

THE RING

Original screenplay by Takahashi Hiroshi
Based upon the novel by Suzuki Kouji

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Distributed by PONY CANYON

Adapted/ Translated by J Lopez

<http://www.somrux.com/ringworld/>

Caption-- "September 5th. Sunday."

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD – TOMOKO’S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSEUP on a TELEVISION SET. There’s a baseball game on, but the sound is turned completely down. Camera PANS to show two cute high school girls, MASAMI and TOMOKO. Masami is seated on the floor at a low coffee table, TEXTBOOK in front of her. Tomoko is at her desk. There are SNACKS all over the room, and it’s obvious there hasn’t been much studying going on. Masami is currently in mid-story, speaking excitedly.

MASAMI

They say that some elementary school kid spent the night with his parents at a bed and breakfast in Izu. The kid wanted to go out and play with everybody, right, but he didn’t want to miss the program he always used to watch back in Tokyo, so he records it on the VCR in their room. But of course the stations in Izu are different from the ones in Tokyo. In Izu, it was just an empty channel, so he should’ve recorded nothing but static. But when the kid gets back to his house and watches the tape, all of a sudden this woman comes on the screen and says--

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

MASAMI (cont'd)
“One week from now, you will die.”

Short silence as Masami pauses, relishing the moment.

MASAMI (cont'd)
Of course the kid's completely
freaked, and he stops the video.
Just then the phone rings, and when he
picks it up a voice says--

Her voice drops voice almost to a whisper.

MASAMI (cont'd)
“You watched it, didn't you?” That
same time, exactly one week later...
he's dead!

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

MASAMI
What is it, Tomoko?

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

TOMOKO
Who did you hear that story from?

MASAMI
Who? It's just a rumor. Everybody
knows it.

TOMOKO
Youko told you?

MASAMI
No, it wasn't Youko...

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

MASAMI
What's up with you?

Tomoko speaks slowly, still looking away.

TOMOKO

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

MASAMI

Where?

TOMOKO

With Youko and them.

MASAMI

(excited)

So that's what I've been hearing about you doing some double-date/sleepover thing! So, you and that guy Iwata, huh?

TOMOKO

No, it's not like that. Nothing happened!

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

TOMOKO

Iwata... he found this weird video. Everyone was like, "What's that?" so he put it on and we all watched it.

MASAMI

(quietly)

And? What kind of video was it?

TOMOKO

Just... weird, I can't really explain it. Anyway, right after we finished watching it, the phone rang. Whoever it was didn't say anything, but still...

Silence. Masami curls up on herself, thoroughly spooked.

MASAMI

Jesus.

TOMOKO

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

Tomoko looks seriously over at her friend.

TOMOKO (cont'd)
That was one week ago today.

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

MASAMI
Waaait a minute. Are you faking me
out?

Tomoko's face suddenly breaks into a smile.

TOMOKO
Busted, huh?

They both crack up laughing.

MASAMI
Oh, my... I can't believe you!

Masami reaches out, slaps her friend on the knee.

MASAMI (cont'd)
You're terrible!

TOMOKO
Gotcha!

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

Tomoko nods, uh-huh. Masami dives forward, pinching her friend's cheeks and grinning wildly.

MASAMI
So, how far did you and he get?

TOMOKO
Oh... I can't remember.

MASAMI
You can't remember, huh?

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

MASAMI

Man, you had me freaked me out.
I--

Just at that moment, the phone RINGS. They are both suddenly, instantly serious. Tomoko's eyes go off in one direction and she begins shaking her head, -No-. Masami looks over her shoulder, following her friend's gaze.

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

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

MASAMI

(softly)
Was it true?

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

TOMOKO

Masami!

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD – STAIRCASE - NIGHT

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

TOMOKO

Masami!

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD – KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

MASAMI

I'll put her on.

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

TOMOKO

(softly)

Yes?

She is silent for a moment, then smiling widely.

TOMOKO

Oh, man!

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

TOMOKO

(on the phone)

Yeah, I've got a friend over now.

Yeah. Yeah, OK. Bye.

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

TOMOKO

The game's gone into overtime, so they're gonna be a little late.

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

TOMOKO

Jeezus, my parents...

MASAMI

Oh man, I'm tellin' everybody about this tomorrow!

Tomoko shakes her head, -Don't you dare-.

MASAMI

I'm gonna use your bathroom. Don't go anywhere.

TOMOKO

'K.

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

She begins walking slowly, following the sound to the DINING ROOM

adjacent the kitchen.

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are off, and there is no one in the room. Tomoko pauses a moment, bathed in the garish LIGHT from the TV, which has been switched on. Playing is the same baseball game they had on the TV upstairs; the same game that Tomoko's parents are currently at. The VOLUME is up quite high.

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

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD – KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

The screen goes white, and fades into:

CAMERA POV

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

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

There seems to be a popular rumor going around about a "cursed" videotape.

YOUNG GIRL

Uh-huh.

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

Have you heard what kind of video it might be?

YOUNG GIRL

Uh-huh.

The girl looks directly at the camera, her mouth dropping into an "O" as she's suddenly overcome by a kind of stage fright. She continues staring, silently, at the camera.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

KOMIYA, the cameraman, has lowered his camera. We can now see that the young girl being interviewed is seated at a table between two friends, a SHORT-HAIRED GIRL (GIRL#2) and a LONG-HAIRED GIRL (GIRL #3).

They are all dressed in the UNIFORMS of junior high school students. Opposite them sits Komiya and Asakawa, a pretty woman in her mid-twenties. A BOOM MIKE GUY stands to the left.

KOMIYA

Uh, don't look right at the camera,
OK?

YOUNG GIRL

Sorry.

ASAKAWA

Let's do it again.

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

ASAKAWA

Have you heard what kind of video
it might be?

YOUNG GIRL

What I heard was, all of a sudden
this scaarry lady comes on the
screen and says, "In one week, you
will die."

GIRL #2

I heard that if you're watching TV
late at night it'll come on, and
then your phone'll ring.

ASAKAWA

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

GIRL #2

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

ASAKAWA

Izu?

GIRL #2

Mmm-hmm.

ASAKAWA

And, do you know if anyone's really died from watching it?

The girl flashes a look at her two friends.

YOUNG GIRL

Well, no one that we know, right?

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

ASAKAWA

What is it?

GIRL #3

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

ASAKAWA

They were in a wreck?

GIRL #3

No, their car was parked, but they were both dead inside. Her boyfriend died because he'd watched the video, too. That's what my friend said.

Girl #3 grows suddenly defensive.

GIRL #3 (cont'd)

It's true! It was in the paper two or three days ago.

ASAKAWA

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

GIRL #3

No... I heard this from my friend, and it didn't happen at her school.

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

INT. NEWS STATION – DAY

Asakawa is seated at her DESK. The station is filled with PEOPLE,
scrabbling to meet deadlines. Komiya walks up to Asakawa's desk
and holds out a MANILA FOLDER.

KOMIYA

Mrs. Asakawa?

ASAKAWA

Hm?

KOMIYA

Here you are.

ASAKAWA

(taking the folder)

Thanks.

Komiya has a seat.

KOMIYA

This same kind of thing happened
about ten years ago too, didn't it?
Some popular young singer committed
suicide, and then suddenly there was
all this talk about her ghost showing
up on some music show.

ASAKAWA

But I wonder what this rumor's all
about. Everyone you ask always
mentions "Izu."

KOMIYA

Maybe that's where it all started.
Hey, where was that Kuchi-sake
Onna * story from again?

>* Literally "Ripped-Mouth Lady," a kind of ghastrly spectre from
>Japanese folk stories who wears a veil to hide her mouth, which
>has been ripped or cut open from ear to ear. She wanders the
>countryside at night asking men "Do you think I'm beautiful?" then
>lowering her veil to reveal her true features.

ASAKAWA

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

KOMIYA

A big accident?

ASAKAWA

Mmm-hmm. Something terrible like that is going to stay in people's minds. Sometimes the story of what happened gets twisted around, and ends up coming back as a rumor like this one. That's what they say, at least.

KOMIYA

D'you think something like that happened out at Izu?

ASAKAWA

Maybe. Well, anyway, I'm off. See you tomorrow.

KOMIYA

See you.

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

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

STRANGE AUTOMOBILE DEATH OF YOUNG COUPLE IN YOKOHAMA

The bodies of a young man and woman were discovered in their passenger car at around 10 A.M. September 6th. The location was a vacant lot parallel to Yokohama Prefectural Road. Local authorities identified the deceased as a 19-year old preparatory school student of Tokyo, and a 16-year old Yokohama resident, a student of a private all-girls' high school. Because there were no external injuries, police are investigating the possibility of drug-induced suicide...

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

GUY IN SUIT

OK, Okazaki, I'm counting on you.

OKAZAKI

Yessir.

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

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

OKAZAKI

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

Asakawa turns around and begins speaking excitedly.

ASAKAWA

Okazaki, can I ask you a favor?

OKAZAKI

Sure.

Asakawa points to the newspaper.

ASAKAWA

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

OKAZAKI

I guess...

ASAKAWA

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

OKAZAKI

Ma'am.

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

EXT. APARTMENT PARKING LOT - DAY

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

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

Yoichi!

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

ASAKAWA

Sorry I'm late. Oh, you've already changed.

YOICHI

Yup.

He points over to his mother's right.

YOICHI (cont'd)

I got your clothes out for you.

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

ASAKAWA

Aargh, we've gotta hurry!

She runs into the next room to change.

INT. BEDROOM – DAY

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

ASAKAWA

Did grandpa call?

YOICHI (O.S.)

Nope.

Yoichi walks into the room and faces his mother.

YOICHI

Why did Tomo-chan die? *

>* "-chan" is a suffix in Japanese that denotes closeness or affection.

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

ASAKAWA

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

She takes a seat on the bed.

ASAKAWA

Will you do me up?

Yoichi fastens the rear button of his mother's dress and zips her up.

YOICHI

You can die even if you're young?

ASAKAWA

If it's something serious... well, yes.

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

ASAKAWA

As hard as it is for us, what your
auntie and uncle are going through
right now is even harder, so let's
not talk about this over there, OK?

Yoichi nods.

ASAKAWA

(remembering)

You and her used to play a lot
together, didn't you?

Yoichi says nothing.

EXT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

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

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

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

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

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

Kneeling opposite the guests is KOUICHI, Asakawa's father. The two guests are bowing deeply, and Kouichi bows in response.

ASAKAWA

Dad.

Kouichi turns to see her.

KOUICHI

Ah!

ASAKAWA

How is sis holding up?

KOUICHI

She's resting inside right now.
She's shaken up pretty badly, you
know. It's best she just take
things easy for a while.

Asakawa nods.

ASAKAWA

I'll go check on auntie and them,
then.

KOUICHI

OK. Ah, Yoichi. Why don't you sit
here for a little while?

He grabs the young boy and seats him on a cushion next to the two guests. As the guests resume their conversation with Asakawa's father, Yoichi's eyes wander to the ALTAR at the front of the room set up to honor the deceased. It is made of wood, and surrounded by candles, flowers, and small paper lanterns. At the center is a PICTURE of the deceased, a teenage girl. A small wooden PLAQUE reads her name: Tomoko Ouishi. It is the same Tomoko from the first scene.

Yoichi continues to stare at Tomoko's picture. He makes a peculiar gesture as he does so, rubbing his index finger in small circles just between his eyes.

INT. HALLWAY – NIGHT

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

AUNT

Have you heard anything more about Tomo-chan's death?

ASAKAWA

No, I...

AUNT

But the police have already finished their autopsy!

ASAKAWA

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

AUNT

(shaking her head)

That was no normal death. They haven't once opened the casket to let us see the body. Don't you think that's strange?

Asakawa looks away, thinking.

INT. HALLWAY – NIGHT

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

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

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - TOMOKO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Yoichi has wandered into Tomoko's bedroom. The lights are all off, and there is an eerie feel to it. Yoichi's eyes wander about the room, finally coming to rest on the TELEVISION SET. Suddenly, he hears his mother's voice from behind him.

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

Yoichi?

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

ASAKAWA

What are you doing up here? You shouldn't just walk into other people's rooms.

Without replying, Yoichi's gaze slowly returns to the television set. Asakawa holds him by the shoulders, turning him to meet her.

ASAKAWA

You go on downstairs, OK?

YOICHI

OK.

He turns to leave, and Asakawa follows.

INT. OUSHI HOUSEHOLD - TOP OF THE STAIRS – NIGHT

Just as Yoichi and Asakawa are about to descend the steps, Asakawa's CELL PHONE rings. She opens the clasp to her PURSE.

ASAKAWA

(to Yoichi)

You go on ahead.

YOICHI

'K.

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

ASAKAWA

Hello?

OKAZAKI

Uh... this is Okazaki. I've got some more info on that article for you. The girl was a student of the uh, Seikei School for Women in Yokohama City.

Asakawa blinks at this, looks disturbed.

ASAKAWA

(softly)
Thanks.

She hangs up the phone.

EXT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Asakawa stands now at the entrance of the house. Dazedly, she walks toward a large, hand-painted PLACARD. The placard reads that the wake is being held for a student of the Seikei School for Women.

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

ASAKAWA

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

The three girls turn their faces to the ground.

ASAKAWA

Please. If you know anything...

GIRL RIGHT

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

GIRL LEFT

Because they watched the video.

ASAKAWA

Video?

GIRL LEFT

That's what Youko said. They all watched some weird video, and after that their phone rang.

ASAKAWA

Tomoko-chan watched it, too?
Where?

Girl Left shakes her head.

GIRL LEFT

She just said they all stayed
somewhere.

GIRL RIGHT

There was a girl with Tomoko when
she died. She's had to be
hospitalized for shock.

GIRL MIDDLE

They say she won't go anywhere
near a television.

INT. NEWS STATION - VIEWING BOOTH – DAY

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

YOSHINO

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

Onscreen, the policeman has finally picked the lock. The door opens, and a girl's BODY half-falls out, head facing upwards. Yoshino flicks a BUTTON on the control panel, scans the footage frame by frame. He stops when he gets a good close-up of the victim.

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

YOSHINO

This is the first time I've -ever-
seen something like this.

ASAKAWA

Cause of death?

YOSHINO

Couldn't say, aside from sudden
heart failure.

ASAKAWA

Drugs?

YOSHINO

The autopsy came up negative.

Yoshino takes the video off pause. Onscreen, a policeman has caught the young girl's body from completely falling out, and is pushing it back into the car. As the body moves into an upright position, we can see that the girl's PANTIES are mid-way around her left thigh.

YOSHINO

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

He sighs.

YOSHINO (cont'd)

Do -you- get it?

EXT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - DAY

Asakawa's CAR is already halted before a modest-sized, two-story HOUSE with a small covered parkway for a garage. She gets out of her car, closes the door. She stares at the house, unmoving.

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD – KITCHEN - DAY

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

RYOMI (O.S.)

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

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

ASAKAWA

Mmm-hmm.

RYOMI

They used to play a lot together, didn't they? Upstairs.

ASAKAWA

Yeah...

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

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD – STAIRCASE - DAY

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

INT. OUIISHI HOUSEHOLD - TOMOKO'S ROOM - DAY

As if intruding, Asakawa walks slowly, cautiously into Tomoko's room. The window to the room is open, and a single piece of folded white PAPER on Tomoko's desk flutters in the breeze. Asakawa walks towards it, picks it up. It is a RECEIPT from a photo shop. The developed photos have yet to be claimed.

Asakawa senses something, spins to look over her shoulder. Her sister has crept quietly up the stairs and down the hall, and stands now in the doorway to Tomoko's room. She appears not to notice what Asakawa has in her hands, as her gaze has already shifted to the sliding closet door. She regards it almost druggedly.

RYOMI

(haltingly)

This... this is where Tomoko died.

FLASHBACK

RYOMI (O.S.)

Tomoko!

Ryomi's hands fling aside the CLOSET DOOR. Within, she finds the pale blue CARCASS of her daughter, curled up into an unnatural fetal position. Tomoko's mouth yawns gaping, her eyes glassy and rolled up into the back of her head. Her hands are caught in her hair, as if trying to pull it out by the roots. It is a horrific scene, one that says Tomoko died as if from some unspeakable fear.

PRESENT

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

EXT. CAMERA SHOP – DAY

Asakawa leaves the camera shop clutching Tomoko's unclaimed PHOTOS. She walks out onto the sidewalk and begins flipping through them. We see

Tomoko standing arm-in-arm with Iwata, her secret boyfriend. Tomoko and her friends eating lunch. The camera had its date-and-time function enabled, and the photos are marked

97 8 29.

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

IZU PACIFIC LAND

ASAKAWA

Izu...

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

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT – KITCHEN - DAY

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

ASAKAWA

Look, I'm probably going to be late coming home tonight, so just stick your dinner in the microwave when you're ready to eat, OK?

YOICHI

'K... Mom?

ASAKAWA

Hmm?

YOICHI

Tomo-chan watched some cursed video!

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

ASAKAWA

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

YOICHI
(utterly unfazed)
I won't. I'm going to school now.

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

Caption-- "September 13th. Monday."

EXT. ROAD – DAY

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

INT. ASAKAWA'S CAR - DAY

Asakawa mutters to herself, deep in thought.

ASAKAWA
There's no way...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD – DAY

Asakawa's car drives past a sign reading:

IZU PACIFIC LAND

EXT. IZU PACIFIC LAND - DRIVEWAY – DAY

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

She wanders about for a while, trying to get her bearings. She pauses now in front of a particular cottage and reaches into her PURSE. She withdraws the PICTURE from the photomat, the one that showed Tomoko and her friends with their faces all blurred. The four are posing in front of their cottage, marked in the photograph as "B4." Asakawa lowers the photo to regard the cottage before her.

B4

She walks to the door, turns the handle experimentally. It's open. Asakawa walks in.

INT. PACIFIC LAND - COTTAGE B4 – DAY

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

Her eyes rest on the TV/VCR setup at the front of the room. Crouching before the VCR now, she presses the eject button. Nothing happens. She fingers the inside of the deck, finds it empty, then reaches behind to the rear of the VCR, searching. Again, there is nothing. Asakawa presses the power button on the television, picks up the REMOTE, and takes a seat on the SOFA. She runs through a few channels but they're all talk shows, no clues whatsoever. She flicks the TV off and leans back in the sofa, sighing.

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

ASAKAWA

"My dad is fat. My mom is fat.
That's why I'm fat, too."

She smiles in spite of herself.

Asakawa flips through the rest of the ledger, but there's nothing else of any import.

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

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFÉ - DUSK

Asakawa eats silently, alone.

INT. PACIFIC LAND - FRONT RECEPTION - NIGHT

Asakawa has returned to the bed and breakfast. As she walks in the door, the COUNTER CLERK rises out of his chair to greet her.

CLERK

Room for one?

ASAKAWA

Um, actually I'm here on business.

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

ASAKAWA

They would have stayed here on

August 29th, all four of them.
If there's any information you
might have...

CLERK

Uh, hang on just a minute.

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

CLERK

(to himself)

August 29th...

While she waits, Asakawa's eyes start to wander around the room. Behind the desk is a sign reading "Rental Video," and a large wooden BOOKSHELF filled with VIDEOTAPES. They are all in their original boxes, and she lets her eyes glance over the titles. Raiders of the Lost Ark, 48 Hours--

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

ASAKAWA

That...

The clerk looks up.

CLERK

Hmm?

Asakawa stabs a finger excitedly towards the shelf.

ASAKAWA

That! What tape is that?

The clerk reaches out for it, grabs it.

CLERK

This? Hmm...

The clerk pulls the tape out of its SLEEVE and checks for a label. It's unmarked.

CLERK

Maybe one of the guests left it behind...

INT. PACIFIC LAND – COTTAGE B4 - NIGHT

Asakawa flips on the TV. It's on channel 2, and there is nothing but static. She kneels down to slide the tape into the deck and pauses a moment, framed in the vaguely spectral LIGHT from the television screen. Steeling her nerves, she puts the tape into the machine, picks up the remote, and presses play.

NOTE: This next scene is entirely visual. If you are reading this translation before watching the movie, do yourself a favor; STOP reading this now and watch the scene for itself. Afterwards, you can come back here to check the meaning of the Japanese characters displayed.

THE VIDEOTAPE

At first it looks like nothing has happened-- then Asakawa realizes that she is now viewing recorded static instead of broadcast static. She watches, waiting, but the static continues unbroken. Asakawa looks down at the remote, is about to press fast forward, when suddenly the picture on the screen clears and for a moment she thinks she's looking at the moon.

It's not the moon at all, she realizes. The shape is round like a full moon, but it seems to be made up of thin RIBBONS of cloud streaking against a night sky. And there's a FACE, she sees, a face hidden in shadows, looking down from above.

What is this?

The scene changes now, and Asakawa notes that the tape has that kind of grainy quality one sees in 3rd or 4th generation copies. The scene is of a WOMAN brushing her long hair before an oval-shaped MIRROR. The nerve-wracking grating as if of some giant metallic insect sounds in the background, but the lady doesn't seem to notice. The mirror the lady is using to brush her hair suddenly changes position from the left part of the wall before which she stands, to the right. Almost instantly the mirror returns to its original position, but in that one moment in its changed location we see a small FIGURE in a white GOWN. The woman turns towards where that figure stood, and smiles.

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

local volcanic eruption

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

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

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

The eye blinks once, twice. The symbol remains.

A long shot of an outdoor, uncovered WELL.

Sudden loud, blinding STATIC as the tape ends.

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

The room is empty. Asakawa runs to the sofa to collect her jacket--

--and the RINGING of the telephone stops her dead in her tracks. Zombie-like, she walks towards the telephone, picks it up wordlessly.

From the other end comes the same metallic, insectoid SQUEAKING heard on the video. Asakawa slams the phone down and glances up at the CLOCK. It's about seven minutes after 7 P.M.

ASAKAWA
(to herself)
One week...

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

EXT. STREET – DAY

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

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

speaking. Yoichi then walks around the person's left and continues on his way. The man resumes walking as well.

Caption-- "September 14th. Tuesday."

EXT. OUTSIDE AN APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

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

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ryuji puts his bag down, looks around the apartment. The interior is dark, ominous somehow. He takes his JACKET off and wanders into the living room. Asakawa is in the kitchen behind him, preparing TEA. Ryuji spies the collection of FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS in living room.

RYUJI

Yoichi's in elementary school
already, is he?

ASAKAWA

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

RYUJI

Same as always.

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

ASAKAWA

And money is...?

RYUJI

I'm teaching at university.

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

RYUJI

Anyway. You said that the phone rang?

ASAKAWA

That's right.

RYUJI

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

He gestures with his mug

RYUJI (cont'd)

--should ring.

ASAKAWA

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

RYUJI

(flippant)

Well, why don't you try calling an exorcist?

He takes a sip of his tea. Asakawa reaches quickly, grabs something from the bookshelf behind her-- a POLAROID CAMERA. She shoves it into Ryuji's hands, then turns to look down at the floor.

ASAKAWA

Take my picture.

Ryuji raises the camera to his eye.

RYUJI

Turn this way.

ASAKAWA

(unmoving)

Hurry up and take it.

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

Just like the picture of Tomoko and her friends.

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

EXT. VERANDA - DAY

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

RYUJI

It's over.

Asakawa re-enters her apartment.

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

RYUJI

Well, it looks like your phone's not ringing.

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

RYUJI

Make me a copy of this, will you?
I'd like to do a little research
of my own. There's no reason to
write us off as dead just yet.

He dramatically takes a seat.

RYUJI (cont'd)

If there's a video, that means that
somebody had to make it.

ASAKAWA

There's the guest list from the
cottage to look into... and the
possibility of someone hacking
into the local station's broadcast
signals.

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

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

Okazaki putters around.

Caption— "September 15th. Tuesday."

INT. NEWS STATION - VIEWING BOOTH - DAY

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

carefully, and notices...

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

OKAZAKI
(handing her the file)
Here's that guest list you wanted.

ASAKAWA
Oh, thanks.

OKAZAKI
What are you gonna do with this?

ASAKAWA
Uh... sorry, I'm working on something personal.

EXT. IN FRONT OF A TRAIN STATION - DAY

Some quick shots of a FOUNTAIN gushing water, PIGEONS flapping away looking agitated. CUT to Ryuji sitting on a BENCH. He's deep in thought, writing in a NOTEPAD. There are multitudes of PEOPLE about him, and we can hear the sounds of their coming and going. A PAIR OF LEGS attached to a woman in white dress, hose, and pumps appears, heading directly for Ryuji. Her pace is slow, rhythmical, and as that pace progresses all other sounds FADE into the background, so that all we can hear is the CLOMP, CLOMP as those legs walk to stand just before Ryuji. The pumps are scuffed, dirtied with grime.

A gust of WIND rips by. Ryuji fights the urge to look up as in his ears rings the same hollowed, multi-voiced BABBLING heard on the videotape. The sound grows stronger.

RYUJI (VO)
So, it was you. You did it.

The babbling fades, disappears as slowly the world's normal background sounds return. Ryuji looks up, but the woman in white is nowhere to be seen.

EXT. OUTSIDE RYUJI'S APARTMENT – AFTERNOON

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

RYUJI
Hey.

Asakawa notes in his face that something is wrong.

ASAKAWA
What happened to you?

RYUJI
(gruffly)
Nothing.

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

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

The two walk down the hallway towards the FRONT DOOR to Ryuji's apartment. He unlocks the door and they enter.

INT. RYUJI'S APARTMENT – AFTERNOON

Ryuji and Asakawa enter the living room.

RYUJI
So, what'd you come up with?

ASAKAWA
I don't think any of the guests on the list brought the tape with them. I couldn't confirm it face-to-face of course, but even over the phone I got the feeling they were all being upfront with me.

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

Asakawa shakes her head.

ASAKAWA
There're no traces of any illegal television signals being broadcast around Izu.

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

ASAKAWA
Here's that copy of the videotape you wanted.

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

RYUJI

(sternly)

Asakawa.

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

RYUJI

Have you ever seen this woman?

Asakawa regards the screen intently.

ASAKAWA

No...

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

ASAKAWA

(excitedly)

There's something strange about this shot.

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

ASAKAWA

From this angle, the mirror should be reflecting whoever's filming.

RYUJI

So, what does that mean?

Asakawa lets out a short sigh.

ASAKAWA

Well, if the person who made this is a pro, there'd be a way around that, I guess, but still...

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

RYUJI
(reading)
Volcanic eruption... Eruption where?

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

ASAKAWA
This is gonna be impossible to figure
out on just a regular TV screen,
don't you think?

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

RYUJI
Come on in.

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

RYUJI
Asakawa, meet my student, Takano Mai.

He turns, addresses Mai.

RYUJI (cont'd)
This is Asakawa, my ex-wife.

Ryuji gets up and walks conveniently away.

MAI
Nice to meet you. I'm Takano.

ASAKAWA
Asakawa. *

> * As you may already be aware, Japanese name order is the
>opposite of English's, and even close friends may continue to
>address one another by their last names. Incidentally, Asakawa's
>first name is "Reiko." In this scene, Mai deferentially refers
>to Ryuji as sensei, meaning "teacher."

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

MAI

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

RYUJI

(brusquely)

What're they talkin' to you about it for?

MAI

Because they can never get a hold of you.

Ryuji picks up his keys, video firmly in hand.

RYUJI

Ask them to wait another week.

MAI

Sensei, ask them yourself, please.

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

RYUJI

OK, OK.

Asakawa walks after him. They leave.

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

INT. NEWS STATION – HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

INT. NEWS STATION - VIEWING BOOTH - NIGHT

Asakawa and Ryuji sit in a completely darkened room, their eyes glued to the television MONITOR. They are again watching the scene

with the fragmented kanji characters, but despite their efforts have been able to identify only one additional word, bringing the total to three:

volcanic eruption local residents

RYUJI

This is impossible.

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

RYUJI

Sada...

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

RYUJI

Is Yoichi gonna be all right?

ASAKAWA

(sadly)

He's used to it...

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

RYUJI

Whoever made this had to have left some kind of clue behind. They're probably waiting for us to find it.

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

RYUJI

Wait a minute.

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

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

Ryuji and Asakawa exchange glances. This could be it. Ryuji flips some more switches, setting the sound for super-slow mo. What follows is a strange, labored sort of speech— a hidden message-- framed in

the skittering distortion of the tape in slow motion.

TAPE

Shooooomonn bakkkkkarrri tooou...
booooouuukonn ga kuuru zouuu...

RYUJI

(repeating)

Shoumon bakkari, boukon ga kuru
zo. Did you hear that, too?

Asakawa nods. Ryuji is already writing it down excitedly.

ASAKAWA

What does that mean?

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

RYUJI

I'm gonna check it out.

EXT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

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

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

All the lights are turned off, and she is sitting on the living room couch watching the footage of her café interview with the junior high school girls.

Caption-- "September 16th. Thursday."

Just when the girl in the interview mentions that whomever watches the video is supposed to afterwards receive a phone call, Asakawa's own phone RINGS, startling her. She runs to answer it.

ASAKAWA

Hello?

RYUJI (O.S.)

I've got it. It's a dialect, just
like I thought. SHOUMON means
"playing in the water" and BOUKON
means "monster." *

>* Translated from standard Japanese, the phrase from the videotape

>would initially have sounded like, "If only SHOUMON then the
>BOUKON will come." These two capitalized words, later identified to
>be dialectical, were at the time completely incomprehensible to Ryuji
>and Asakawa. Dialect can vary dramatically from region to region in
>Japan, to the point of speakers of different dialect being unable to
>understand one another.

>The phrase on the tape can now be rendered, "If you keep playing in
>the water, the monster will come for you."

ASAKAWA

But, dialect from where?

RYUJI

Oshima. And the site of our
"eruption" is Mt. Mihara.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

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

ASAKAWA

(whispering, on phone)

Yoichi? I'm gonna be a little
late tonight, honey.

Ryuji looks over his shoulder at her, scowls.

ASAKAWA

You can do it yourself, right? OK.
Sorry. Bye.

She hangs up, returns to her seat at the cubicle. She resumes her
scanning of the newspaper articles, and Ryuji shoots her another scowl.
Asakawa turns a page and then stops, frowning. She has spied an article
that looks like...

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

Mount Mihara Erupts Local Residents Urged to Take Precautions

Ryuji notices her, leans forward excitedly.

ASAKAWA

I've got it! This old article...

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

Did Local Girl Predict Eruption?
A young lady from Sashikiji prefecture...

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

ASAKAWA

What are you doing?

RYUJI

Has your newspaper got someone out there at Oshima?

ASAKAWA

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

RYUJI

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

He begins walking briskly away. Asakawa chases after him.

ASAKAWA

What do you think you're--?

RYUJI

(angrily)

You've only got four days left, Asakawa! Your newspaper contact and I can handle this from here on out. You just stay with Yoichi.

Ryuji strides off. Asakawa stands motionless.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A car speeds along. CUT to a gravel DRIVEWAY leading up to a wooden, traditional-style HOUSE. Kouichi, Asakawa's father, is standing before the entrance and pattering around in his GARDEN. The car from the previous shot drives up, comes to a halt. The passenger door opens and Yoichi hops out, running towards the old man. Asakawa walks leisurely after her son.

YOICHI

Grandpa!

KOUCIHI

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

Caption-- "September 17th. Friday."

ASAKAWA

Yoichi says he's looking forward to doing some fishing with you.

KOUCIHI

Is that so?

Yoichi begins tugging excitedly at his grandfather's arm.

YOICHI

C'mon grandpa, let's go!

KOUCIHI

OK, OK. We'll get our things together and then we can go.

EXT. RIVER — DAY

Asakawa stands on a RIVERBANK while her father and Yoichi, GUMBOOTS on, are ankle-deep in a shallow river. Yoichi holds a small NET, and Asakawa's dad is pointing and chattering excitedly.

KOUCIHI

There he is! C'mon, there he is, don't let him go!

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

KOUCIHI

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

YOICHI

That was your fault, grandpa.

Asakawa's father laughs.

KOUCIHI

Well, whaddya say we try again?

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

KOICHI

We'll get 'im this time.

Asakawa looks away, pensive.

INT. KOICHI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

YOICHI

(sleepily)

How was work, mommy?

Asakawa tucks him into the futons and walks silently off.

INT. KOICHI'S HOUSE - STAIRCASE — NIGHT

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

ASAKAWA

Hello?

RYUJI (O.S.)

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

INT. RYUJI'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

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

RYUJI

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

INT. KOUJI'S HOUSE – STAIRCASE - NIGHT

ASAKAWA
Have you got anything else?

RYUJI (O.S.)
I'm gonna have to check it for
myself. I'll be leaving for
Oshima tomorrow morning.

ASAKAWA
Oshima? I've only got three days
left!

RYUJI (O.S.)
I know. And I've got four.

Short silence.

RYUJI (O.S.)
I'll be in touch.

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

KOUJI
What's happened?

Asakawa shakes her head.

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

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

INT. KOUJI'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM — NIGHT

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

TOMOKO (O.S.)
Auntie?

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

ASAKAWA

Yoichi?

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

Suddenly, the IMAGE from the video of the figure with its face shrouded springs to Asakawa's mind. Just an instant, its pointing visage materializes, and then disappears. It reappears a moment later, pointing more insistently now, and disappears again.

Asakawa blinks her eyes and realizes that the futon next to hers is empty. Yoichi is nowhere to be seen.

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

He is watching the video.

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

Shrieking, Asakawa races over to Yoichi, covers his eyes though it is already too late. She scoots over to the VCR, ejects the tape and stares at it uncomprehendingly. She is then at Yoichi's side again, shaking him roughly.

ASAKAWA

Yoichi! You brought this with you,
didn't you? Why?!?

YOICHI

Tomo-chan...

Asakawa freezes, her eyes wide.

YOICHI

Tomo-chan told me to watch it.

EXT. OCEAN — DAY

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

RYUJI

I should've been more careful.

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

ASAKAWA

You mean that Tomoko—

RYUJI

That's not Tomoko. Not anymore.

ASAKAWA

Yoichi... he can see them too, can't he?

Ryuji nods his head, lowers it sadly.

ASAKAWA

It's all my fault. First Tomoko died, then those three others. It should have stopped there, but it didn't. Because of me.

RYUJI

I wonder...

Asakawa turns to Ryuji suddenly.

ASAKAWA

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

RYUJI

This kind of thing... it doesn't start by one person telling a story. It's more like everyone's fear just takes on a life of its own.

ASAKAWA

Fear...

RYUJI

Or maybe it's not fear at all. Maybe it's what we were secretly hoping for all along.

EXT. PORT — DAY

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

ASAKAWA

Mr. Hayatsu?

HAYATSU

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

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

Caption-- "September 18th. Saturday."

INT. HAYATSU'S MINIVAN - DAY

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

HAYATSU

Back in the old days, the Yamamuras used to head fishing boats out in Sashikiji, though they don't much anymore. You know, one of Shizuko's cousins is still alive. He's just an old man now. His son and his daughter-in-law run an old-fashioned inn. I went ahead and booked reservations for y'all, hope that's alright...

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

ASAKAWA

(to Ryuji)

Why did Yamamura Shizuko commit suicide?

RYUJI

She was taking a real beating in the press, being called a fraud and all sorts of names.

After a while she just lost it.

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

INT. HAYATSU'S MINIVAN — DAY

RYUJI

Shizuko was getting a lot of attention around the island after predicting the eruption of Mt. Mihara. Seems that for some time she'd had a rather unique ability: precognition. It was around then that she attracted the attention of a certain scholar whom you may have heard of; Ikuma Heihachiro.

ASAKAWA

He was driven out of the university, wasn't he?

Ryuji nods.

RYUJI

This Professor Ikuma convinces Shizuko to go to Tokyo with him, where he uses her in a series of demonstrations meant to prove the existence of ESP. At first she's the darling of the press, but the next thing you know they're knocking her down, calling her a fraud. Hmph. Forty years later, the media still hasn't changed that much.

Asakawa continues, ignoring Ryuji's barb.

ASAKAWA

I've heard this story. But... I'm sure I remember hearing that somebody died at one of those demonstrations.

A strange look crosses Ryuji's face. He looks away, ignores her for a moment.

RYUJI

After getting kicked out of university, Ikuma just vanished, and no one's been able to get hold

of him since. He's probably not even alive anymore.

ASAKAWA

But, why even try looking for him?

RYUJI

Because he's supposed to have had a child with Shizuko. A daughter.

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

EXT. OUTSIDE YAMAMURA VILLA - DAY

Mr. Hayatsu leads Asakawa and Ryuji to the entrance.

HAYATSU

Hello?

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

KAZUE

Thank you.

She turns to Asakawa and Ryuji.

KAZUE (cont'd)

Welcome.

HAYATSU

Well, I'll be off then.

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

KAZUE

Please.

Ryuji and Asakawa begin removing their shoes.

INT. YAMAMURA VILLA – STAIRCASE - DAY

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

KAZUE

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

RYUJI

Separate, please.

KAZUE

'Sir.

INT. YAMAMURA VILLA - 2ND FLOOR – DAY

Kazue gives a little bow.

KAZUE

This way.

Kazue turns to the right. Almost immediately after reaching the top of the steps, however, a strange look crosses Ryuji's face. He heads down the opposite end of the corridor, Asakawa close behind.

KAZUE

(alarmed)

Sir!

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

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

KAZUE

(softly)

Please, this way.

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

ASAKAWA

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

YAMAMURA

I got nuthin' to say.

ASAKAWA

It's about Shizuko's daughter.

The old man says nothing.

ASAKAWA
She did have a daughter, didn't she?

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

YAMAMURA
You're wasting your time.

INT. YAMAMURA VILLA - DINING ROOM – NIGHT

The TABLE is laid out with an elaborate-looking DINNER. Asakawa sits alone, knees curled up to her chin, eyes wide and frightened. She is whimpering softly to herself. Just then, the DOOR slides open and Ryuji walks in. He sits at the table and picks up a pair of CHOPSTICKS.

RYUJI
Aren't you gonna eat?

ASAKAWA
Umm...

RYUJI
Hm?

ASAKAWA
You'll stay with me won't you?
When it's time for me to die.

RYUJI
Oh, stop it.

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

ASAKAWA
You'll stay, won't you? If you
stayed, maybe you'd learn something
that could help Yoichi--

RYUJI
I said stop it! Have you forgotten
There was a girl with Tomoko when
she died? That girl's now in a
mental institution. Who knows what
could happen.

ASAKAWA

But you could stay with me, Ryuji.
You'd be OK.

RYUJI
(angrily)
Why, because I'm already not
right in the head?

Asakawa releases her hold on Ryuji's arm, lowers her head. Ryuji
slams his chopsticks down angrily.

RYUJI
If that's the case, why not just
let things run its course, get rid
of father -and- son? Yoichi was a
mistake, anyway.

ASAKAWA
Stop it!

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

RYUJI
We still have two days left...

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

KAZUE (O.S.)
Excuse me?

RYUJI
Come in.

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

KAZUE
It's about Miss Shizuko.

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

KAZUE
This is all that there is...

Kazue produces an old black and white PHOTOGRAPH. The photo shows a

WOMAN, seated, dressed in a KIMONO. A MAN in a Western-style SUIT stands beside her.

RYUJI

Is this Professor Ikuma?

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

KAZUE

...yes. This picture is from before
I'd entered the household.

She pauses a moment.

KAZUE (cont'd)

I should go now.

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

VOICE

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

EXT. IZU SEASHORE - DAY

Asakawa watches Ryuji stride down the shore.

Caption-- "September 19th. Monday."

Ryuji strolls up to find old man Yamamura sitting alone, staring out at the sea. Yamamura glances up to see Ryuji approaching. Ryuji takes a seat next to the old man, but it's Yamamura who speaks first. The deep basso of his voice emphasizes the drawl of his accent.

YAMAMURA

Y'all'd do best to be off soon.
Sea's probably gonna be rough
tonight.

RYUJI

What kind of a child was Shizuko?

YAMAMURA

Shizuko was... different. She'd come
out here by herself ever'day an' just
stare out at the ocean. The fishermen

all took a dislikin' to her. Ocean's
an unlucky place for us, y'see: every
year it swallows up more of our own.
You keep starin' out at somethin'
ike that...

RYUJI

Shoumon bakkari shite'ru to, boukon ga
kuru zo. "If you keep playing in the
water, the monster will come for you."

Yamamura looks at Ryuji, surprised.

RYUJI

Shizuko could see "inside" people,
couldn't she? Down to the places
they'd most like to keep hidden. It
must have been difficult for her...

Yamamura rises unsteadily to his feet, features twisted angrily.

YAMAMURA

Please leave! Now!

Ryuji stands, takes hold of Yamamura's arm.

RYUJI

I've got a little of that ability
myself. It was you who spread the
word about Shizuko, wasn't it?
And you who first contacted
Professor Ikuma?

YAMAMURA

What're you--?

RYUJI

You thought you'd be able to make
some money off her. You even got
some, from one of the newspapers.

YAMAMURA

Leave me the hell alone!

Mr. Yamamura strides angrily off. Both Ryuji and Asakawa take
pursuit, Ryuji calling out from behind Yamamura's back.

RYUJI

Tell us about Shizuko's daughter.

Who was she?

YAMAMURA

I don't know!

RYUJI

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

Yamamura's pace, which has become increasingly erratic, finally causes him to stumble and fall. Ryuji comes up behind him, grasping him firmly. At their touch Ryuji's power awakens, and as he peers into the old man's mind there is a sudden blinding

FLASH

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

FLASH

Ryuji eyes widen as he realizes he is seeing Shizuko's demonstration before the press. He also realizes--

RYUJI

(to Yamamura)

You were there!

FLASH

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

RYUJI (O.S.)

You stood there and watched the
demonstration.

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

FLASH

Asakawa, her eyes wide, finds herself inside the scene, reliving it as if she had actually been there. She watches as Shizuko receives a sealed clay POT in both hands. Shizuko regards the pot a moment and then places it gently on the table before her. She takes a

calligraphy STYLUS from the table, begins writing on a thin, rectangular sheet of RICE PAPER. The members of the press talk excitedly, craning their necks for a better look.

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

JUDGE

Match.

Cameras begin FLASHING excitedly. Shizuko's features melt into a soft smile.

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

JUDGE

Match.

Again and again, Shizuko unerringly demonstrates her power to "see" the unseen. Finally, a bearded REPORTER explodes from his chair, begins striding angrily towards the stage.

REPORTER

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

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

REPORTER

What are you trying to pull, woman?

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

REPORTER #2

That's right! Professor Ikuma,
you're being fooled!

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

REPORTER #3

What's happened?

REPORTER #4

He's dead!

REPORTER #5

(to Shizuko)

Witch!

Professor Ikuma begins leading Shizuko offstage. They stop as someone unseen steps up, blocking their passage. Shizuko's eyes widen, her head shaking in disbelief.

SHIZUKO

Sadako? Was it you?

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

RYUJI

Sadako?!

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

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

RYUJI

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

YAMAMURA

She's... a devil spawn.

CUT back to the demonstration hall. Sadako, her face completely hidden by her long hair, runs offstage... and heads directly for Asakawa. Asakawa instinctively raises her arm, and Sadako grasps it fiercely. All the nails on Sadako's hand are stripped away; her fingers are raw, bloody stumps.

CUT back to the beach. Asakawa, still caught in the throes of the vision, has begun to swoon. Finally her legs give out and she crumples to the beach. Ryuji grabs hold of her supportively. He glances down at her wrist, sees an ugly, purple BRUISE already beginning to form.

The bruise is in the shape of five long, spindly fingers.

Mr. Yamamura slowly rises to a sitting position, and together the three watch the approach of ominous, dark STORM CLOUDS.

INT. MR. HAYATSU'S HOUSE – DUSK

Asakawa is on the phone, her voice almost frantic.

ASAKAWA

That's right. After Yamamura Shizuko committed suicide, Professor Ikuma took the daughter and ran. No, no one knows where they went. That's why I need -you- to find out where they are. Even if the professor's dead, Sadako should still be in her forties. I'll explain it all later, but right now just hurry!

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

RYUJI

Sadako's probably already dead. She could kill people with just a thought, remember? Her mother wasn't even close to that.

ASAKAWA

(flustered)

Well, what about that video? If Sadako's dead then who made it?

RYUJI

Nobody made it. It wasn't made at all. That video... is the pure, physical manifestation of Sadako's hatred.

Ryuji turns to regard Asakawa, his eyes blank.

RYUJI

We've been cursed.

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

HAYATSU

It's no good. With the typhoon coming in, all ships are temporarily staying docked.

RYUJI

What about the fishing boats? Tell their captains I'll pay.

HAYATSU

Fishing boats? Sir, without knowing whether this typhoon is going to hit us or not, I think it'd be better to wait and see how things turn--

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

RYUJI

Fine! I'll try searching myself!

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

HAYATSU

Mr. Takayama!? Mr. Takayama...

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

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

White-capped waves roll angrily in a black sea.

INT. MR. HAYATSU'S HOUSE – NIGHT

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

ASAKAWA

Hello?

OKAZAKI (O.S.)

Mrs. Asakawa? I'm sorry. I tried, but I couldn't come up with any leads at all.

A look of abject fear crosses Asakawa's face. She begins retreating into herself.

OKAZAKI (O.S.)

Hello?

ASAKAWA

(softly)

Thank you...

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

ASAKAWA

Yoichi...

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

ASAKAWA

(softly)

Izu...

EXT. IZU WHARF – NIGHT

Asakawa stands looking down on the wharf, scanning.

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

ASAKAWA

(calling)

Ryuji!

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

ASAKAWA

Ryuji! The phone in my apartment
never rang! It only ever rang at
the rental cottage! Professor
Ikuma must've...

RYUJI

And we've got no way of going back.

HAYATSU

It's too dangerous! The thought of
anybody going out in this weather...

The three fall into silence as they realize the powerlessness of their

situation. Suddenly, a deep VOICE booms from behind them.

YAMAMURA (O.S.)

I'll take you out.

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

YAMAMURA

Sadako is callin' y'all, reckon.
Mayhap to drag you down under the
water.

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

RYUJI

Please. Take us out.

EXT. OCEAN – NIGHT

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

INT. MR. YAMAMURA'S FISHING BOAT – NIGHT

Ryuji and Asakawa are crouched close together in the cabin. Asakawa's expression is dreamy, faraway.

ASAKAWA

It's funny. I'm not afraid at all.

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

RYUJI

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

ASAKAWA

So, Sadako was Professor Ikuma's
daughter?

RYUJI

(nodding)

Ikuma smuggled her out in secret.
His relationship with Shizuko was

already a scandal, and one of the reasons he got drummed out of the university... We've gotta find Sadako's body.

ASAKAWA

(excitedly)

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

RYUJI

It's all we've got left to try.

ASAKAWA

Just one more day...

Ryuji puts his arm around Asakawa.

EXT. MR. YAMAMURA'S FISHING BOAT - DAWN

Ryuji stands on deck, looking out over the water. He heads down below toward the captain's area. Mr. Yamamura is at the wheel.

RYUJI

We made it. Maybe Sadako doesn't
have it out for us after all.

Long pause as Mr. Yamamura says nothing.

YAMAMURA

Shizuko... she used to -speak- to
the ocean, just ramble away. One
time I hid, listenin' to one of her
conversations.

Mr. Yamamura pauses again.

YAMAMURA (cont'd)

And it weren't in no human language.

EXT. MR. YAMAMURA'S FISHING BOAT - DAWN

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

Caption-- "September 20th. Monday."

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

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

YOICHI (O.S.)

Hello?

ASAKAWA

Yoichi? It's mommy. I just called to say I'll be coming home tomorrow.

Ryuji shoots a look at her over his shoulder.

YOICHI (O.S.)

I'm tired of it here, mom! I wanna go back to school.

ASAKAWA

(smiling)

Yoichi, it's rude to your grandpa to talk like that.

YOICHI (O.S.)

He's laughing. You wanna talk to him?

ASAKAWA

No, that's...

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

ASAKAWA

I'm sorry, Yoichi. I'll... I'll see you tomorrow.

YOICHI (O.S.)

What's wrong?

Asakawa's face scrunches up in an effort to hold back tears.

ASAKAWA

Mommy's got something she has to do. Say hello to grandpa for me, OK?

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

blankly into space. Ryuji slides into the driver's seat, buckles his SEATBELT.

RYUJI

What time was it when you first
watched the video?

Asakawa glances at her watch.

ASAKAWA

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

RYUJI

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

Asakawa buckles up as Ryuji steps on the gas.

INT. RENTAL CAR – DAY

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

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD – DAY

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

RYUJI

-Here-.

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

UNDER COTTAGE B4 - DAY

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

RYUJI

I knew it! The well.

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

ASAKAWA

The well...

Ryuji reaches out and takes Asakawa's hand. He sets their clasped hands onto the lid, and together they begin lightly tracing the surface of the lid with their free hands. Asakawa closes her eyes in concentration... and suddenly, as with the incident on the beach, Asakawa finds herself drawn into Ryuji's psychometric VISION.

FLASH

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

FLASH

Asakawa looks up, her eyes wide open.

FLASH

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

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

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

This man whose name is Professor Ikuma Heihachiro.

FLASH

ASAKAWA

Her own father!

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

RYUJI

It was Ikuma who put this lid on.
And Sadako's still inside.

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

RYUJI

I'll go.

He walks off, leaving Asakawa alone.

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

RYUJI

Sadako was alive! She'd tried to
climb her way out.

Ryuji's face twists into a grimace as if momentarily experiencing Sadako's terrible agony. He waits a moment longer before edging his way down the rope again, finally SPLASHING to rest at the bottom of the well. He holds his flashlight above the brackish water, calls up to Asakawa.

RYUJI

Lower the buckets!

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

finished.

RYUJI

Take it up!

Asakawa hoists the bucket up to the rim of the well. She walks a small distance and tosses the contents out onto the ground. She happens to glance through the wooden lattice to the outside, and with a start realizes that the sun has already started to set. A nervous glance at her WATCH later and she is back at the well, lowering the empty bucket to find another full one already awaiting her.

RYUJI

Take it up!

In the well, Ryuji glances at his watch. He looks at it for a long moment, the expression on his face saying We're not going to make it. Time passes as Asakawa pulls up bucketload after bucketload, her strength beginning to fade. She half-stumbles, glances up... and is shocked to realize that NIGHT has fallen.

CUT to Asakawa slowly pulling up yet another bucket, her strength almost gone. She looks at her watch and sees that it is now past 6:00. She calls frantically down to Ryuji.

ASAKAWA

It's already six!

RYUJI

(explosively)

I know! Hurry up and TAKE IT UP!!

The bucket slowly jerks into motion. Asakawa pulls it up to the rim of the well, holds it unsteadily. She takes one faltering step and falls, spilling the bucket's contents onto the ground.

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

RYUJI

Take it up!

Nothing happens.

RYUJI

Asakawa!

The bucket begins moving, even slower than before. CUT to Asakawa, her body trembling with effort. By now it's all she can do to simply keep her body moving. She glances behind her, sees through the wooden

lattice that it is now pitch black. A look of resignation crosses her face and she releases her hold on the bucket, her body crumpling and falling in on itself.

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

RYUJI

(fuming)

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

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

RYUJI (O.S.)

Hey!

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

RYUJI

Asakawa!

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

RYUJI

We'll change. You're in no condition to keep this up.

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

ASAKAWA:

No!

RYUJI

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

ASAKAWA

But, we don't even know if it's doing any good...

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

RYUJI

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

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

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

RYUJI

Don't look down!

She returns her gaze, cranes her neck upward. CUT to Ryuji leaning over the rim of the well, peering down at her. For an instant, everything becomes monochrome. It's not Ryuji looking down at her at all; it's Professor Ikuma, checking to see if she's still alive or if the blow to the back of her head has finished her off. CUT to Asakawa, her eyes wide with fright.

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

ASAKAWA

Where are you? Please, come out.

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

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

ASAKAWA

Please. Where are you?

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

Suddenly a pale, thin ARM shoots out from beneath the water, catching Asakawa just below the wrist. Asakawa's ears are filled with a SOUND like moaning as something slowly rises from its watery slumber. It is a GIRL, her face completely hidden by long, black hair. CUT to a shot of Asakawa's face. Far from being frightened, her features are

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

ASAKAWA

It's you...

She strokes the hair again, and abruptly it peels right off the head with a loud SQUELCH. Revealed is not a face at all but a SKULL. Its sockets are at first menacingly empty, but then begin to ooze the green SLUDGE it has pulled up from the bottom of the well. Like a mother comforting a frightened child, Asakawa pulls the skeletal remains to her breast, strokes the bony head comfortingly. Her eyes begin to glaze.

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

RYUJI

Hey! Asakawa! It's already 10 minutes past seven! We did it!

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

EXT. OUTSIDE COTTAGE B4 – NIGHT

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

ASAKAWA

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

RYUJI

Maybe she wasn't his daughter at all.

ASAKAWA

What?

RYUJI

Maybe her father... wasn't even human.

The two exchange glances. Ryuji's gaze falls to Asakawa's WRIST, which he suddenly takes and holds close to his face. The ugly bruise where Sadako had grabbed her has disappeared.

RYUJI

It's gone...

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

RYUJI

Enough, already. It's over. C'mon.
I'll take you home.

Ryuji stands, pulls Asakawa to her feet.

EXT. OUTSIDE ASKAWA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ryuji's white CAR pulls up into the parking lot. He and Asakawa get out, regard each other from opposite sides of the car. There is a long moment where neither of them says anything.

RYUJI

Get some rest.

He flashes her the slightest of grins.

RYUJI (cont'd)

I still have a thesis to finish.

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

ASAKAWA

...thank you.

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

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – MORNING

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

INT. RYUJI'S APARTMENT – MORNING

Ryuji sits busily scribbling into a NOTEBOOK. He stops writing a moment to regard his notes while taking a sip of COFFEE. He glances over at his BLACKBOARD for confirmation when a small scowl crosses his brow. It's gone a moment later as he chuckles wryly to himself.

RYUJI

That girl...

Ryuji stands, walks over to the blackboard. He fixes Mai's little prank with a single chalk stroke.

EXT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT – VERANDA – MORNING

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

Caption-- "September 21st. Tuesday."

NOTE: This next scene is entirely visual. If you are reading this translation before watching the movie, do yourself a favor; STOP reading this now and watch the scene for itself.

INT. RYUJI'S APARTMENT – MORNING

Ryuji is busy scribbling away at his notes again. His hand suddenly ceases, eyes dancing worriedly as he hears a faint...

No.

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

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

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

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

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

RYUJI
(almost frantic)
Why?!

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

RYUJI

That's it! Asakawa...

Ryuji scrambles wildly towards the phone. He takes the receiver but is unable to do more than clutch it fearfully as his gaze is drawn inexorably back to the television. Sadako's shrouded face has filled the entire screen... and then, television popping and crackling, she jerks forward and emerges from the television onto the floor of Ryuji's apartment. Ryuji backs away, screaming in terror.

RYUJI

Aaargh!

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

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

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

Its gaze meets Ryuji's, and his face twists into a grimace as he SCREAMS loudly.

FLASH

EXT. KOUJI'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD – DAY

Yoichi sits on the lawn, doodling into a large SKETCHPAD. He suddenly stops, eyes registering that he has somehow felt his father's death.

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT – DAY

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

EXT. OUTSIDE RYUJI'S APARTMENT BUILDING – DAY

Asakawa comes running down a side street, turning the corner and making for the entrance to Ryuji's apartment building. There is a single GUARD posted at the entrance. He reaches out, catches Asakawa lightly by the arm.

GUARD

Are you a resident here, ma'am?

ASAKAWA

I'm Takayama Ryuji's wife!

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

GUARD

I'm sorry ma'am, but they've already taken the body away.

Asakawa's spins around, eyes wide. Body?

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE RYUJI'S APARTMENT – DAY

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

ASAKAWA

What happened?

Mai shakes her head dreamily.

MAI

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

ASAKAWA

Did he say anything to you? About a videotape?

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

MAI

His face...

Mai falls into silence, curls up on herself. Asakawa leaves her and crosses toward the door to Ryuji's apartment.

INT. RYUJI'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

ASAKAWA (VO)

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

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

INT. ASAKAWA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

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

ASAKAWA

I was the only one to break
Sadako's curse. Ryuji... why...?
Something I did that you didn't...
Something I did that you didn't...

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

ASAKAWA

Ryuji?!

She spins around, but the room is empty. Asakawa's mind races. The figure had been pointing towards her BAG. She stands, rummages in her bag to produce her copy of the cursed videotape. She takes Ryuji's COPY in her other hand, her eyes darting between the two tapes.

ASAKAWA

Something I did that you didn't...

It suddenly clicks home as Asakawa looks full-on at Ryuji's version of the tape, plainly marked COPY.

ASAKAWA

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

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

EXT. HIGHWAY – DAY

ARIAL SHOT of Asakawa's car. We hear her VOICE on the cell
phone.

ASAKAWA (O.S.)

Dad? It's me. I'm on my way over.
Look, dad, I've got something to ask.
It's for Yoichi...

INT. ASAKAWA'S CAR – DAY

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

GIRL A (VO)

They say there's a way you can stay
alive after you watch the video.
You've gotta make a copy of it, and
show it to somebody else inside a week.

GIRL B (VO)

But what about the person you show it
to?

GIRL A (VO)

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

GIRL C (VO)

(laughing)

Then there's no end to it.

GIRL A (VO)

That's just it. There -is- no end. But
if it meant not dying... you'd do it,
wouldn't you?

Asakawa's eyes begin to well. Her car speeds along the highway,
to the direction of menacing-looking STORM CLOUDS.

Caption-- "September 22nd. Wednesday."

FADE TO BLACK as the CAPTION turns blood red.