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - MORNING

Scott opens the door. DINAH CHASE is there, a little five-year-old heartbreaker. She rushes into his arms.

DINAH

Daddy!

Scott lifts her up and hugs her.

SCOTT

Hey, Dinah! This was the longest week of my life!

DINAH

You say that every week.

SCOTT

They get longer.

MELANIE CHASE comes up on the porch. Melanie is pale, pretty, scattered. Something is always happening to her.

SCOTT

Hi, Mel.

DINAH

Mommy, where's my pictures?

MELANIE

Oh, in the car. Sorry.

She turns and runs back to the car. Scott sets Dinah down.

SCOTT

I've got a surprise for you.

DINAH

What is it?

SCOTT

If I tell you, it won't be a surprise.

DINAH

Tell me!

Dinah reaches into Scott's pockets. Meanwhile, Melanie is trying to get into her car.

MELANIE

Dinah!

SCOTT

Looks like your Mommy locked her keys in the car.

DINAH

Again?

She sighs and takes a chain from around her neck. A whole set of keys hangs from it. She selects one.

DINAH

What would she do without me?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Scott attaches one of Dinah's paintings to the refrigerator with a magnet.

MELANIE

I should go.

She starts digging through her purse. Scott comes over to her.

SCOTT

Melanie ... I've been a jerk. At least I admit it. I messed around. Life on the road ... Of course, compared with some of the other guys, I was a saint.

MELANIE

Don't tell me I've lost my keys again. Dinah!

Scott takes Melanie's hand and opens it. The keys.

MELANIE

I don't know what's wrong with me. I'm not usually like this.

SCOTT

You're always like this. And I love you for it.

She turns away nervously, sets the keys down and starts busily cleaning up. She flips on the disposal and scrapes some dishes. Scott has to shout.

SCOTT

I wasn't the worst husband in the world. I make a good living. I think I'm a good father.

Melanie scrapes another dish into the sink. The keys are on it. A terrible crunch. Scott flips off the disposal. Melanie looks down the drain.

MELANIE

Dinah!

SCOTT

Mel, I got the divorce papers.

He takes an envelope from the counter. A spoon is stuck to it with old jam. He pries the spoon off.

SCOTT

Let's rip them up. Start over.  
I'll do better this time. I  
promise.

He touches her hair. Lifts up her face. Leans forward to kiss her.

MELANIE

Scott, I'm getting married.

A pause. Scott looks at her.

SCOTT

Who does he play for?

MELANIE

He doesn't play for anyone.

SCOTT

Who is he?

MELANIE

You don't know him. He's Italian.

SCOTT

I know Italians. Bugliosi,  
Martini ...

MELANIE

They're ball players! Do you  
think I'm crazy enough to marry  
another ball player? His name is  
Rudy Corelli. He doesn't go on  
the road. He's home. He looks  
after me. This kind of thing  
doesn't happen when he's around.

She reaches down the drain for the keys.



SCOTT  
What about Dinah?

MELANIE  
She loves him already. Ask her.

Dinah comes running in.

DINAH  
Mommy, I got a bike! Daddy bought  
me a bike!

Scott crouches down to her. Dinah hugs him.

DINAH  
Daddy, did it come put together?

SCOTT  
I put it together, honey.

DINAH  
'Cause remember the swing set.

SCOTT  
There was something wrong with  
that swing set.

DINAH  
It's still in the backyard in a  
pile. Mommy put a rope around it  
so my friends wouldn't get hurt.

She takes his hand and starts pulling him towards the door.

DINAH  
Come on! Let's try it out!

Melanie pulls the keys out of the drain. They're mangled.  
She turns to Scott, tears in her eyes.

MELANIE  
I wish you would have spoiled me,  
too.

Scott looks at her as Dinah pulls him from the room.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Scott gets on Dinah's bicycle.

DINAH  
Daddy, it's a girl's bike.

SCOTT

I just want to make sure it's  
safe.

He starts riding it down the path. Dinah follows.

DINAH

Now let me! Let me!

The back wheel wobbles. Then the bicycle begins to shudder. Suddenly, the whole thing buckles and collapses, throwing Scott to the grass. Dinah screams.

DINAH

Daddy!

She runs to him and crouches down.

DINAH

Are you hurt?

He shakes his head. Dinah looks at the bike. It's totalled. A moment. Then she bursts into laughter and falls on the grass. He starts to laugh, too. They roll on the ground side by side, giggling like two kids.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - DAY

Scott and Dinah are sitting in the car. It's parked in front of a big, several storied house. Melanie is standing on the front porch, waiting for Dinah.

SCOTT

I should get to the stadium.

DINAH

Do good.

She puts her arms around him. He holds her tight. A dark, handsome man, RUDY, comes out on the porch beside Melanie.

SCOTT

I love you.

DINAH

Me, too.

She opens the car door and starts to get out. Then she turns back. She smiles proudly. She learned a new word.

DINAH

Ciao.

She runs up the grass to the porch. Rudy crouches down, picks her up, and lifts her high. She laughs.

INT. PHOENIX STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Ball players in various stages of dress. Scott is in his Bandits uniform. At the next locker, SKIP, a big blonde farm boy. He's patching up some shaving cuts on his face with pieces of toilet paper.

SCOTT

Who'd you hear that from?

SKIP

Nobody. You don't hear that kind of thing from anybody. You just hear it.

SCOTT

Lucky wouldn't trade me because my first couple games were a little off. I'm just getting warmed up.

SKIP

Lucky's desperate this year. His job's at stake. He'll do anything to get into the Series.

SCOTT

I'll talk to him.

SKIP

Yeah, he'll pat your fanny and say you're like a son to him. Then you read you're traded in the papers.

SCOTT

Christ. What else could happen today?

He slams his locker and turns to go.

SKIP

Hey, Scott, you want to hear some good news for a change?

SCOTT

Sure, Skip.

SKIP

I got a commercial. Lather Plus Shaving Cream. Mucho buckaroos.

Skip smiles broadly, little red squares of paper all over his face.

EXT. PHOENIX STADIUM - DAY

Players are warming up before the game. Scott walks with LUCKY SCHNEIDER, the barrel-chested, tobacco chewing manager of the Bandits.

LUCKY

Scott, you're like a son to me.  
Would I trade my own son?

SCOTT

You did trade your own son.  
Remember? To the Brewers.

LUCKY

He was a piece of shit. You're  
Mr. Talent. Mr. Natural Fucking  
Talent. When you get a hit, I get  
a hard-on. I'm not kidding.  
Mildred doesn't turn me on  
anymore. You do. Do it today,  
Scotty. Bat on ball. Give an  
impotent, balding, fat old man a  
thrill.

Lucky slaps Scott on the ass and jogs over to the dugout.

CUT TO

The game in progress. Scott in the batter's box. He swings  
and misses.

UMPIRE

Strike two!

ON LUCKY

Watching from the dugout. He spits a big brown wad of tobacco  
on the ground. A bat boy has to jump out of the way.

INT. RUDY'S HOUSE - T.V. ROOM - DAY

Dinah is watching the game on T.V., her dolls neglected in  
front of her. Scott is on the screen, jittery, never still.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

Bases loaded, two outs, the bottom  
of the seventh. The Bandits need  
a hit like they need air.

Melanie comes in and frantically searches the room.

DINAH

Your purse is on the table in the  
front hall.

Melanie hurries out. On T.V. Scott steps up to the plate again.

EXT. PHOENIX STADIUM - DAY

The pitcher throws. Scott swings and misses again.

UMPIRE

Strike three!

Scott stands there. He can't believe it. The crowd begins to boo.

INT. RUDY'S HOUSE - T.V. ROOM - DAY

On T.V. Scott is walking away from the plate. The boos are really loud.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

They didn't like that one.

SECOND ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

There was a time when Chase would have knocked that one out of the park. What we're seeing is the decline of a really great ball player. He's lost it. He doesn't concentrate, he goes for bad pitches, his timing is off ...

Dinah reaches up and turns off the sound. She's trembling.

EXT. PHOENIX STADIUM - DAY

Lucky, furious, red in the face, charges up to Scott.

SCOTT

Sorry about that, Lucky.

LUCKY

Sorry? You're out of here, Chase!  
If anyone will take you!

Lucky turns and shouts to the stadium.

LUCKY

How about it? Anybody want him?  
Make me an offer!

INT. RUDY'S HOUSE - T.V. ROOM - DAY

The T.V. cameras zoom in on Lucky. The volume is still off, but it's pretty clear what he's saying. Dinah can't stand it any longer. She flips off the T.V.

EXT. PHOENIX STADIUM - DAY

The game has come to a stop. Everyone is watching Lucky and Scott.

LUCKY

You're shit, Chase! You're worse than shit! You make shit look good!

SCOTT

Okay.

LUCKY

You're dog vomit a dog wouldn't touch! You're ...

He's stumped.

LUCKY

You're ...

He can't think of anything. So he spits a big black wad of tobacco on Scott's chest. Scott looks down at it in disbelief.

LUCKY

You're traded!

It happens in a flash. Scott slugs Lucky right in the jaw. There is a sickening crack. Lucky falls to the ground, unconscious. The crowd gasps.

EXT. PHOENIX STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Scott comes out of the locker room into a corridor filled with reporters and television cameramen. He's in his street clothes and carries a big athletic bag full of stuff. He tries to make his way through the reporters.

REPORTER #1

Scott, do you think you're through in the major leagues?

REPORTER #2

Will you take your case to the Commissioner?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The interview is now playing on the big screen T.V. in Scott's bedroom. Scott is packing away his video tapes in a box.

REPORTER #3

Are you sorry you hit Lucky?

T.V. SCOTT  
I'm not sorry for anything.

REPORTER #1  
Scott, what was going through your  
head when you did it?

The T.V. Scott stops and thinks.

T.V. SCOTT  
I don't know. I guess I just  
forgot it's only a game.

Scott presses the eject button on the VCR and the cassette pops out. A game appears on the screen. The Bandits are playing and the camera focuses on Lucky standing in front of the dug-out, his jaw wired shut.

FIRST ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
And there's Lucky Schneider.

SECOND ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
He's a trouper, all right.

Scott turns off the T.V.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A half-finished bottle of scotch sits on the floor. CDs are scattered carelessly around. A fire is blazing in the fire place. Scott pokes the fire a little. He puts another log in. But it isn't a log. It's one of his bats.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The next morning. He looks like he finished that bottle of scotch. He opens the refrigerator. There's not much in here. He opens a carton of milk and sniffs it. It's pretty bad. He puts it back and takes out a beer. He opens a grease stained box and takes out a piece of congealed pizza. He's about to bite into it when he stops. He looks at it with disgust.

SCOTT  
Italian.

He throws it in the trash.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Scott is digging in the closet. He pulls a suit jacket off a hanger. Looks at the label.

SCOTT  
Italian!

He throws it on the floor. He grabs a shirt, looks inside the collar.

SCOTT

Italian!

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Scott has just showered, shaved. He's talking to himself. He's pretty worked up.

SCOTT

Dinah's my daughter. Mine! You lay one finger on her, I'll pound your face in, you greasy Wop!

INT. RUDY'S STUDY - DAY

Scott watches RUDY CORELLI, a darkly handsome man in his mid-thirties, uncork a bottle of wine.

RUDY

Scott, you don't know me. For all you know, I'm just some greasy Wop.

SCOTT

Oh, no ...

RUDY

Well, that's nice of you. You don't know anything about me. Please don't think I'm taking your place. Dinah's your daughter. You call the shots. All I want to do is give her a good home and make sure she doesn't have to worry about a thing.

Rudy pours a little wine in a glass and gives it to Scott to taste.

SCOTT

Fine.

Rudy pours more in his glass.

RUDY

You're welcome here anytime. Don't call, just show up like you did today. My home is your home.

SCOTT

Thanks.



Rudy pours wine in his own glass.

RUDY

She's so bright. She amazes me.  
You should be so damn proud of  
her. And she's so proud of you.  
She talks about you all the time.  
She can't get enough of you.  
Salute!

Rudy clinks his glass against Scott's and drinks.

RUDY

If one person felt about me the  
way Dinah feels about you ... You  
know, I think I could conquer the  
world.

Rudy's eyes mist up. He wipes them with the back of his hand.  
He laughs, a little embarrassed.

RUDY

Italian.

INT. ROY'S OFFICE - DAY

Scott stares at Roy in disbelief.

SCOTT

Japan?

ROY

The Miyori Seals. They think  
you're the greatest thing since  
chopsticks.

Roy opens a box of sushi, picks out a piece with a pair of  
chopsticks, and puts it in his mouth.

SCOTT

I'm not going to Japan. Are you  
nuts?

ROY

They're crazy about baseball.  
It's the national sport. A lot of  
major leaguers are playing for  
Japanese teams. Marshall  
Preston's over there.

SCOTT

That's a good reason not to go.  
The son of a bitch threw a ball  
in my ear one game.

ROY

This is a fantastic offer, Scott. The teams are all owned by big corporations. Miyori's a huge electronics firm. They've got a lot of yen to play with.

SCOTT

What about my daughter?

ROY

Scott, I love kids, but it's either take this offer or start selling aluminum siding.

SCOTT

I thought you said the Expos were interested.

ROY

They were, for a minute. They passed. I've tried everywhere. Look, go over there for a season, get it back together, hit fifty home runs and maybe you have a chance to get back in the show. Scott, it's the best I can do for you. I'm sorry.

SCOTT

Roy, what am I going to do in Japan?

ROY

Play ball.

Roy picks up another piece of sushi with the chopsticks and holds it out to Scott.

ROY

Try some raw fish.

EXT. RUDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Dinah is riding a bike around the front lawn in fast circles. Scott watches.

SCOTT

That's a great bike Uncle Rudy got you.

She keeps riding.

SCOTT

By the time I come back, you won't need the training wheels.

She keeps riding. Scott steps in front of her and puts his hands on the handlebars, stopping her.

SCOTT

Dinah, I've got to go.

She doesn't look at him.

SCOTT

It's only till October. Seven months. It'll go by so fast.

She still doesn't look at him, but she speaks.

DINAH

Send me everything about you, okay? The papers and stuff.

SCOTT

Honey, it'll be in Japanese.

DINAH

That's okay.

He kisses her.

SCOTT

I'm going to miss you like crazy.

A moment. He lets go of the bike and starts towards his car. She watches him. She has tears in her eyes.

DINAH

Do good.

Scott turns, smiles and gives her the thumbs-up sign.

INT. NARITA AIRPORT - GATE - NIGHT

Scott comes up the ramp from the plane. He's suddenly blinded by dozens of flashbulbs. There's a solid wall of photographers who snap his picture and shout to him in Japanese. It's chaos. A small, stocky man with bright eyes pushes through the crowd and comes up to Scott. This is KAZU.

KAZU

Mr. Scott Chase, please come with me.

Kazu takes Scott's hand luggage and leads him through the crush of photographers. The photographers pursue them.

KAZU

My name is Kazuhito Imada. Call me Kazu. I work for the Seals. I'm your interpreter.

SCOTT

Man, I thought reporters in the States were pushy.

KAZU

Oh, these are not reporters, Mr. Chase.

SCOTT

Who are they?

KAZU

Fans.

Kazu opens a door and Scott follows him inside.

INT. NARITA AIRPORT - MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Filled with a whole new crowd of people snapping pictures, shouting questions, trying to get close. It's much worse than before.

KAZU

Here are the reporters.

IKEDA, a slight man but wiry and taut, approaches Scott, bows and speaks in Japanese.

KAZU

Mr. Ikeda, manager of the Miyori Seals, welcomes you to Japan.

SCOTT

Thanks. Glad to be here. It's a pleasure to play for your team.

Scott and Ikeda shake hands and pose for the photographers. Scott is exhausted and jet lagged. Kazu whispers to him.

KAZU

Smile, please.

SCOTT

I've got to piss.

KAZU

Smile first, piss later, please.

Scott smiles and the photographers go wild.

CUT TO

A press conference. Scott, Kazu and Ikeda sit at a table. The reporters are all asking questions at the same time. Flash-bulbs continually go off and T.V. cameras whirr. The FIRST REPORTER asks a question. Kazu translates.

KAZU

Why did you hit your manager in front of the whole stadium ...

SCOTT

I answered that already. How many times ...?

KAZU

... and cause him to lose face?

SCOTT

He didn't lose his face. He lost the use of his jaw for about a week which didn't upset too many people, if you want to know the truth. Doesn't anybody have anything else they want to ask me? My shoe size? My brand of underwear? Maybe the little lady has a question.

The Reporters look over to see who he's pointing to. HIROKO KIMURA is a striking woman in her early thirties - the only woman in the crowd. She has no camera, just a note pad. She speaks in English.

HIROKO

How do you feel about leaving your little daughter for so many months?

Scott doesn't answer for a moment. When he does, the answer is difficult for him.

SCOTT

I had to do it. I had to play ball. That's all I've ever done. It's who I am. (pause) But, I gotta tell you, it was a killer leaving her. It's going to be the longest seven months of my life.

A long moment as Scott and Hiroko look at each other. Then a SECOND REPORTER shouts a question and the moment is broken. Kazu translates.

KAZU

What do you think is the difference between American ball players and Japanese?

SCOTT

Well, your guys are just too small to really power hit the ball. You've got good running, good pitching, but the hitting sucks. I guess that's why you need me.

A pause. Kazu doesn't know how to translate this. Everyone waits. He takes a breath, then speaks. After he is finished, the Reporters burst into laughter and some even applaud. Scott is surprised by the reaction - it's not what he expected. He looks over at Hiroko. She's silent, watching him.

INT. NARITA AIRPORT - MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Scott is standing at a sink, looking into the mirror. He speaks to himself.

SCOTT

Asshole.

He turns on the water, washes his hands and splashes water on his face. Kazu stands discretely by the hand dryer.

SCOTT

What an asshole thing to say. Did I just fuck things up for good out there?

KAZU

I'm afraid I didn't translate very well for you.

SCOTT

How's that?

KAZU

I mean, when the reporter asked what is the difference between American players and Japanese?

SCOTT

Yeah?

KAZU

I said, "It is the same difference between American men and Japanese men. We are bigger, but you are harder."

Scott looks at him a moment, then starts to laugh.

KAZU

Is it okay?

SCOTT

It's okay.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Scott slides the screens back from the window. He has a panoramic view of Tokyo. The lights go forever. The Tokyo Tower rises over the city. The apartment is furnished in Western style. Kazu flips the light switches on and off, testing them. He turns on the television. That works, too.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kazu flushes the toilet. It seems to be okay. He turns on the shower.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A large bowl of fruit wrapped in plastic is on the table. Scott reads the card.

SCOTT

From the team.

Kazu is peering into the cupboards. They're stocked.

SCOTT

That woman. The reporter. What paper does she write for?

KAZU

Sugama Shimbun, owned by Mr. Sugama, very rich and important. He also owns the Tokyo Warriors. Would you like some tea? Or a beer?

Kazu opens the refrigerator. It's full.

SCOTT

You don't have to baby-sit me, Kazu. I'm fine. You live nearby?

KAZU

Not so far away. Two hours by train.

SCOTT

Two hours! Man, get out of here. I'll see you tomorrow.

KAZU

Any time, night or day, I'm at  
your service. Just call.

He takes a card from his pocket and hands it to Scott.

SCOTT

Thanks.

He holds out his hand and they shake.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Scott has unpacked a little. He's hanging up some of Dinah's  
paintings on the wall.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Silence. Scott is sipping a beer. He fiddles with the stereo,  
an elaborate, high-tech piece of equipment made by Miyori.  
Suddenly, a loud blast of a Japanese pop song. He turns it  
off. He switches on the T.V. A Japanese program comes on,  
perhaps a soap opera. He switches it off. He picks up the  
phone, punches "O". Waits. An operator answers.

SCOTT

I'd like to place a call to the  
United States.

There is excited chattering in Japanese on the other end.

SCOTT

Do you speak English? Can you  
connect me with someone who speaks  
English?

More excited chattering.

SCOTT

That's okay. Forget it.

He puts down the phone. A second later, it rings. He's  
surprised. He picks it up.

SCOTT

Hello?

We hear a MAN'S VOICE with rock music in the background.

MAN'S VOICE

No hard feelings, huh, Scott?

SCOTT

What? Who is this?



MAN'S VOICE

We're all in the same sampan now.

He chuckles.

SCOTT

Do I know you? Who is this?

MAN'S VOICE

Come to Kento's in Roppongi and find out.

Click. Scott hangs up. He's really puzzled, but intrigued.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - NIGHT

Outside his apartment building, Scott flags down a taxi. It skids to a halt. Scott reaches for the door handle, but the door pops open by itself.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Scott speaks to the TAXI DRIVER.

SCOTT

Kento's.

He shows the Taxi Driver a page in his Tokyo guide.

SCOTT

Kento's. Roppongi.

TAXI DRIVER

Ah, Roppongi! Hai!

He flips on the meter and takes off up the street. Scott holds on for dear life.

EXT. ROPPONGI STREET - NIGHT

The nightclub area. A dizzying display of hundreds of signs in hiragana, katakana and kanji characters. The street is crowded with people. Scott pays the taxi, then starts for the Kento's sign.

INT. KENTO'S - NIGHT

The club is decorated in 50's kitsch. The band is dressed like Buddy Holly: wide lapel coats and horn-rim glasses. They perform bubble gum music of the early 60's with uncanny accuracy. The sound and phrasing are perfect. The dance floor is packed. Scott is astonished. He hears a voice call to him from across the room.

MAN'S VOICE

Scott!

Scott makes his way through the crowd to a table littered with beer bottles and shot glasses. Three Americans are here: MARSHALL, RICH and VERN. MARSHALL PRESTON is in his late thirties; he looks like he's played a lot of ball and it's taken it's toll. He gets up to shake with Scott. There's a lot of animosity here, but Scott tries to hide it.

SCOTT

Marshall Preston! Long time no see.

MARSHALL

Thought you could use a little company your first night.

SCOTT

You're not kidding.

MARSHALL

Hey, I'm sorry about our little incident. That pitch just got away from me.

SCOTT

No problem. I barely remember it. Can't remember a thing since that game.

The two men look at each other for a moment - then Marshall laughs loudly and slaps Scott on the back. Vern rises to shake with Scott. He's a big black guy. He really stands out in this crowd. He's the only one of the group who's reasonably sober.

VERN

Vern Smith.

SCOTT

Sure. We played each other.

VERN

We'll be doing it again. I'm with the Tigers. Marshall's with the Warriors. So's Rich.

Rich is younger than the others. He has bloodshot eyes and a skin condition. He's pretty wasted. He rouses himself enough to shake with Scott.

RICH

Rich Wagner. A big fan.

SCOTT

Thanks.

VERN

Sit yourself down.

He pulls up a chair for Scott. Rich shouts to a passing waitress.

RICH

Garsonette! Another round!

Vern pours half his beer into Scott's glass and hands it to him.

SCOTT

How long have you guys been over here?

MARSHALL

Five years for me. Vern four. Rich one.

RICH

Two!

MARSHALL

One year, Rich. This is your second.

RICH

My third! Isn't it?

He looks at Vern and Marshall. They shake their heads.

RICH

Shit.

SCOTT

This team I'm on, the Seals, they pretty good?

Marshall, Rich and Vern all look at each other.

MARSHALL

Did the Seals win a single game last year?

VERN

A couple. One was an exhibition game against a Little League team. It was tight, but they took it.

Marshall, Vern and Rich all howl with laughter. Scott shrugs.

SCOTT

Well, I'm just here for the money.

MARSHALL

That's the spirit!

He raises his glass.

MARSHALL

Welcome to the Ugly Americans  
Club.

EXT. ROPPONGI STREET - NIGHT

The Ugly Americans are walking down the street. It's late at night, but the street is still crowded with people.

MARSHALL

Tokyo's great. It's got everything you can imagine and a lot you never even dreamed of. I know a place where you can eat sushi off a naked woman.

RICH

I've been there. I had octopus off her pussy.

SCOTT

Can you tell them to hold the octopus?

Scott eyes two pretty women walking arm in arm.

SCOTT

What's the story on women over here?

RICH

Man, don't tell me you brought your dick! Same mistake I made.

MARSHALL

Ask Vern. He's married to a Jap.

SCOTT

I didn't say anything about marriage. Look, I gotta go. I've got practice tomorrow.

MARSHALL

No way. Ugly Americans don't go home this early.

RICH  
Yeah, Scott. Ugly up!

Scott flags down a cab.

VERN  
Mind if I share with you?

SCOTT  
Great.

MARSHALL  
Scott, a little warning. They  
practice like hell over here.  
Tell them right up front, this is  
how I get ready for a game and if  
you don't like it, screw you.

SCOTT  
I'm not worried. I'm in shape.

MARSHALL  
Yeah, but there's one thing  
they've got you ain't. (taps  
Scott on the back) A little hatch  
back here where the batteries go.

INT. SECOND TAXI - NIGHT

The SECOND TAXI DRIVER dodges through the crowded Tokyo streets  
at a frantic pace. Vern speaks to the Driver in Japanese.

SCOTT  
You know Japanese?

VERN  
Enough to get around. Yeah, this  
ain't the major leagues, that's  
for sure, but it's something.  
What you get out of it is what you  
want to get out of it. If all you  
want is money, that's all you'll  
get.

SCOTT  
What else is there?

Vern speaks to the driver again and the driver pulls over.

VERN  
This is where I get off.

He tries to hand Scott some money, Scott shakes his head.

VERN

I'm playing a better game than I ever did in the States. I'm proud of my time over here. It's all in the way you look at it, Scott. You know where you're going?

Scott digs out a piece of paper, looks at it.

SCOTT

Kotto-dori Street.

Vern glances at the address, speaks to the Driver, then he gets out of the cab.

VERN

See you on the field, first game.

SCOTT

Night, Vern.

Vern lumbers up the walk to his apartment building.

CUT TO

Scott is holding on for dear life as the Second Taxi Driver dodges wildly through the manic Tokyo traffic.

SECOND TAXI DRIVER

Besuboru!

SCOTT

What?

SECOND TAXI DRIVER

Besuboru!

SCOTT

Sorry, I don't speak Japanese.

The Second Taxi Driver hands him a newspaper.

INSERT

Of the front page of the paper, a picture of Scott.

TAXI DRIVER

Besuboru!

ON SCOTT

Looking at the paper. Then he leans back against the seat. He feels exhausted, out of place and lost.

SCOTT

Yeah. Besuboru.

He looks out the window, then sees something that makes him sit up.

SCOTT

Wait! Pull over! Over there!

EXT. MCDONALDS - NIGHT

The familiar golden arches. Scott gets out of the taxi and goes inside.

INT. MCDONALDS - NIGHT

Scott at a table, his tray loaded with food. He opens a Styrofoam box and takes out a hamburger.

SCOTT

God bless the U.S.A.

He bites into it.

EXT. MCDONALDS - NIGHT

We see Scott from outside, all alone at his table, devouring his burger and fries.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Seals Stadium is old, falling apart and lacking almost every modern convenience. It's hard to believe this is the home of a major team - it looks more like the bush leagues. Kazu is introducing Scott to the team.

KAZU

This is Yukio Kenko, our starting pitcher.

SCOTT

Scott Chase. Look forward to playing with you.

YUKIO is a trim, muscular young man. He shakes with Scott, then gives a curt bow and turns away. Scott is underwhelmed by his reception and by the condition of the room.

SCOTT

This is quite a locker room you got here.

KAZU

(proudly)

It's the oldest baseball stadium  
in Tokyo.

SCOTT

They ever think of remodeling it?

KAZU

Oh no. The Seals locker room has  
always been like this. To change  
would be bad luck.

SCOTT

Yeah, you wouldn't want anything  
to upset that losing streak.

Kazu points to the hiragana characters on the nameplate of the  
of the lockers.

KAZU

Su-ko-to Cha-su.

Scott opens his locker. Inside, a crisp new uniform in the  
blue and gold Seals colors. On the back, the number 54.

KAZU

That's the number of home runs Mr.  
Ikeda would like you to hit for  
us.

SCOTT

He doesn't want much, does he?

Scott takes the uniform out of the locker.

CUT TO

The team is in uniform and sitting on benches. Ikeda addresses  
them in ringing tones. Kazu sits next to Scott, quietly  
translating.

KAZU

Last year you disgraced me, you  
disgraced your fans. You were in  
the cellar all year long. I was  
so ashamed that I offered the  
Miyori company my resignation.  
They did not accept it. You will  
not humiliate me again. You will  
train twice as hard. You will  
work from morning to night. You  
will find your fighting spirit  
again.



Ikeda pauses to let this sink in. The players are bowing their heads like naughty schoolboys.

KAZU

Mr. Ikeda is so inspiring.

SCOTT

He's going to inspire everyone to jump off a bridge.

Ikeda continues.

KAZU

I have hired Mr. Scott Chase who is going to help us. He will hit fifty-four home runs this season.

The Players look at Scott suspiciously. Scott is about to protest when Ikeda continues.

KAZU

This year the pennant race can be between the Warriors and the Seals. We can do it. Let's do it for our fans. Let's do it for ourselves. Let's win, win, win!

The players take up the chant. Then Yukio jumps to his feet and starts to sing. The other players join him, holding arms and swaying to the song. Kazu pulls Scott up.

KAZU

It's our team song.

SCOTT

I suppose you have cheerleaders, too.

KAZU

Of course.

Kazu starts to sing.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

The Seals are doing laps. Yukio is out in front, keeping up a fast pace. Scott passes him.

YUKIO

Be careful. We have trained four weeks already.

Scott turns and jogs backwards in front of Yukio.

SCOTT

Hey, I'm no wimp.

He laughs, turns around and speeds ahead of the team.

ON IKEDA

Near the dugout, watching. His face is a mask. Kazu is beside him, also watching anxiously.

CUT TO

Yukio leading the team in rigorous calisthenics. First, jumping jacks.

CUT TO

Push-ups, just as vigorous.

CUT TO

Sit-ups. Scott's keeping up, but he's breathing hard.

CUT TO

Fielding practice. Scott shags a fly ball in right field, then runs to center for a grounder, then to left field for another pop fly. He's been doing this for a while and he's almost staggering.

CUT TO

Catch practice. Scott is teamed with Yukio. They fire the ball back and forth as fast and hard as they can. Balls are flying all over the field.

SCOTT

Yukio, you train like this for five weeks?

YUKIO

We train like this all year. Hey, we're no wimps.

CUT TO

Scott in front of the dugout, pouring water down his throat. He has completely sweated through his nice clean uniform. He glances over at third base and speaks to Kazu.

SCOTT

What's going on over there?

SCOTT'S POV

The ASSISTANT COACH is hitting balls at a young, boyish player, ISO. Iso makes no attempt to catch the balls. A ball hits his shin; he flinches but doesn't cry out.

KAZU

Iso's a rookie. We teach him not to be afraid of the ball.

SCOTT

Yeah, but there's got to be a better way.

A ball hits Iso right in the stomach. He bends over, in agony.

KAZU

Better, yes. Faster, no. First game, one week from tonight.

Iso straightens up and gets ready to receive another ball.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Scott steps up to the plate.

SCOTT

Boy, does this feel good.

OGUCHI, middle-aged with a Buddha stomach, approaches Scott and tries to re-position Scott's legs. He speaks in Japanese. Kazu, standing nearby, translates.

KAZU

Mr. Oguchi says your feet should remain still.

SCOTT

I know what I'm doing. I've been doing this for a while.

Scott shakes Oguchi off and raises his bat. Oguchi tries to straighten it.

KAZU

And he says the bat should be straight up.

SCOTT

Just tell him to back off.

KAZU

Scott, please try. Mr. Oguchi is the batting coach.

SCOTT

I don't need a coach, okay?  
What'd you hire me for?

Oguchi backs off. Scott takes his usual stance at the plate. Yukio is at the mound. He winds up and pitches. He's got a hell of a fastball. It's high on the inside corner. Scott swings and misses.

ON IKEDA

Watching closely. In fact, practice has come to a standstill all over the field. Everyone is watching.

CUT TO

Scott is wiggling and squirming as usual. Oguchi watches from the sidelines. Yukio pitches again. Scott starts to swing, then checks himself. But the pitch is right over the plate - a strike. Scott knows everyone is watching and expecting great things. It makes him even more nervous and jumpy. Yukio winds up. Scott speaks to himself.

SCOTT

Do good.

Yukio pitches. Scott swings and connects. The ball rockets into the right field stands. Scott grins, then turns and tips his hat to Oguchi.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - CORRIDOR - DAY

The players are filing into the club house - a dingy room with dirty windows - for lunch. Scott passes Ikeda's office. In the office, Ikeda is shouting at Oguchi, who is bowing lower and lower. Scott speaks to Kazu.

SCOTT

Now what?

KAZU

Mr. Oguchi is resigning because you will not take his advice. He is dishonored in front of the whole ball club.

SCOTT

Look, he doesn't have to resign.

Scott barges into Ikeda's office. Kazu hurries after him.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - IKEDA'S OFFICE - DAY

Ikeda's office is very small and cramped - four people fill it up.

SCOTT

Look, I'm a big boy. I know what I'm doing. No offense, but I don't need a coach. Just leave me alone and let me do my job.

Kazu translates. We see his translation in subtitles.

KAZU

(subtitled)

Scott apologizes for being short tempered. He is nervous because it is his first day. He would very much like to have Mr. Oguchi's help and advice.

Oguchi speaks.

OGUCHI

(subtitled)

I am the batting coach to all players, no special cases. Not even Americans.

KAZU

(to Scott)

Mr. Oguchi says if you would allow him to make one tiny suggestion about your stance, it would make your batting style perfect.

SCOTT

I'll hear him out, but I'm not changing anything.

KAZU

(to Oguchi - subtitled)

Scott knows he needs help with his stance and would be honored to have your assistance, when you have the time.

Oguchi bows, Scott nods and they shake hands. Kazu smiles, not saying a word.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - CLUBHOUSE - DAY

In the drab clubhouse a cook serves the team bowls of watery noodles. Scott gets his and sits down with Yukio and some other players.

SCOTT

Chow down, huh? I was hoping for a piece of raw fish with this.

YUKIO

Raw fish for dinner, not for lunch.

Kazu comes hurrying up.

KAZU

Scott, please, come quickly. There is a newspaper reporter to speak to you.

SCOTT

Kazu, I've worked my butt off all morning. I'm having my noodles. I might even be reckless and top it off with some seaweed.

Hiroko comes into the room with Ikeda. Scott sees her. He puts down his bowl and stands.

SCOTT

Sure. Glad to.

Scott walks across the room, Kazu at his heels.

KAZU

Please say something nice about Mr. Ikeda. Ikeda-san loves to see his name in the paper.

They stop in front of Ikeda and Hiroko. Ikeda speaks, Kazu translates.

KAZU

This is Miss Hiroko Kimura, a very important reporter for Sugama Shimbun. She is going to watch practice this afternoon and then would like to talk with you.

SCOTT

Scott Chase. We've sort of met before.

HIROKO

Hello.

He shakes her hand. Ikeda talks some more. Ikeda is surprisingly convivial and smiley.

KAZU

Ikeda-san says it is a special honor to have a reporter from the  
(MORE)

KAZU  
(cont'd)

Sugama Shimbun. Mr. Sugama owns  
the Tokyo Warriors, Ikeda-san's  
favorite ball club.

SCOTT  
The Warriors are his favorite  
team?

KAZU  
Yes. He has been a fan of the  
Warriors since he was a little  
boy.

SCOTT  
What about us?

KAZU  
We are his second favorite.

Scott looks at Ikeda, astonished.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

Hiroko is sitting in the stands. Ikeda is hovering, trying to  
make her comfortable. He gives her a cushion. A Bat Boy  
brings her some tea.

ON SCOTT

In the batting cage, hitting balls, one after the other. He's  
wiped out, but he's working hard, aware that Hiroko is studying  
him.

CUT TO

The sun is dipping down. Scott and Yukio are tossing the ball  
around.

SCOTT  
You're the Seals' star pitcher and  
you have to live with your wife's  
parents and sleep in the living  
room?

YUKIO  
Japanese players do not get paid  
as much as you.

SCOTT  
Ask for more.

YUKIO

That would show disrespect to  
Mr. Ikeda.

SCOTT

Forget Ikeda. I can't believe the  
way he talks to you. Stand up to  
him. He'll never respect you if  
you don't respect yourselves.  
You're a great pitcher. You could  
work in the majors.

YUKIO

(surprised, pleased)  
You think so?

The Assistant Coach blows a whistle and the team stops  
practicing.

SCOTT

Finally. I thought this day would  
never end.

YUKIO

It's not over yet.

Yukio starts jogging across the field. Scott follows.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - ENTRANCE - SUNSET

The players come jogging out. A group of TEENAGE GIRLS scream  
and snap pictures as they go by.

EXT. SHINTO SHRINE - SUNSET

Hundreds of stone steps leading straight up. The team takes  
them at a rapid pace. Scott stops at the bottom.

YUKIO

Four hundred thirty-six steps to  
the top.

SCOTT

Thanks for telling me.

YUKIO

But only two hundred eighteen like  
this.

Yukio starts up the stairs two at a time. Scott takes a breath  
and follows, two steps at a time.



CUT TO

The top of the shrine. It's huge and brilliantly red with a gracefully curved roof. Scott arrives at the top, bent over, out of breath. Yukio is waiting for him.

YUKIO

We pray for good luck on opening day.

Scott tries to catch his breath. Yukio has warmed towards him.

YUKIO

I will say a prayer for you, too, Scott.

SCOTT

Thanks.

Yukio goes towards the shrine where other players are already buying their ema, wooden boards with a prayer written on them. The players hang them on the rack in the covered hall in the front of the shrine. Scott watches.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - BATH - NIGHT

Scott, a towel around his waist, comes into the bath with Yukio. Team members squat on tiny stools in front of faucets. They soap up, fill buckets with water and dump them over their heads.

SCOTT

Where's the showers?

YUKIO

This is the showers.

CUT TO

Scott seated on a small stool, covered with soap. He fills a bucket and pours it over his head. The water feels good.

CUT TO

The players relaxing in the communal tub. Steam rises off the water. Everyone watches Scott. He's very uncomfortable.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - DUSK

Scott, wearing street clothes, signs autographs for the group of teenage girls while Hiroko speaks to him.

HIROKO

I have never written about sports before. I write about subjects interesting to women.

SCOTT

Well, that's me. Let's go, I'm starved.

A cab pulls up, the door pops open and Scott holds it open for Hiroko. The girls snap pictures as he gets in the car.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Scott and Hiroko are seated at a table in this trendy restaurant. Hiroko clicks on a tape recorder and sets it down on the table. Scott is already on his second beer and feeling reckless. Hiroko tries to keep the interview on a professional level, but she also feels the heat.

SCOTT

I get into big trouble with those things.

HIROKO

As I said, I don't know anything about sports. I don't even like baseball.

SCOTT

Well, everyone has their faults.

HIROKO

What is your first impression of Japan?

SCOTT

It has very pretty reporters.

HIROKO

So, you were attracted to many of the men at the press conference yesterday?

SCOTT

They were swell.

HIROKO

Do American ball players look down on Japanese baseball?

SCOTT

They don't think about it. It's halfway around the world.

HIROKO

So they won't think of you anymore. You'll be forgotten.

SCOTT

I won't be forgotten. In baseball, they never forget anything.

HIROKO

You'll be a statistic.

SCOTT

Nothing wrong with being a statistic, as long as you're a good statistic. I'm ready for another beer.

Hiroko speaks to a Waiter, who hurries away.

HIROKO

What makes you a good ball player?

SCOTT

I make love to the ball.

HIROKO

Is that why your wife left you, because you made love to the ball, not to her?

SCOTT

She didn't leave me. We split up. Are you married? You don't have a ring. Do people wear rings over here?

HIROKO

No, in Japan we have a different custom. Married couples have a small tattoo placed on the same spot on their bodies to show they are joined for life.

SCOTT

I like that. You have any tattoos?

HIROKO

No tattoos.

Hiroko looks down at her pad for the next question. She has said this with a straight face, but now she looks down at her note pad with a smile.

HIROKO

Is there a woman in your life  
right now?

SCOTT

Right now? You.

HIROKO

Are you attracted to Japanese  
women?

SCOTT

Come on, now you're fishing for  
compliments.

Hiroko asks the next few questions without looking at her  
notes. She's winging it - now she's unsure if she's inter-  
viewing Scott or flirting with him.

HIROKO

Are you a good lover?

SCOTT

I haven't had many complaints.

HIROKO

Is pleasing women important to  
you?

SCOTT

Sure. But don't take my word for  
it. Do some investigative  
reporting.

HIROKO

What do you look for in a women?

SCOTT

Someone who asks a lot of  
questions. Speaks English. And  
doesn't have any tattoos.

His beer comes, he takes a swallow. Hiroko hides a smile.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hiroko is standing on the street in front of the restaurant.  
Scott is inside, signing an autograph for the MANAGER. Scott  
gives the menu back, the Manager smiles, bows gratefully and  
holds the door open. Scott comes out.

SCOTT

I've signed more autographs in two  
days than I did in eight years in  
the States.

HIROKO

Mr. Chase, thank you for giving me your time ...

SCOTT

We're not finished, are we? Don't you have more questions on that little pad?

HIROKO

I've enjoyed it very much ...

Scott takes her pad and looks at it.

SCOTT

This question. Are you sure you asked me this one?

HIROKO

That is my grocery list. (takes the pad back) I've taken up too much of your time.

SCOTT

Listen, I have some tapes of some of my games. You should look at them to see how ...

HIROKO

How you make love to the ball? I'm sorry, I don't like dirty films.

He sees a cab and holds up his hand.

SCOTT

Okay, then I'll send you a ticket to opening night.

HIROKO

I don't like baseball.

SCOTT

Maybe you'll change your mind. Can I drop you off?

The taxi skids to a stop at the curb.

HIROKO

I will take the train. Thank you again, Mr. Chase.

SCOTT

Scott.

She holds out her hand. He takes it and holds on to it.

SCOTT

Here's something for your story. Our family never went on summer vacations. Other families went to the beach or camping. We didn't go anywhere. My Dad saved up his vacation time and in October he took us kids out of school and we went to the World Series. Didn't matter where it was. L.A., San Francisco, Detroit. One year we went to Detroit for vacation! We never had good seats. Always way up top. But boy ... You wonder why I wanted to be a ball player? You should have seen my Dad's face at those games.

HIROKO

He must be very proud of you.

SCOTT

He was only around for my first season.

HIROKO

I'm sorry.

They look at each other for a long moment. Then Scott leans forward to kiss her cheek, but she flinches and he stops himself. He gets in the cab and it zooms up the street. Hiroko watches until it's gone.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - DAY

Another day of grueling practice. Scott is shagging flies in right field. It's getting a little easier for him.

CUT TO

Sliding practice. The players, one after the other, are sliding into home plate. Scott's turn comes - he slides in head first. The Assistant Coach blows the whistle and Ikeda comes to the plate as Scott is getting up and brushing himself off. Ikeda speaks, Kazu translates.

KAZU

Mr. Ikeda says the Seals do not slide head first.

SCOTT

Why not? I won a game with a slide like that.

KAZU

He says, it is not the way we play.

SCOTT

You don't play to win? Oh, right, we wouldn't want to win against the Warriors, would we? Your favorite team.

Scott turns and walks to the dugout.

KAZU

(to Ikeda - subtitled)

Scott apologizes deeply for the slide and will never do it again. He wants to be a good influence on the younger players.

Suddenly, Iso, the rookie, races towards home plate and slides - head first. He blows a huge cloud of dust up on Kazu and Ikeda.

INT. SUGAMA SHIMBUN - DAY

Hiroko is sitting at her cramped, uniform desk at the newspaper, typing on a computer screen (we see the Japanese keyboard and kanji characters on the screen.) An Office Boy puts some mail on her desk. She looks through it, then opens an envelope and takes out a note. The note reads: "Tuesday you saw me at my worst. Come see me at my best. Scott." The ticket to the game is enclosed. She looks at it.

INT. HIROKO'S HOUSE - KENJI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

This once was a traditional Japanese room, but now it is covered with posters of American movie stars, rock stars, baseball players. There are books, tapes, video tapes, all in English. KENJI, a thirteen year old boy, is asleep in bed, an English grammar textbook open on his chest, a Seals cap on his head and a Walkman on his ears. Hiroko looks down at him. She takes the book away, removes the cap and the Walkman. She kisses him, then starts towards the door. But she stops when she sees a big poster of Scott on the wall. She looks at it a moment, then opens her purse and takes out the ticket. She looks back at Kenji. She goes to him and slips the opening night ticket into his hand.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

The OFFICIAL CHEERLEADER, a diminutive man in his fifties, leads the cheering section in a rousing fight song. The fans perform elaborate routines with plastic cushions - one side blue, the other side gold - such as spelling out players' names and numbers.

CUT TO

Another part of the stadium: a young vendor sells hotto dogus; a second sells bento, portable meals of rice and fish; a third sells whiskey.

CUT TO

Businessmen in suits and ties. They've come straight from the office (and will probably go straight back when the game is over). They buy bento and whiskey from the vendors.

CUT TO

A group of school girls, perhaps the same girls we saw snapping pictures of the players outside the stadium. They giggle over the pictures of the players in a baseball magazine.

CUT TO

Some young boys with plastic megaphones. When they aren't shouting through them, they're banging them together.

CUT TO

Kenji is finding his seat, a great seat on the first baseline. Surrounding him are executives from the Miyori Corporation who didn't count on sitting next to a kid. They make him show them his ticket. Then Kenji sits and organizes his stuff - megaphone, program, T-shirt. He raided the souvenir stand.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

A soft, feminine voice announces the players as they run out to the field.

ANNOUNCER

Goju-yon. Sukoto Chasu.

Scott jogs out and takes his place in the lineup. The cheering section goes crazy, singing and spelling out Scott's name with their cushions.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji aims his camera with telephoto lens and takes a picture.



EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Ikeda is leading the entire team across the field. He stops in front of the official cheering section. Ikeda removes his cap. The players remove theirs. Ikeda addresses the cheering section. Scott whispers to Yukio.

SCOTT

What's going on?

YUKIO

We apologize to our fans for losing so many games last year.

SCOTT

You gotta be kidding.

Ikeda finishes his speech. He bows, low and deep, and holds the bow. The entire team follows his example. Only Scott remains upright. The Official Cheerleader glares at him.

SCOTT

Don't look at me! I wasn't even here!

He turns and walks back across the field to the dugout. The stadium buzzes with comment. Ikeda comes out of his bow and turns to watch Scott. He is not pleased.

CUT TO

The scoreboard. It's the bottom of the first: Warriors 1, Seals 0.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Scott steps into the batter's box. He takes his usual stance: shifting, waving his bat, never settling down. And grinning.

CUT TO

Marshall on the mound. He winds up and throws. It's a brush-back pitch and Scott barely avoids getting hit. The UMPIRE calls a ball. Scott steps back up to the plate. He looks out at Marshall. Marshall smiles and winks. Then he winds up and pitches again. Scott doesn't swing at this one and the Umpire calls a strike.

SCOTT

Are you crazy? That was a foot out of the strike zone!

INT. SEALS STADIUM - DUGOUT - NIGHT

Ikeda jumps out of the dugout and goes to the plate. Kazu is right at his heels.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

The Umpire and Scott are in a shouting match, each using a different language.

SCOTT

This is such bullshit! He had to get on a ladder to catch it!

Ikeda arrives at the plate.

SCOTT

Ikeda, can you believe that call?

Ikeda starts shouting, not at the Umpire, but at Scott. Scott is astonished.

SCOTT

What is this?

KAZU

In Japan we do not argue with the umpire.

SCOTT

No way was that a strike!

KAZU

Ikeda says, the umpire is always right.

SCOTT

Kazu, you saw the pitch.

KAZU

It was hard to tell from where I was.

Ikeda turns on his heel and walks away.

SCOTT

What did he say?

Kazu hesitates.

SCOTT

Just tell me.

KAZU

He says, you were hired to hit  
fifty-four home runs. Shit or get  
off the pot.

Kazu runs off the field. Scott steps up to the plate again.  
Now he's really rattled. Marshall pitches. It's a little  
wide. Scott swings, angrily. It's a line drive that  
almost knocks Marshall's head off - he has to duck. Scott gets  
to first. Rich is the first baseman.

RICH

Already causing sparks.

SCOTT

This is such Mickey Mouse ball.  
How do you stand it, Rich?

RICH

I'm always just a little drunk.

Scott looks up into the stands.

SCOTT'S POV

No Hiroko. Instead, a kid taking his picture.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

At the plate, the rookie Iso gets a hit. He runs for first.  
Scott races towards second. The second baseman catches the  
ball. Scott's out, but he slides, anyway. He knocks the  
second base man down, causing him to drop the ball. The  
Warriors rush towards Scott to tear him apart. Iso is safe  
at first.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - DUGOUT - NIGHT

Ikeda charges out of the dugout, Kazu right behind.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

It's a lynch mob surrounding Scott, shouting at him, shoving  
him. Ikeda pushes his way into the crowd, Kazu at his heels.  
Ikeda shouts at Scott.

SCOTT

What is it now?

KAZU

That was illegal.

SCOTT

We do it all the time in the  
States.

KAZU

This is not the States. Yamamoto  
could have been hurt.

SCOTT

Come on. This isn't Little  
League.

The Japanese continue shouting at each other.

SCOTT

Maybe it is.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji is snapping pictures as fast as he can. The crowd is  
excited by the drama on the field.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

The game has come to a complete halt. Most of the Warriors and  
half of the Seals are grouped at second with Scott right in the  
middle of it.

ON MARSHALL

Marshall on the mound. He chuckles, enjoying the whole thing.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The game is over and the crowd is streaming out of the stadium.  
It was an exciting game. Hiroko is here, waiting for Kenji.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ikeda is holding a press conference outside the locker room.

CUT TO

Kenji, crawling through the legs of the reporters and past  
Ikeda. He pushes open the locker room door and scrambles  
inside.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Players are in various stages of dress. Kenji looks around,  
awestruck. He sees Scott. He has changed into street clothes  
and is just closing his locker. Kenji approaches nervously.  
Scott sees him.

SCOTT

How'd you get in here?

Kenji opens his mouth to speak, but nothing comes out.

SCOTT

You want my autograph? Here.

He holds out his hand for Kenji's program. Kenji gives it to him.

SCOTT

What's your name?

KENJI

(weakly)

Kenji.

Scott writes on the program.

SCOTT

You know, that was my seat you were in. What did you do, sneak down from the top? I used to do that all the time when I was a kid. I got in so much trouble. I know you can't understand me.

KENJI

I understand you. I know English. I can swear and everything. You want to hear me?

SCOTT

No thanks.

He hands the program back to Kenji.

KENJI

Thanks. Fantastic. Cool. Take it easy. I got to meet my mom.

He runs for the door just as Kazu is coming in. Kazu catches Kenji and starts to lecture him in Japanese.

SCOTT

Kazu, it's okay. Just an autograph pup.

Kazu lets Kenji go. He dashes out the door.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Hiroko is questioning an usher when a handsome man in an impeccable Italian suit approaches Hiroko. This is SUGAMA. He treats Hiroko very graciously, almost fawning over her.

SUGAMA

(subtitled)

Miss Kimura, I wish I'd known you wanted to see the game. I would have been honored for you to sit in my box.

HIROKO

(subtitled)

Good evening, Mr. Sugama. I'm just picking up my son.

SUGAMA

I'm glad to know he's a Warriors fan.

Kenji comes running up, waving his program and speaking in English.

KENJI

I got it, I got it! Look, Scott Chase! He talked to me and everything!

Sugama hears Scott's name. He looks at Kenji and his face tightens. Hiroko quickly tries to cover.

HIROKO

Kenji, be polite to Mr. Sugama. He's my boss.

KENJI

Yeah, but he owns the Warriors and they're scum.

HIROKO

(to Sugama - subtitled)

Kenji says the Warriors played well tonight. They deserved their victory.

SUGAMA

(subtitled)

I have your article about Scott Chase on my desk. I will read it tomorrow. I'm sure it is perfect, as always.

He bows to her, then leaves with the bodyguards. Kenji gives her the program.

KENJI

Look! Scott Chase!

She takes the program and looks at the autograph.

HIROKO

Who's Kenny?

He looks at it. At first he's surprised.

KENNY

I'm Kenny.

Then he's overjoyed.

KENJI

I'm Kenny!

His shout echoes through the corridor and out into the stadium.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Scott is having a drink, looking out at the view and talking on the phone.

SCOTT

I hit two home runs and batted in four runs. I wish you could have seen me.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RUDY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Dinah is in her pajamas, having breakfast. Bright Phoenix sun shines in the windows.

DINAH

Is your uniform pretty?

SCOTT

Really pretty. Blue and gold. And they have cheerleaders and people waving banners and singing songs. It's even better than baseball back home.

DINAH

Send me stuff.

SCOTT

I've got tons of stuff for you. And this nice lady's writing a big article about me. I'll send it to you.

DINAH

Am I in it?

SCOTT

You bet you are. I told her all about you. I told her what a good girl you are and how I miss you like crazy.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Scott is having his noodles while Kazu reads to him from the Sugama Shimbun.

KAZU

"'I make love to the ball,' Scott Chase says, leering at this reporter."

SCOTT

I didn't leer. It was a joke.

KAZU

"He boasts that he's a great lover of women ..."

SCOTT

I didn't say great. That whole story is a lie.

KAZU

"But there is also an innocent Scott Chase. When he asked if married couples exchanged rings, I made up a childish story and he believed every word."

SCOTT

You mean you really don't get tattooed?

Kazu looks at him, puzzled. The Assistant Coach blows the whistle and the Seals immediately jump to their feet and start for the door.

KAZU

We better go.

SCOTT

Kazu, do you think Hiroko was offended because I tried to kiss her?

KAZU

(shocked)

You put your moves on her?



SCOTT

It was a little kiss on the cheek.

KAZU

In Japan it's not customary to kiss on the first date.

SCOTT

This wasn't a date. It was an interview.

KAZU

That is even less customary.

SCOTT

I was a little drunk and ...

KAZU

(relieved)

Oh, you were drunk! That's good! In Japan you can do anything when you're drunk - talk back to the boss, kiss the girl, anything. Just don't do it when you're sober. Come, Oguchi is waiting to give you your lesson.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Oguchi is trying to adjust Scott's batting stance. Kazu translates.

KAZU

Mr. Oguchi suggests that your elbows are too high.

SCOTT

I'm sorry. They came that way.

KAZU

He says that you lose time because you have to drop them down to hit the ball.

SCOTT

Just because every damn player on the Seals has his elbows in the same damn position doesn't mean ...

KAZU

Scott, please cooperate. Otherwise Mr. Oguchi will lose face and try to resign again.

SCOTT

Well, we wouldn't want that to happen. Are these elbows low enough for him?

Scott exaggerates, hunching over and putting his elbows waist high. Oguchi speaks.

KAZU

He says a little higher.

Scott raises them.

KAZU

High still. A little higher. There! Perfect!

Kazu nods to Yukio, who is at the mound. Yukio winds up.

SCOTT

I couldn't hit my daughter's giant whiffle ball like this.

Yukio pitches. Scott swings, crack, and it's a line drive to center. Yukio has to dive out of the way to avoid getting hit. The ball smacks the wall in center field. Oguchi smiles and speaks - obviously, "I told you so."

KAZU

Mr. Oguchi says, nice elbows.

INT. SUGAMA SHIMBUN - DAY

Hiroko is working at her computer when Scott comes across the office and up to her desk. He drops the newspaper on her desk.

SCOTT

I don't mind being criticized. I'm not perfect. But I'm not Jack the Ripper either. I can't send this to my daughter, even if she can't read it.

HIROKO

I believe the article is fair.

SCOTT

You want to explain your idea of fair? Is it anything like your idea of tattooing?

HIROKO

I told that story to show how innocent you were about Japan.

SCOTT  
You mean how stupid.

HIROKO  
I said you were charming.

SCOTT  
When I wasn't being "arrogant and self-important."

HIROKO  
I said you had a lot to be proud of in your career.

SCOTT  
But now I'm washed up.

HIROKO  
And you tried very hard at practice.

SCOTT  
But I was pathetic compared to the Japanese players.

HIROKO  
I said that you had strength and beauty and so much more to give if you'd let yourself.

SCOTT  
You didn't say that.

Flustered, Hiroko looks at the article.

HIROKO  
Oh, maybe that part was cut because of space ...

SCOTT  
How come you didn't come to my game? Some little kid stole your seat.

HIROKO  
(not looking at him)  
I told you, I don't like baseball.

SCOTT  
You wouldn't have written this if you'd seen me play. I hit two home runs.

HIROKO  
I know.

SCOTT  
I made a spectacular catch.

HIROKO  
I know.

SCOTT  
I got in a fight.

HIROKO  
I know.

Scott looks at her. She quickly covers.

HIROKO  
It was in the paper.

SCOTT  
Tomorrow afternoon we're playing  
the Tigers. I'll leave a ticket  
for you at the box office.

HIROKO  
I'm sorry, I have something  
else ...

SCOTT  
It's right on the first baseline.  
A great seat. I know a little kid  
who'd kill for that seat.

A pause. A faint smile passes Hiroko's lips. She is about to respond when Sugama comes up to Hiroko's desk and speaks to her.

HIROKO  
Mr. Sugama would very much like to  
meet you.

Sugama bows, says a few words of greeting. Scott bows a little, then pumps Sugama's hand.

SCOTT  
The famous owner of the  
Warriors. You whipped our butts  
the other night, but we'll get  
back at you.

Sugama speaks, Hiroko translates.

HIROKO

Mr. Sugama says he would be honored to talk baseball with you sometime, but now he needs me in the editorial room.

SCOTT

(to Sugama)

Sure. Good to meet you. Give my best to Marshall. (to Hiroko)  
See you at the game.

Sugama bows again to Scott, then leads Hiroko off across the room. Scott watches.

INT. HIROKO'S HOUSE - KENJI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hiroko is sitting on Kenji's bed. He is showing her some photos.

KENJI

This is the best.

INSERT

A picture of Scott sliding and flattening the second baseman.

ON HIROKO

She looks at it a moment, then collects the pictures and puts them in the developer's envelope.

HIROKO

Okay. Bed. It's late.

He crawls under the covers. She kisses him, then goes to the door.

KENJI

My pictures!

HIROKO

You can have them in the morning.  
Oyasumi nasai.

She turns out the light.

INT. HIROKO'S HOUSE - HIROKO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hiroko is sitting up in bed, doing some work. Her attention wanders. She looks across the room.

CUT TO

The packet of photos on top of her dresser.

ON HIROKO

She can't resist. She puts her work aside, gets out of bed and crosses to the dresser. She opens the envelope and looks through the pictures.

INSERT

Of some of the pictures: Scott talking with Rich, Scott arguing with the umpire, several of the melee at second.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

The scoreboard shows that it's the bottom of the fifth - Swallows 3, Seals 0. One out.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Scott steps up to the plate. He glances into the stands.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

No Hiroko. Kenji is there again. He waves to Scott.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Scott raises his bat. He's edgy, shifty. The Swallows pitcher winds up. Scott speaks to himself.

SCOTT

Elbows.

The pitcher swings and Scott knocks the ball into the stands.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The Ugly Americans are drinking and have been drinking for a while. Scott is pretty high.

SCOTT

My team is going to take the pennant this year. What do you bet?

VERN

The Seals?

Vern laugh. Rich barks and claps his hands together.

MARSHALL

The Seals have never won against the Warriors.

SCOTT  
That's going to change.

MARSHALL  
Your manager's a Warriors fan.  
He's got a season ticket!

Marshall, Vern and Rich howl.

SCOTT'S POV

Hiroko has just come into the bar. She takes a seat at a table.

ON SCOTT

He drains his drink and stands.

SCOTT  
Excuse me, guys. I see somebody  
I know.

He threads his way across the bar to Hiroko and sits opposite her. She starts to protest, but he doesn't let her get a word in.

SCOTT  
You didn't come to my game again.  
I'm beginning to think you really  
don't like baseball.

HIROKO  
Scott ...

SCOTT  
I hit two more home runs.

HIROKO  
I know. I saw the pictures.  
(catches herself) In the paper.  
Scott, I'm not ...

A man comes up to the table.

SCOTT  
Waiter, two mizuwari. How about  
that? My first Japanese word.  
Whiskey and water. Maybe the only  
one I'll ever need.

HIROKO  
Scott, you've met Mr. Sugama.

Scott looks up, sees Sugama and stumbles to his feet.

SCOTT

Sugama! Got you mixed up with the waiter. Nice suit. How're you doing?

He offers his hand to Sugama. Sugama shakes his hand and speaks. He's cordial, if a little chilly.

HIROKO

Mr. Sugama says he wishes he could have you on the Warriors, but he is only allowed two gaijin players. Foreign players.

SCOTT

And you've got two of the best. Marshall and Rich. A homicidal maniac and a drunk. Join us.

Scott grabs another chair and drags it over to the table.

CUT TO

Across the room, the Ugly Americans are watching.

MARSHALL

Christ, it's Sugama!

RICH

If he sees us here, he'll fine the shit out of us.

They duck down and scurry away, disappearing into the crowd.

CUT TO

Sugama speaks, Hiroko translates.

HIROKO

Mr. Sugama says he has work to do, but order anything you like. It's on the house. He owns the club.

SCOTT

Great. And don't worry about Hiroko. I'll get her home safe.

Hiroko stands.

HIROKO

I have work also.

SCOTT

Stay and have a drink. It's on the house.



HIROKO

It was nice to see you again,  
Scott.

SCOTT

I'm not giving up until you see me  
play. I'll keep sending you  
tickets.

HIROKO

(smiles)

Thank you. Good-bye.

She goes off with Sugama.

CUT TO

Scott back at his table with Vern. Scott is wasted.

SCOTT

Vern, if you were a woman, would  
you think I was an asshole or a  
pretty great guy?

VERN

A pretty great guy, of course.

SCOTT

No, be honest.

VERN

An asshole.

SCOTT

No, be honest.

VERN

A pretty great asshole.

Vern laughs and starts to get up.

SCOTT

Say you were a Japanese woman ...

VERN

Scott, I'm calling it a night.

Scott pulls Vern back down into his chair.

SCOTT

Wait, wait. If you were a  
Japanese woman ... a big, black  
Japanese woman ... would you go  
out with me?

VERN

Scott, if Sugama wants her, he gets her.

SCOTT

Why?

VERN

Because he owns a bank, a skyscraper, a mall, a chain of restaurants and a movie studio. And that's just in L.A.

Vern rises again. Scott also stands up, draining his drink as he does.

SCOTT

Well, you can't have everything you want. The Warriors are going to lose that pennant and he's going to lose that woman. He can keep the movie studio.

Scott puts down his glass and grabs a passing waiter.

SCOTT

Drinks for the whole house. On Sugama-san.

Then Scott weaves towards the door after Vern.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Scott at the plate. The pitch comes, he swings, misses and the Umpire calls strike three.

CUT TO

Scott again at the plate. He swings, connects, but the ball goes straight up in the air. The catcher knocks off his mask, gets under the ball and nabs it.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

Kenji is again in Hiroko's seat. He watches, disappointed.

CUT TO

The scoreboard. Now it's the bottom of the seventh: Tigers 4, Seals 0.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - DUGOUT - DAY

Ikeda and Scott are in an argument, Kazu interpreting.

KAZU

He says you are not hitting. We need a run.

SCOTT

I'll get you a run. If they pitch way outside, I'll hit way outside.

KAZU

Mr. Ikeda prefers for you to sit on the bench.

SCOTT

Okay, he doesn't need me? Fine.

Scott turns and goes out of the dugout.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Scott is furiously taking his Japanese bath, dumping water over his head when Kazu rushes in.

KAZU

Scott! Mr. Ikeda has changed his mind. He feels you'll get a hit now. Hurry! Get dressed!

Scott turns and looks at Kazu.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Scott comes out of the dugout with just a towel wrapped around his waist, picks up a bat and goes to the plate. Ikeda's jaw drops. The stadium buzzes with comment.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

Kenji takes pictures fast and furious.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

Vern, at second, laughs.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

The pitch comes. Scott socks a line drive up the middle and runs for first, barely holding onto the towel.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Immediately after the game. Ikeda is lecturing the Seals, who are sitting on the bench, heads hanging. Kazu translates for Scott.

KAZU

You are an embarrassment to me.  
You do not deserve to wear the  
Seals uniform.

ON KENJI

Sneaking in the door. No one sees him yet.

CUT TO

Ikeda continues the harangue. Scott is getting pretty fed up.

KAZU

You don't care whether we win  
or not. You're an insult to  
the Miyori Company, an insult  
to me ...

Scott stands, interrupting.

SCOTT

Look, Ikeda, you're never going  
to ...

KAZU

Scott, please, do not interrupt.

Scott ignores Kazu.

SCOTT

I know we didn't play so hot  
tonight. I had my share of fuck-  
ups. Maybe we insulted you, but  
you insult us by being a fan of  
the other team. Why don't you be  
on our side for a change? Give us  
something to play for and maybe  
you'll see a difference. That's  
all I wanted to say.

Scott sits down. Everyone looks to Kazu to translate. Kazu  
speaks.

KAZU

(subtitled)

Scott says that he is ashamed at  
the way he played and promises to  
do better. He thinks we should  
all practice more diligently ...

Suddenly Kenji steps forward and rattles off a string of  
Japanese - an accurate translation of Scott's speech. He  
speaks so fast and everyone is so shocked that nobody inter-  
rupts him. When he finishes, he stands there a moment, looking

at Scott. Then the Assistant Coach goes for Kenji, but he bolts out the door before he can be caught. Scott turns to Kazu. Kazu avoids his gaze.

CUT TO

Later. The Seals have changed into street clothes and are leaving the locker room. Kazu tries to slip out the door when Scott grabs him.

SCOTT

I thought you were my friend.

KAZU

I am.

SCOTT

No, I don't think so. I don't think I can trust you anymore.

KAZU

Scott, what you said was too strong. I changed it a little ...

SCOTT

No, it wasn't too strong. It was right on the money, but you didn't have the balls to say it, did you? It took a little kid.

KAZU

The little kid does not work for the Miyori company. I need this job.

Yukio and some of the other Seals have gathered to listen.

SCOTT

Okay, it's your country, your ball club. I'm just a visitor. But I'm not going to take any shit from Ikeda and I don't think the rest of you should, either. This is a team and where I come from a team means you all pull together or you don't get anywhere.

Scott walks out of the room.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - DUSK

Kazu comes out of the stadium and walks slowly up the road. He's down, lost in his thoughts. Suddenly, he hears Scott's voice.

SCOTT

Kazu! Catch!

And a beer flies through the air. Kazu catches it. Scott emerges from the shadows. He's already had a few beers himself.

SCOTT

Good reflexes. You should have been a ball player. Look, I was a little rough on you in there. I kind of forgot, it's only a game, right?

KAZU

What you said is not wrong ...

SCOTT

Just the way I said it. Well, that's the Scott Chase story. This is your life.

Scott and Kazu walk up the road. Kazu opens the beer.

SCOTT

Listen, Kazu, I wanted to ask your advice about something. About a woman.

KAZU

Oh, I'm not the right person to ask. I've been married to my wife since I was eighteen.

SCOTT

No kidding. I didn't even know you were married. Kids?

KAZU

No kids.

SCOTT

So there's this woman ...

KAZU

Not Miss Kimura? From Sugama Shimbun?

SCOTT

That's her. I wanted some advice ...

KAZU

Find another woman. That's my advice.

SCOTT  
Should I ask her out, send her  
flowers, what?

KAZU  
Stay away from her. She's Mr.  
Sugama's property.

SCOTT  
Look, I don't care how much money  
Sugama has, he can't own people.

They approach a subway station.

KAZU  
That will be news to him. Good-  
bye, Scott. I will see you  
tomorrow.

Kazu hurries down into the subway. Scott is left hanging. He  
sees a cab coming up the street and whistles for it.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DUSK

Kazu has stopped, halfway down into the station. He sees Scott  
wave down the taxi, then get into it. Kazu changes his mind  
and quickly goes up the stairs again.

INT. TAXI - DUSK

Scott is giving his address to the taxi driver when Kazu taps  
on the window. Scott rolls the window down.

KAZU  
Take her to see the cherry  
blossoms.

SCOTT  
You're kidding. Isn't that a  
little corny?

KAZU  
Very corny. And sentimental and  
silly. Try it.

Kazu disappears again down into the subway station.

EXT. TOKYO PARK - DAY

It's late in the season. The cherry blossoms are falling.  
Scott and Hiroko walk along a path.

HIROKO  
I hate cherry blossoms.

SCOTT

Baseball and cherry blossoms. I'm  
batting a thousand.

HIROKO

I didn't always hate them. A long  
time ago a man took me to see the  
cherry blossoms. I was young. I  
fell in love with him, of course.  
I thought we would get married and  
have a family and live happily  
ever after. But his father wanted  
his son to marry someone from a  
better family. He was a good son  
and did what he was told. I  
shamed my parents.

SCOTT

The guy sold out. It wasn't your  
fault.

HIROKO

But I had a child. It was a long  
time ago and my parents have  
forgiven me. They love my son as  
much as I do. But he will never  
have a good future because he  
doesn't have his father's name.  
That's the way it is here. This  
is not America. It's the Land of  
Opportunity only for those with  
the right background.

SCOTT

Maybe it'll change.

HIROKO

Japan doesn't change.

SCOTT

Maybe your son will change it.  
I'd like to meet him sometime.

She looks at Scott. She starts to speak, to tell him about  
Kenji, then stops herself. She smiles.

INT. HIROKO'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Scott is under the microscope. Hiroko's Mother and Father are  
silently watching him. Hiroko is nervously fidgeting.



SCOTT

So, are you both big baseball fans? Everyone seems to like baseball over here.

HIROKO

Father likes baseball. Mother likes sumo.

The sound of a door slamming and feet running down the hall. Then Kenji charges into the room. He starts to ask if dinner is ready, then he sees Scott. His mouth falls open in surprise. Scott is just as surprised.

KENJI

What are you doing here?

SCOTT

What are you doing here?

KENJI

How do you know my mother?

SCOTT

How do you know your mother?

HIROKO

Scott, this is my son, Kenji.

KENJI

Kenny.

HIROKO

This is Scott.

SCOTT

Nice to meet you.

Scott holds out his hand. Kenji takes it. Then Scott whips Kenji's arm around his back and gets him in a hold. Kenji struggles, but he's caught. Hiroko watches, smiling.

CUT TO

The table is set for dinner. Hiroko's Father is reading the newspaper. Scott has a beer. Hiroko sets down a platter of food. Scott starts to rise.

SCOTT

Can I help?

Hiroko's Father motions him to sit down. He sits. Hiroko rushes out. Hiroko's Mother serves Scott.

HIROKO'S MOTHER

(subtitled)

Are you enjoying your stay in  
Japan?

Scott looks at Kenji for translation.

KENJI

She says, when are you and my Mom  
going to get married?

Scott looks at Hiroko's Mother in surprise. She smiles.

SCOTT

Well, we really haven't talked ...  
It's a little soon for that kind  
of thing.

Kenji translates for Hiroko's Mother.

KENJI

(subtitled)

He likes it a lot. The people are  
really nice and the food is great.

Hiroko's Mother speaks again.

HIROKO'S MOTHER

(subtitled)

I have never been to your country.  
Japan is very different, isn't it?

Scott looks at Kenji for translation.

KENJI

She says, better marry her before  
Mr. Sugama does. We hate him.  
He's a slime bucket.

Hiroko's Mother smiles sweetly at Scott. He looks at Kenji  
suspiciously. Kenji tries to keep a straight face, but can't.  
He bursts into laughter.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A list is posted on the bulletin board. Scott reads it, then  
rips it down and takes it to Kazu.

SCOTT

What is this? I'm not on the  
starting lineup.

KAZU

You have not been hitting. Mr. Ikeda wants you to sit on the bench until you start hitting again.

SCOTT

How can I start hitting again if I'm sitting on the bench? He's got to put me in the game if he wants me to hit.

KAZU

You will go in the game. When you start to hit.

SCOTT

But I can't ...

He stops, frustrated.

SCOTT

Come on.

Scott turns and leaves the room. Kazu follows.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - IKEDA'S OFFICE - DAY

Scott barges into Ikeda's office, waving the list. Kazu is right behind.

SCOTT

I want to know why I'm not on the starting line-up. And no bullshit about me not hitting.

Ikeda speaks, Kazu translates.

KAZU

You promised us fifty-four home runs. You've only hit nineteen.

SCOTT

I can't hit a homer from the bench.

KAZU

He says you are a disappointment, a disgrace to the Seals uniform.

SCOTT

I can't be a disgrace to the Seals uniform because the Seals are a joke. You've got good players and  
(MORE)

SCOTT  
(cont'd)

you treat them like children. You could have a winning ball club, but you're just pissing it away. Tell him that.

Kazu hesitates.

SCOTT  
Tell him! Word for word. And no prettying it up.

Kazu speaks. Ikeda stares at Kazu for a long moment. He says a few words to Kazu, then starts to do some paperwork. Kazu bows to Ikeda.

SCOTT  
What did he say?

KAZU  
Mr. Ikeda says you are back in the starting line-up, but you better get a hit.

SCOTT  
Don't worry. All I'm saying is, let's work together.

Ikeda doesn't look up from his desk.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Scott at bat. The pitch comes. He doesn't swing. The Umpire calls strike three.

SCOTT  
Strike! You're nuts!

The Umpire yells back. Scott shouts towards the dugout.

SCOTT  
Kazu!

Kazu doesn't come.

SCOTT  
(to Umpire)  
Show me the strike zone. First it was here, then it was over here ... Kazu! Where's Kazu?

Scott looks at the dugout.

SCOTT'S POV

The dugout. Ikeda is watching, stone-faced. Kazu is nowhere to be seen.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

After the game. Scott is staring at Yukio in shock.

SCOTT

Fired? Why? He was just translating what I said.

YUKIO

He should have made it better.

SCOTT

I told him not to. I said, word for word. If Ikeda wants to fire someone, he should fire me.

YUKIO

You are too expensive to fire. Kazu is very cheap.

SCOTT

Let's talk to Ikeda. You translate ...

YUKIO

No, Scott. I have a wife and a baby.

SCOTT

Somebody's got to stand up to Ikeda.

YUKIO

Ask somebody else, please.

SCOTT

There isn't anybody else.

Yukio shakes his head and turns away. Furious, Scott kicks his locker.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

Scott comes into the kitchen. He looks like he didn't get any sleep. He opens the refrigerator, takes out some juice. He sees Kazu's card attached to the refrigerator door with a magnet. He takes it off. He picks up the phone to call, then remembers his trouble with the phone before. He puts down the receiver.

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Outside, bright green countryside. The sun shines. The grey, crowded city is left behind. Scott watches fields go by, farms, a temple.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Scott shows Kazu's card to an elderly woman with a baby strapped to her back. She points up the street.

EXT. VILLAGE - MORNING

People are visiting with their neighbors and some kids are playing as Scott walks up the street of this quiet village. People stop what they're doing to watch him.

EXT. KAZU'S HOUSE - MORNING

A traditional house: small, simple and spare. Scott is standing on the front porch when KAZU'S WIFE opens the door. She is plump, matronly and wears a house kimono. She's startled to see Scott.

KAZU'S WIFE

Ah, Chasu-san!

SCOTT

Hi, you must be Kazu's Wife.  
Sorry to come without calling,  
but ...

KAZU'S WIFE

O-hairi kudasai!

She moves aside to let Scott enter. He starts to step inside. She gasps and drops to her knees. She starts to remove Scott's shoes.

SCOTT

Sorry. I've got them.

But Kazu's Wife is already pulling off one of his shoes. He loses his balance and crashes against the door. Kazu's Wife screams.

SCOTT

Sorry. My fault. I'm okay.

INT. KAZU'S HOUSE - DAY

Tatami mats on the floor, rooms divided by sliding screens. Kazu's Wife opens a screen. Kazu is inside, wearing a kimono, a sake bottle on the table in front of him.

KAZU'S WIFE  
Gomen kudasai. Sukoto Chasu.

Kazu leaps to his feet in surprise.

KAZU  
Scott! Please come in! I'm so  
sorry for my home. It's so small.

SCOTT  
Don't get up.

KAZU  
Sit! Be comfortable. Would you  
like a beer?

SCOTT  
I don't want anything ...

Kazu speaks to his Wife and she dashes out of the room.

KAZU  
I apologize for my clothes. Let  
me change ...

Kazu starts for the room. Scott grabs him.

SCOTT  
Kazu, it's me who has to  
apologize.

Kazu's Wife rushes in carrying a tray with two bottles of beer  
on it. Kazu gives one to Scott.

KAZU  
Dozo. Are you comfortable? Would  
you like a chair?

Kazu takes the tray from his Wife, speaks to her again and  
again she rushes out. Scott sets down the beer.

SCOTT  
Kazu, I don't need a chair. I  
want to apologize for ...

Kazu's Wife appears again, this time lugging a chair. Kazu  
takes it and sets it down for Scott.

KAZU  
Sit. Relax. Are you hungry?

Kazu picks up the beer and gives it to Scott.

SCOTT

No! Would you just let me ...?  
I don't want a beer. It's nine  
o'clock in the morning!

KAZU

I want to show you something.

Kazu speaks to his Wife again and she rushes out.

SCOTT

Kazu, look, I'm a jerk. At least  
I admit it. I shouldn't have put  
you in the middle that way. It  
wasn't fair.

Kazu's Wife rushes in, carrying an ancient samurai sword in an  
elaborate carved scabbard. She looks very worried. Kazu takes  
the sword from her, speaks to her and she disappears, closing  
the door.

KAZU

This is what I want you to see.

SCOTT

It's great. Kazu, are you  
listening to me?

Kazu draws the sword from the scabbard.

KAZU

This is the sword I will kill  
myself with.

Scott stares at him.

SCOTT

What?

KAZU

Seppuku. Ritual suicide. I will  
disembowel myself.

SCOTT

Kazu, are you drunk?

KAZU

Of course I'm drunk! It might  
hurt!

SCOTT

Give me that.

Scott reaches for the sword. Kazu doesn't give it to him.  
Kazu sways unsteadily; he's semi-hysterical.



KAZU

Scott, it is tradition - after I have slit open my stomach and my entrails have come out on the floor, will you take the sword and cut off my head?

SCOTT

No problem. And I'll make sure to keep my elbows low.

KAZU

I am serious, Scott. What else can I do? I've been fired. My life is over. I have to do it.

SCOTT

No, you don't have to do it. First of all, you'd give Ikeda too much satisfaction and we can't have that. Second, you'd make a disgusting mess. The tatami mats would never get clean. Give me that. Mrs. Imada!

Scott wrestles the sword away from Kazu. Kazu goes for the sake bottle. Kazu's Wife appears.

SCOTT

Ocha, kudasai. Lots of it. Nice and hot. We've got to sober you up.

Kazu's Wife, seeing the sword out of Kazu's hands is greatly relieved. Scott grabs the sake bottle away from Kazu and gives it to Kazu's Wife. She disappears.

SCOTT

Listen, Kazu, you're going to get your job back.

KAZU

How? It's impossible.

SCOTT

It's not impossible. Just calm down. This is a hell of a bat.

He shadow swings with the sword. Kazu watches.

SCOTT

I'm going to get your job back and I'm going to get my batting

(MORE)

SCOTT  
(cont'd)

average up again. I don't understand why I'm not hitting. I'm in better shape than I've ever been. I'm not over the hill. I can feel him in here, that baseball player I used to be. He's in there. He's just not hitting the ball.

The door opens and Kazu's Wife comes in carrying a teapot and cups. She sets them down and disappears again. Kazu pours.

KAZU  
Scott, do you want to hit the ball?

SCOTT  
Are you kidding? Of course.

KAZU  
Then you must learn to do it.

SCOTT  
I know how to do it.

KAZU  
Then why don't you do it?

SCOTT  
If I knew that ... Are you saying I don't know how to hit?

KAZU  
No, I'm not saying it.

SCOTT  
Okay.

KAZU  
I'm hoping you will say it.

SCOTT  
If I don't know how to hit I might as well pack up and go home.

KAZU  
That's one solution.

SCOTT  
What else can I do?

KAZU  
Stay and learn.

SCOTT

Who's going to teach me? Oguchi?

KAZU

No, no. Your teacher must be the best hitter in Japan.

SCOTT

I hate to sound like an asshole, but that's me.

KAZU

Exactly!

SCOTT

I'm supposed to teach myself to hit?

KAZU

See? You're learning already.

Scott stares at him. Kazu raises his teacup and drinks.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Kazu and Scott are walking in the park. Kazu carries a bat, Scott a mitt and a ball.

KAZU

They say if you look hard enough and concentrate, you can see the seams on the ball.

SCOTT

On a ninety mile an hour pitch?

KAZU

It would be a beautiful sight.

SCOTT

Kazu, you love baseball so much. Didn't you ever want to play?

KAZU

I played for Miyori Seals for many years. I played third base.

SCOTT

You never told me that. Why'd you quit?

KAZU

I was injured. We were playing the Warriors. It was my best

(MORE)

KAZU  
(cont'd)

game. I had three home runs already. When I came to bat, the owner of the Warriors ...

SCOTT

Sugama?

KAZU

He wanted to put me out of the game. The pitcher threw a fastball right at my head. I was in the hospital for three months.

SCOTT

Jesus. I hope they busted that pitcher.

KAZU

Oh, no. He still plays. He's your friend. Mr. Preston.

SCOTT

Marshall?

KAZU

After that my vision was no longer good. I spoke English, so Mr. Ikeda made me the interpreter. It was very kind of him. He didn't have to give me a job.

SCOTT

Well, you're going to get it back. I'll figure out a way.

They come to a baseball diamond. Two boys are playing. The FIRST BOY pitches, the SECOND BOY swings and misses. Kazu and Scott watch.

KAZU

Perhaps they will someday play for the Miyori Seals.

SCOTT

First, he's got to learn to wait for the ball. He's swinging too early.

Kazu claps his hands to get the Boys' attention. He talks to them in Japanese and they look at Scott, awestruck. The Second Boy shyly speaks.

KAZU

He asks if you could please show  
him how to wait for the ball.

Scott goes to the plate. Kazu goes to the pitcher's mound.

SCOTT

It's simple. Just don't swing  
till the ball gets to you. You  
anticipate, you get excited and  
you swing too early. Of course  
you miss. Watch me. Okay, Kazu,  
throw me one.

Kazu stands at the mound, ball in hand. He doesn't throw.

SCOTT

Any time. I'm ready.

Kazu still doesn't pitch.

SCOTT

Go ahead.

Kazu doesn't move.

SCOTT

I can't show them how to wait for  
the ball if you don't pitch it.

Kazu does nothing. Irritated, Scott lets his bat down and at  
that very moment Kazu fires the ball across the plate. Scott  
raises his bat, but he's too late.

SCOTT

What are you doing? I wasn't  
ready!

KAZU

You said, "any time". You didn't  
wait for the ball.

Scott stares at him. The First Boy is acting as catcher and he  
tosses the ball back to Kazu. Scott raises his bat. As  
always, he's restless and itchy at the plate.

SCOTT

Okay, I'm ready. Any time.

Kazu doesn't pitch.

SCOTT

I can wait just as long as you  
can.

Kazu still doesn't pitch. Scott speaks to the Boys.

SCOTT

He thinks he can fake me out ...

At that instant, Kazu fires the ball. Scott is off-guard. He swings and misses.

SCOTT

Goddamnit! I wasn't ready!

The game has attracted the attention of other KIDS in the park and a small crowd gathers. Scott raises his bat and waits for Kazu to pitch. He tries to concentrate. He fidgets less. The crowd of Kids are whispering among themselves.

SCOTT

Hey, we're trying to work here!

At that moment, Kazu rockets the ball to Scott. He swings and misses. He throws down his bat in frustration.

SCOTT

How am I supposed to concentrate?

KAZU

You play for fifty thousand people every day. Can't you play for ten?

Scott glares at Kazu. He raises the bat again. Now he doesn't shift at all or grin. He stands still, determined to hit the pitch. Kazu pitches. Instead of firing the ball suddenly as he did before, Kazu goes into a traditional pitcher's windup and pitches.

SCOTT'S POV

The ball coming towards him. It slows way, way down. It turns so slowly that the seams are visible on the ball. Scott has all the time in the world to hit the pitch.

ON SCOTT

Scott swings. Crack. The ball goes flying.

CUT TO

Scott catching a fly ball. Now he's playing a game with Kazu, the two Boys and the Kids. Scott is having fun playing ball for the first time in a long time and it shows. He's playing like dynamite and everyone is having a ball.

INT. SUGAMA SHIMBUN - DAY

Hiroko is at her desk working on her computer. Scott is leaning over her shoulder. Hiroko reads what she has written.

HIROKO

An interpreter is so necessary for a foreign player that Scott Chase of the Miyori Seals was sad and demoralized when his interpreter, Kazu Imada, left the team.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - DUGOUT - DAY

Now Ikeda is reading this in the paper. Scott is sitting at the other end of the dugout, watching.

HIROKO

(over)

Fortunately, Mr Ikeda, the manager of the Seals ...

SCOTT

(over)

The great manager of the Seals ...

Ikeda reads this and beams.

HIROKO

(over)

... the great manager of the Seals showed his superior wisdom by persuading Mr. Imada to return to the Seals.

SCOTT

(over)

And gave him a raise.

Ikeda reads this and blanches.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - DAY

Another argument at home plate. Scott is shouting about the Umpire's call and Kazu is right in there, translating.

SCOTT

You're nuts! That ball was so far out it was in Kyoto! You don't need glasses, you need a seeing eye dog!

KAZU  
(subtitled)

Mr. Chase respects your experience and knowledge, but he asks if you perhaps made a slip of the tongue and said strike instead of ball.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Scott is wound up, talking non-stop to Hiroko, who is sitting on the couch. The endless lights of Tokyo are visible through the window.

SCOTT  
When I was a kid, I couldn't wait to get up to the plate. I lived for it. I loved the feel of the bat. The weight of it. I stood there and I waited for that pitch and I swung. There was nothing else in the world. Raise the bat, wait for the pitch, swing - that's all there was to it. But when I got in the majors and had a little success, it got complicated. I started thinking about a million other things, worrying how I'm going to do, worrying how I look. Instead of just being a kid again, stepping up to the plate and seeing what happens. It took Kazu to show me. He gave me my career back and we got him back his job.

He sits down next to her, takes her hand kisses it.

HIROKO  
Scott, don't.

SCOTT  
Why not?

HIROKO  
Scott, Mr. Sugama asked me to marry him.

SCOTT  
You said no, I hope.

HIROKO  
I said I had to think.



SCOTT

Think "no". He's slime, like  
Kenny said. He practically killed  
Kazu. Kazu never played again.

HIROKO

He's nice to me.

SCOTT

As long as you do exactly what he  
says. But cross him and you're in  
deep shit.

He kisses her neck.

HIROKO

Please don't do that. You see, if  
I marry Mr. Sugama he will adopt  
Kenny. (corrects herself) Kenji.  
Kenji will finally have a father  
and a family name.

SCOTT

Sugama might want to adopt Kenny,  
but Kenny's never going to adopt  
him back.

HIROKO

He will if I say so.

SCOTT

Are we talking about the same kid?

HIROKO

Mr. Sugama is not all bad.

Scott runs his hand up her arm.

HIROKO

Please stop that. He's very  
generous. He gives money to many  
charities. Orphans and crippled  
people.

Scott runs a hand up her leg.

SCOTT

I bet he's nice to his mother,  
too.

HIROKO

Very nice. He built a beautiful  
home for his parents. He supports  
them. He doesn't drink. Or  
smoke. Or gamble.

Scott continues kissing and caressing Hiroko. She finds it more and more difficult to control herself.

HIROKO

And he has wonderful manners. He has never once tried to take advantage of me. He has never even kissed me. He kisses my hand. I appreciate that. It shows he has respect for me and regard for my feelings.

Hiroko suddenly grabs Scott and kisses him passionately.

HIROKO

And he gives me little presents. He gave me this necklace.

Scott unhooks the necklace and takes it off her.

HIROKO

And these shoes. They're lovely shoes.

Scott reaches down, slips them off her feet.

HIROKO

And ... what else? Oh, he gave me this dress.

Scott slowly unzip the dress.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Scott up at bat. The pitch comes and he slugs it. It goes right into the center field stands.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Of Scott slugging ball after ball. Perhaps this is intercut with a continuation of Scott and Hiroko making love. Then we see other Seals players making great plays on the field. Scott has inspired them to work as a team and they're really cooking.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Scott is making up a package for Dinah. Into a big envelope he puts newspaper clippings about himself, a couple of magazine ads he has posed for, a T-shirt with his picture on it and some Scott Chase buttons. In the background, on T.V., a sports-caster is discussing the current standing. A graphic shows that the Seals are in third place behind the Warriors and the Swallows.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Yukio winds up, pitches and strikes out a batter. The whole team, including Scott, start jumping up and down and pounding on each other. We haven't seen this kind of camaraderie from the Seals before. It's a new team.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Yukio is pouring champagne. The Seals are giddy, chummy. Yukio raises his glass.

YUKIO

First place! The first time ever  
for the Seals!

The players cheer, then immediately quiet down when Ikeda comes into the room. He speaks, Kazu translates for Scott.

KAZU

He says this is no time to  
celebrate. It's time to work  
harder than before. Go home.  
Practice starts at seven tomorrow  
morning instead of eight.

Ikeda turns to leave the locker room.

SCOTT

Ikeda-san ...

Ikeda turns. Scott takes out a piece of paper from his pocket and reads in halting Japanese.

SCOTT

(subtitled)

I never wanted to play for Miyori  
Seals. It was a big letdown after  
playing in the major leagues. But  
now this is my team and I want us  
to win. I'm proud of the Seals  
and I think you should be proud of  
them, too. It's a good ball club.

He looks up at Ikeda. Scott continues in English.

SCOTT

A kid helped me write that.

Ikeda turns and walks out of the room. Scott and Kazu look at each other, then Scott tacks the speech up on the bulletin board goes to the door.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Scott is staring at Hiroko in shock.

SCOTT  
You've got to be kidding.

HIROKO  
I accepted Mr. Sugama's proposal  
of marriage.

SCOTT  
Why?

HIROKO  
I have to think of Kenji's future.

SCOTT  
Look, Kenny will get along just  
fine without Sugama's name or his  
money.

HIROKO  
You don't know Japan.

SCOTT  
But I know that kid. Sugama's  
never going to treat him like a  
son. He's just using Kenny for  
bait. Hiroko, don't fall for it.  
That night ...

HIROKO  
That night was a mistake.

SCOTT  
Well, I hope I make a lot of  
mistakes like that.

HIROKO  
I don't know why I allowed it to  
happen.

SCOTT  
You love me, that's why.

HIROKO  
There are other things more  
important than love.

SCOTT  
What? Even baseball isn't that  
important.

HIROKO

I can't depend on you, Scott.  
When you're through playing,  
you'll go back home. You won't  
even think about Japan again.

SCOTT

That's not true. This has been  
the most important year of my  
life.

HIROKO

But you will go back home. You  
will get a job in the States just  
like you always wanted and you'll  
be near your daughter and we'll be  
far away. Mr. Sugama offers me a  
future. What do you offer me?

SCOTT

I love you. That's the best offer  
I've got.

HIROKO

It's not enough. I'm sorry.

SCOTT

I can't believe you're doing this.  
You know you're making a mistake.  
Don't do it.

HIROKO

Good-bye, Scott.

She hurries to the door.

SCOTT

Hiroko ... do you still hate  
baseball?

She turns and looks at him, tears in her eyes.

HIROKO

More than ever.

She goes out the door.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

The stadium is packed. Excitement in the air.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Scott at the plate. He waits for the pitch, it comes and he  
socks it right into the stands. The crowd jumps to their feet

and the electronic scoreboard goes crazy, showing that this was his 40th homer. Scott jogs around the bases.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji is jumping up and down and shouting Scott's name.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Now the scoreboard shows that it's the eighth inning. The Seals are shutting out the Swallows.

CUT TO

Yukio is on the mound. He's exhausted. He can barely lift his arm. He pitches and the Swallows Batter slugs a line drive. The guy on third bolts for home. Scott, in right field, scoops up the ball, hurls it to the first baseman, beating the Swallows Batter by a fraction of a second. The Batter is out, but the Swallows have scored.

CUT TO

The Scoreboard as the numbers change to show the Swallows' run.

CUT TO

Ikeda calling time. He goes to the pitcher's mound and starts chewing Yukio out. Yukio bows his head, humbly.

ON SCOTT

Watching this. It's all he can do to keep himself from going to the mound and defending Yukio.

CUT TO

Ikeda is still ragging on Yukio. He's really steamed. Yukio bows at the waist in apology and holds the bow.

ON SCOTT

That's it. Scott starts jogging towards the mound.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - DUGOUT - NIGHT

Kazu sees Scott, quickly jumps out of the dugout and runs towards the mound.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Yukio is still bowed, Ikeda still lecturing him when Scott arrives at the mound.

SCOTT

Ikeda, the guy's beat. You worked him all day. We're way ahead. Give him a break.

Now Ikeda starts shouting at Scott, telling him to return to right field. Kazu arrives at the mound.

KAZU

Mr. Ikeda says, return to your position.

SCOTT

He's got three relief pitchers.

KAZU

He says Yukio has lost his fighting spirit.

SCOTT

He's not a machine. Yukio, get up.

KAZU

Scott, please don't interfere.

SCOTT

I'm not going to let him humiliate himself in front of the whole stadium. Get up.

Scott takes hold of Yukio's arm and tries to pull him up from the bow. Ikeda shoves Scott away and immediately Scott starts to go for Ikeda.

KAZU

No, Scott!

Kazu gets between them. Suddenly it's a brawl. Scott shoves Kazu out of the way, grabs hold of Ikeda by the front of the uniform and throws him down on the ground. The crowd gasps. Scott starts striding across the field to the dugout.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji can't believe his eyes. He grabs his stuff and runs to the exit.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Scott has changed into his street clothes. His uniform hangs in the locker. He looks at the uniform for a moment, then closes the door. He turns to Kenji, who has been watching.

SCOTT

Well, I'm outta here.

Kenji is on the verge of tears. Scott puts his Seals cap on the boy's head, yanks it down over his eyes, then pulls Kenji to him and hugs him.

INT. NARITA AIRPORT - DAY

Scott puts his luggage on the conveyer belt and walks through the metal detector. Kazu comes running up.

KAZU

Scott! I was afraid I would miss you.

Scott comes back through the detector.

SCOTT

Kazu, thanks for everything.  
Sorry the way it ended.

He holds out his hand, they shake. Kazu shrugs.

KAZU

It's only a game.

Kazu's Wife appears, out of breath. She carries a long, narrow box.

KAZU'S WIFE

Gomen kudasai.

KAZU

I have something for you.

Kazu takes the samurai sword from the box and holds it out to Scott.

SCOTT

Kazu, I can't accept this.

KAZU

It's my gift.

SCOTT

I really appreciate it. It's beautiful. But you know I can't take it.

KAZU

I insist.



SCOTT

Kazu, I can't take it! You think they're going to let me through the metal detector with this?

He draws the sword out of the scabbard. Panic among the security personnel. Scott looks at the sword. He'd love to have it, but he slides it into the scabbard and gives it back to Kazu.

SCOTT

You've been my friend. I'll never forget that.

Scott goes through the detector, picks up his luggage, walks to the escalator. Kazu watches until he disappears.

INT. PHOENIX TAXI - DAY

The sunshine is blindingly bright. Scott is in the back seat, surrounded by luggage. Dust blows in the window. The driver has the radio tuned to a country station. A row of fast food restaurants goes by: a Bar-B-Q place, a Mexican place, a steak place.

EXT. RUDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Scott is standing on the porch of Rudy's house, anxiously looking up the street. Melanie comes through the front door. There is none of the agitated, scattered Melanie we saw before. She's calm, organized.

MELANIE

She's on her way.

SCOTT

What did you tell her?

MELANIE

Just that it was time to come home. I didn't say you were back.

Melanie looks at a note pad.

MELANIE

I sent a cleaning service over to your house. And a gardener. They're both reasonable.

She tears off a sheet of paper and hands it to him.

SCOTT

You did all that just now?

MELANIE

It took two seconds. Oh, and I made an appointment at the service station for a tune up for your car. I told the post office you're back and started the paper. You took daily and Sunday, didn't you?

Scott looks at her in amazement.

SCOTT

You know, I was going to ask if you're happy being Mrs. Corelli. But I don't have to. I just have to look at you.

Melanie blushes, then looks up the street.

MELANIE

Here she comes.

CUT TO

Dinah, sailing around the corner on her bicycle. No need for training wheels anymore.

ON SCOTT

He steps down from the porch and hurries out on the lawn. Melanie watches for a moment, then goes back in the house.

ON DINAH

She doesn't see Scott until she's turning into the driveway. When she sees him, she screams.

DINAH

Daddy!

She drops her bike on the lawn and runs to him. He grabs her and lifts her up.

SCOTT

I've missed you like crazy. Like crazy.

They hold each other tightly.

INT. PHOENIX STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

It's empty. Scott stands before his old locker. The name "Bukowski" is written on a piece of tape. Scott picks at the tape. The edge comes up. He peels it off. Underneath, his own name. Lucky comes into the locker room.

LUCKY

I'm going to cry and I haven't  
cried since my puppy got squished  
when I was five.

SCOTT

Hi, Lucky.

Lucky gives Scott a bear hug. Then he steps back and examines  
Scott, feeling his arms, his legs, punching his stomach a  
little.

LUCKY

Look at you! What did those Japs  
do to you? You look like a  
zillion bucks!

SCOTT

Lucky, I want to apologize for  
slugging you like that.

LUCKY

Are you kidding? I should  
apologize to you! I should be  
down on my knees licking the toe  
jam from your feet! Except my jaw  
action isn't so great since you  
hit me. You gotta see something.  
You'll love this!

CLOSE SHOT

Of a T.V. The opening credits of "Wide World of Sports" is  
playing.

ANNOUNCER

"Spanning the globe to bring you  
the constant variety of sport.  
The thrill of victory ..."

A gymnast grimaces as she presses her chin into the bar and  
arches her legs over her head.

INT. PHOENIX STADIUM - LUCKY'S OFFICE - DAY

Scott and Lucky are watching this in Lucky's office.

LUCKY

Now watch.

ANNOUNCER

"And the agony of defeat."

The skier totals on the ski jump.

LUCKY

Here it is!

ANNOUNCER

"The human drama of athletic competition ..."

Then we see Scott smash Lucky in the face.

LUCKY

Isn't that great?

Lucky stops the tape and rewinds it.

LUCKY

You want to see it in slow motion?

SCOTT

That's okay.

LUCKY

God, I'm proud of you. I knew you'd get it back. We need you on this team. Two of my best sluggers are out with injuries. If you come back, we can get into the Series. I'm on my knees, Scotty. I'm begging you.

EXT. PHOENIX STADIUM - DAY

The Bandits are shaking Scott's hand, welcoming him back.

SKIP

Great to have you back, man.

SCOTT

Thanks, Skip.

Skip turns away and speaks to another player, deliberately loud enough for Scott to hear.

SKIP

Just what we need, a slant-eye on the team.

Lucky tosses Scott a bat.

LUCKY

Scott, show us your stuff!

SCOTT

I've got to warm up first.

LUCKY

Great! Let's all warm up with  
Scott!

Scott starts jogging around the field. Skip shrugs and falls in behind him and the other players follow.

CUT TO

Later. The twentieth lap. Scott is sweaty, but still going strong. The Bandits are winded and staggering.

CUT TO

Scott doing rigorous leg kicks. The Bandits are straining to keep up.

CUT TO

Rapid sit-ups. Scott does them easily. The Bandits do one or two to Scott's five.

ON LUCKY

Looking at his watch. He calls out to Scott.

LUCKY

Great! Now let's bat some balls  
around!

CUT TO

Scott leading the team up the bleachers, taking them two at a time. He seems refreshed by the work-out. The Bandits are tripping and falling into the stands.

CUT TO

A couple of hours later. The Bandits are collapsed on the grass, completely wiped out. Scott steps up to the plate and raises his bat. Skip, sitting on the grass, speaks to some other players, again loud enough for Scott to hear.

SKIP

Big fucking deal. Jap parks are  
so small my grandmother could hit  
fifty home runs.

Scott plays no attention. He stands absolutely still at the plate. The pitcher winds up and throws.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Of Scott hitting balls, one after the other; each one is out of the park.

CUT TO

The Bandits, including Skip, watching this performance, astonished.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Ikeda is lecturing the Seals in his usual dictatorial fashion.

IKEDA

(subtitled)

You've lost three games in a row.  
You don't care about winning the pennant. I'm ashamed to be your manager. I would resign right now if the Miyori company would let me.

Yukio looks past Ikeda.

YUKIO'S POV

Scott's speech is still tacked to the bulletin board.

CUT TO

Yukio suddenly stands up, interrupting Ikeda.

YUKIO

Ikeda-san!

IKEDA

(subtitled)

I'm not finished!

YUKIO

(subtitled)

We want to win as much as you do, but we need Scott. We'll do anything you say, if you bring him back.

The players shout their agreement.

IKEDA

(subtitled)

Are you crazy? Nothing will make me bring that maniac back! He's like all American products - good looking, but undependable. Now, get out on the field for practice!

Yukio doesn't move. His teammates shift uneasily, but no one gets up.

IKEDA

(subtitled)

Did you hear me? Now!

Still no one moves. Ikeda is stunned. He doesn't know what to do.

INT. PHOENIX AIRPORT - DAY

Scott stands at the bottom of an escalator. A low ceiling prevents him from seeing the top. Passengers are revealed feet to head. First, some people with boxes of pineapples and lei around their necks. Then, a stewardess or two. Then this: a pair of cowboy boots, stubby legs in jeans, a turquoise belt buckle, a Western shirt with string tie. It's Kazu, dressed for his trip to America. He even wears a Stetson hat. He sees Scott, breaks into a wide smile and waves.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - DAY

Scott drives along a wide street lined with car dealerships, fast food restaurants and discount stores. Kazu looks out the window with interest.

KAZU

Nissan ... Toyota ... Kentucky  
Fried Chicken. Just like Japan!

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A long narrow box lies on the table with various airline tags on it. Scott draws out the samurai sword. He looks at Kazu and smiles.

SCOTT

Thanks. This is great.

KAZU

The team made Mr. Ikeda take you  
back. They almost went on strike.

SCOTT

They stood up to Ikeda?

KAZU

(nods)

He sent me to negotiate a new  
contract for the rest of the  
season. If you come back, we can  
beat the Warriors for the pennant.

SCOTT

I thought Ikeda liked the  
Warriors.

KAZU

Yes, but now that we're tied, he wants to whip their ass. Scott, please come back.

Scott doesn't answer.

KAZU

That boy still comes to the stadium every game. Kenny.

SCOTT

He's a good kid.

KAZU

His mother hasn't married Mr. Sugama.

A moment. Scott puts down the sword.

SCOTT

I want to show you something.

EXT. SCOTT'S BACKYARD - DAY

A wooden playhouse is under construction. It's going to be beautiful. Care has gone into every inch. Scott tightens the screws on the door hinges.

SCOTT

I take Dinah to school every morning. Pick her up in the afternoon. Help her with her homework. She stays with me every weekend. She's gotten so big.

He closes the door. He takes a few steps back, then hurls himself at the door, trying to break it down. It doesn't break. Kazu watches this, baffled.

SCOTT

I'll never forget that time I saw the seams on the ball. That was amazing. I could never have done that here.

Scott runs his hand along the window ledge.

SCOTT

How are you with sandpaper?

He hands Kazu some sandpaper and Kazu starts to sand the window ledge.



SCOTT

I thought I'd changed. Then when I threw Ikeda down, I realized you don't give up your asshole status overnight. It takes time. Go with the grain.

Scott helps Kazu. Then he takes out some letters from a paper sack and puts them up on the door to see how they look. They spell out Dinah's name.

SCOTT

I've spent my whole life trying to be the best ball player in the world. But what'll I be when I'm not a ball player anymore? If I go back, maybe I have a chance of finding out what else I am. I sure as hell ain't going to find it out playing for Lucky.

He puts some glue on the "D" and attaches it to the door.

SCOTT

But there's Dinah. She's an inch taller. That's a whole inch of her life I didn't get to see.

He takes his hand away. The "D" sticks. He turns to Kazu.

SCOTT

What do you think I should do?

Kazu continues to sand.

KAZU

Am I doing better now?

INT. ROY'S OFFICE - DAY

The atmosphere is tense. Lucky is punching some figures into a little calculator. He digs a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket and consults it. Then does some more figuring. Kazu sits absolutely still. Roy leans back in his chair, enjoying every moment of this.

LUCKY

One hundred twenty-five thousand dollars. That's my final offer.

KAZU

One hundred thirty-five.

Lucky throws his calculator against the wall.

LUCKY

Goddamnit! I'm offering a hundred grand for three weeks work to a man who broke my jaw!

ROY

Ain't pro ball something?

LUCKY

One hundred fifty.

KAZU

One hundred sixty.

LUCKY

One sixty-five.

KAZU

One seventy.

Lucky pushes his face into Kazu's and screams.

LUCKY

My father died at Pearl Harbor! I was a baby! I never knew him! You took my father, now you're taking my best ball player! What kind of people are you?

Lucky throws himself in his chair. He's shaking.

ROY

Lucky, your father lives at the Apache Junction Retirement Home.

LUCKY

He would have died at Pearl Harbor if that trick knee hadn't kept him out of the service. One hundred seventy-five thousand bucks. That's final!

KAZU

Two hundred thousand.

Lucky picks up his calculator and starts desperately punching figures into it again.

EXT. SCOTT'S BACKYARD - DAY

The playhouse is finished and painted. It's every girl's dream house. Dinah has her hands over her eyes.

SCOTT

Okay. You can look.

She takes her hands from her eyes. She looks at the playhouse in wide-eyed amazement.

DINAH  
Is it for me?

SCOTT  
Nobody else.

DINAH  
Can I go in?

He nods, then opens the door. She goes to the door, but hesitates at the threshold.

DINAH  
You better go first.

SCOTT  
No, honey. It's safe.

She goes in.

INT. PLAYHOUSE - DAY

Fully outfitted with curtains on the windows, a table and chairs, shelves with dishes, cups and saucers, everything. Dinah looks around. She opens a drawer, closes it, opens a cupboard. She doesn't speak for a long time.

DINAH  
Are you going away again?

SCOTT  
Why do you say that?

DINAH  
I don't know.

SCOTT  
They're talking about it.

DINAH  
Who is?

SCOTT  
The people in charge.

DINAH  
Aren't you in charge?

SCOTT  
Sure. It's just that there's other people involved, too.

DINAH  
But you're Daddy.

SCOTT  
I don't want you to worry about  
it.

A moment.

DINAH  
Let's have some tea.

Dinah hands cups and saucers to Scott. He sets them on the table. She takes the sugar bowl and cream pitcher from the shelf. Scott puts these on the table, too. Then she takes the teapot down. They sit at the little table on the little chairs. Dinah pours invisible tea.

DINAH  
Cream and sugar?

SCOTT  
Just cream.

She pours imaginary cream into his cup, then makes her own tea with both milk and sugar. He sips his tea.

SCOTT  
You're right, I'm in charge. But  
sometimes it really hard to be in  
charge. You have to decide things  
and you don't know what to decide.  
You don't want to hurt the person  
you love most in the world.

DINAH  
More tea?

He nods. She pours, putting both milk and sugar in his cup.

SCOTT  
I want to finish the season over  
there. I got mad and walked away.  
That's not good. You should  
always finish what you start. And  
there's another reason I want to  
go back. There's this nice lady  
over there. I think you'd like  
her a lot. She has a boy.

DINAH  
Oh, I put sugar in your tea!

SCOTT

That's okay.

She starts to cry.

DINAH

You said cream and I put in sugar!

He goes around the table, crouches down to Dinah and holds her as she sobs.

SCOTT

Don't cry. It's good with sugar, too.

He holds her tight. She cries some more as he strokes her hair. Then she becomes calmer. She catches her breath. She wipes her nose.

DINAH

I like the Japanese papers. They're pretty. I want a lot more papers. The kids at school think they're neat. And they all want T-shirts, too, so I need more T-shirts and more buttons.

He wipes away her tears.

SCOTT

Anything you want, honey. And you can come see me. You can fly over. Would you like that?

DINAH

Is there a movie on the plane?

SCOTT

Three.

She laughs. They look at each other for a long moment.

DINAH

Let's have some more tea.

He lets her go and sits at the table. She picks up the teapot and starts to pour.

INT. PHOENIX AIRPORT - GATE - DAY

Melanie, Rudy and Dinah are seeing Scott off. Rudy shakes his hand. Melanie kisses his cheek.

MELANIE

We'll miss you.

RUDY

We sure will.

Scott smiles. Then he crouches down to Dinah. He puts his arms around her and hugs her tight.

SCOTT

I love you. I'll see you soon.

DINAH

Do good.

SCOTT

I will.

He kisses her and lets her go. He stands up and walks towards the door to the plane where Kazu is waiting.

DINAH

Daddy!

He looks back at her. She smiles.

DINAH

Sayonara.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

The Official Cheerleader leads the cheering section in a rousing fight song.

CUT TO

Sugama is showing Hiroko and Kenji to seats right above the visiting dugout. Kenji plops in his seat unhappily. Sugama takes out a Warriors cap and plants it on Kenji's head. He's really trying to be friendly, but Kenji isn't buying it. Kenji immediately pulls the hat off, but Hiroko makes him put it back on.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

The entire Seals team is lined up on the field. The Announcer makes the final announcement.

ANNOUNCER

Goju-yon. Sukoto Chasu.

Scott runs out on the field.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Hiroko is shocked - she had no idea Scott was back. Kenji is just as surprised, then he starts cheering and yelling Scott's name. Sugama glares at him.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

At the top of the right field stands some Drunks, businessmen in suits, shout, "Chasu Go Home!" People around them pick up the phrase.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji tries to shout them down. Hiroko tries to get him to sit down and be quiet.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

The chant spreads quickly and soon the entire stadium rings with "Chasu Go Home!" The Seals shift nervously in line; they don't know what to do. Then Scott steps out of the lineup and walks across the field to right field. He stops in front of the Official Cheering section. He takes off his cap, then bows from the waist and holds the bow. The fans see this and, one by one, stop chanting. The chant starts to die away throughout the stadium. Soon only the Drunks are shouting and people make them stop, too. There is complete silence. Everyone watches Scott. He holds the bow a little longer, then rises, puts his cap on and jogs back to the lineup. The crowd begins to cheer.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji is jumping up and down, excited and proud. Sugama speaks sharply to him, but Kenji ignores Sugama.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

The Seals line breaks up and the players take the field. Ikeda claps his hands together, pats a couple players on the back. There's a real change in his attitude.

IKEDA

(subtitled)

If we win this game, we take the pennant, so let's go for it!

Scott speaks to Yukio as they move to their positions.

SCOTT

How's your arm?

YUKIO

Good as new. Ikeda-san gave me three days rest.

CUT TO

Yukio on the mound. He strikes out three Warriors in a row, including Rich and Marshall. He's hot tonight.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Scott steps up to the plate. He doesn't shift around. He takes his stance and holds it. He's relaxed and concentrated. All that exists for him is the bat and the ball.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Hiroko and Kenji are sitting on the edge of their seats.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Marshall is at the mound. He unleashes a 90 mile an hour fastball.

ON SCOTT

Very calm and still. He looks like he has all the time in the world to hit the pitch.

SCOTT'S POV

The ball coming towards him. It's in slow motion, turning over and over. As it approaches, the seams come into sharp focus.

ON SCOTT

He swings. There's no wasted movement or wasted energy in his swing. He barely seems to be putting any effort into it. Nevertheless, he connects. We're reminded of the very first time we saw Scott hit - on his VCR as he played himself back in slow motion. The hit is that pure, that fresh. The ball goes sailing.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - DUGOUT - NIGHT

Ikeda lets out a shout of happiness and starts jumping up and down with the rest of the Seals.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Scott jogs around the bases while the crowd cheers.

ON MARSHALL

At the mound, watching Scott. He's not at all pleased.



CUT TO

The scoreboard.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Scott at the plate again. Again he is still and concentrated. Marshall is still at the mound. He pitches. The pitch is deliberately wide. The Umpire calls ball four. Scott drops his bat and starts jogging to first. He looks over at Marshall. Marshall tips his hat.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Of Marshall walking Scott time and time again.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - DAY

Kenji is furious. He rips off his Warriors cap and throws it to the ground. He takes out the Seals cap that Scott gave him and puts it on his head.

KENJI

I hate the Warriors. They don't play fair!

SUGAMA

(subtitled)

What's wrong with him?

HIROKO

(subtitled)

He's sorry, but the hat itches.

SUGAMA

(subtitled)

My hats don't itch! Tell him to put it back on.

KENJI

Tell him to go to hell.

HIROKO

(subtitled)

He says, please forgive him, he's allergic to it.

CUT TO

The scoreboard. Now it's the bottom of the ninth. The score: Warriors - 2, Seals - 1.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - DUGOUT - NIGHT

Ikeda speaks to Scott, Kazu translates.

KAZU

We have two men on, one out. They have walked you ever since the first inning. Mr. Ikeda needs a hit to win the pennant.

SCOTT

If Ikeda-san wants a hit, he gets one.

Ikeda and Scott look at each other. Then Ikeda picks up a bat and hands it to Scott.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

There are men on second (the rookie, Iso) and third when Scott steps up to the plate and raises his bat. He stands still, ready, waiting for the pitch. Marshall pitches. It's way outside. A ball.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji has had enough. He stands up, brushes past Hiroko and Sugama and goes into the aisle.

HIROKO

Kenny!

Sugama tries to catch him, but Kenji eludes his grasp and runs up the stairs.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Marshall pitches again. Again it's way outside.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Sugama is watching the play and speaking to Hiroko.

SUGAMA

(subtitled)

When that boy becomes a Sugama, he'll have to start acting like a Sugama.

HIROKO

(subtitled)

He's young.

SUGAMA

(subtitled)

He's a spoiled brat who doesn't know how lucky he is. No other man would adopt the little bastard.

Hiroko looks at him, then grabs her purse, gets up and starts into the aisle. Sugama grabs her arm very tightly.

SUGAMA

(subtitled)

Where are you going?

HIROKO

(subtitled)

To find the little bastard. I'm worried about him.

He still holds her arm.

HIROKO

(subtitled)

You're hurting me. Let me go.

He takes his hand away and she escapes up the stairs.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Marshall throws the third pitch. Ball Three.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Sugama signals to the Warriors Manager, who calls time and runs over to Sugama. Sugama has a brief conference with him.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - HOME PLATE - NIGHT

Scott is still standing at the plate, bat raised, ready, waiting for the pitch.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji is now standing at the fence on the Seals side of the stadium. Hiroko appears at the top of the stairs. She spots Kenji and hurries down to him.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

The Warriors Manager runs out on the field and talks to Marshall. All this time Scott doesn't move. He stays in position - relaxed and alert, still waiting for the pitch. Marshall nods, then the Warriors Manager jogs back to the visiting dugout. Marshall looks at Scott and smiles.

ON SCOTT

He doesn't react. He's still waiting.

ON MARSHALL

Marshall rubs some saliva on the ball and winds up.

ON KAZU

Kazu knows exactly what's coming. He takes a step forward as if to run out on the field, but he stops himself.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Kenji and Hiroko are together at the fence. Kenji, who also knows what's coming, shouts.

KENJI

Scott, watch out!

Hiroko puts her arm around Kenji and draws him close.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Marshall winds up and pitches, high and hard, right at Scott's head. Scott doesn't flinch or duck. Instead, he brings his bat around in front of his face and hits a hard grounder to Rich on first base. Rich chases it while Marshall runs to cover first. Rich grabs the ball, throws it to Marshall - Scott's out. But Scott doesn't stop; he slams into Marshall and knocks him flat. Marshall drops the ball. Meanwhile, the runner on third has scored and Iso is moving to third. The Third Base Coach puts up his hands to stop him. Iso looks over his shoulder at first. The ball is still on the ground, so Iso rounds third and heads for home. Rich grabs the ball and fires it to the catcher. Iso dives head first at the plate, angling his body around the catcher and touching the corner of the plate with his hand a second before the catcher tags him. The Seals have won and all hell breaks loose. The players rush out of the dugout, surround Iso and lift him up.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - STANDS - NIGHT

Hiroko and Kenji hug each other.

ON SUGAMA

Sugama, on the other side of the stadium, gets up and quietly leaves the stadium.

EXT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - NIGHT

Scott whoops and throws his hat in the air. Kazu rushes out on the field and jumps on Scott. The whole stadium is going

crazy, shouting, cheering, tearing up their programs and throwing them in the air.

INT. SEALS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY

The stadium is empty. A fall day. Quiet. No one on the field. Scott and Hiroko are sitting in the stands. Hiroko presses the record button on her tape recorder.

SCOTT

Just an interview, huh?

HIROKO

My editor wants another story on you. Now that the Seals have won the pennant, will you also win the Japan Series?

SCOTT

I don't know. What do you think?

HIROKO

(enthusiastically)

I think you'll win. The Lions' best stopper is out with a torn rotator cuff, their infield is just average and they don't have any power at the plate.

Scott looks at her in surprise.

SCOTT

I thought you hated baseball.

HIROKO

(looking at her pad)

A journalist must keep an open mind. Has your opinion of Japan changed since you came here?

Scott doesn't answer right away. We see flashbacks from Scott's time in Japan: Kazu greeting him at the airport, Scott running up the stairs of the temple with Yukio, the first game where he got in a fight at second base, walking with Hiroko under the cherry blossoms and his apology to the fans at the final game.

ON SCOTT AND HIROKO

For a moment he's silent, thinking about his season.

SCOTT

Yes, it's changed.

HIROKO

How?

He looks at her.

SCOTT

What's the difference? You won't print what I say, anyway. You'll make up your own ...

HIROKO

The tape recorder is recording every word.

He picks up the tape recorder.

SCOTT

Yeah, these things are great.

He opens the recorder.

SCOTT

But you have to put tape in them.

HIROKO

Oh. I must have forgot ...

She quickly fishes in her purse and takes out a cassette.

SCOTT

Your editor didn't ask for a story, did he? You just wanted an excuse to see me. Hiroko, you don't need an excuse.

Hiroko takes the tape recorder back and puts the tape in.

HIROKO

Now we'll have to start all over.

She presses record and sets down the tape player on the bench in front of them.

HIROKO

What brought you back to Japan?

Scott leans forward and kisses her. It's a long kiss and afterwards she's a little breathless. She looks at her note pad and tries to focus.

HIROKO

Do you think you'll break the Japanese record of fifty-five home runs next year?

A pause. He looks at her. He smiles a little.

SCOTT

You ask too many questions.

He takes the note pad from her, tosses it away and takes her in his arms. The tape recorder keeps going, recording nothing.

FADE OUT

THE END