

the grudge

by
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Based on the films
Ju-on, Ju-on 2 and Ju-on: The Grudge
By
Takashi Shimizu

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FADE IN on MARIA (late 20s), asleep in bed. She's breathtakingly beautiful. Morning light fills the room. The sound of wind, and rippling cloth.

Maria stirs, and opens her eyes. She stretches contentedly.

Then she frowns. Rolls over. She's alone in the bed?

No, she's not: PETER (20s) sits on the edge, his back to her. Two fresh, steaming mugs of coffee sit on a tray near him.

MARIA
Hey. Are you okay?

Peter doesn't turn. He slowly stands and walks forward towards an OPEN WINDOW.

There's something strange about the way he moves -- stiffly, almost jerkily, straining his joints and muscles.

Maria gets out of bed, concerned.

MARIA
Peter? What's the matter?

He pauses at the window. Turns his head to look back at her. His eyes are vacant. His face is a blank.

Then Peter slowly leans forward. And falls from the window.

Maria stands in shock as the sound of SCREECHING TIRES from outside reaches her ears. Then SCREAMS OF TERROR from below.

Aghast, she finally manages to numbly walk forward, towards the window. We MOVE PAST her and TILT DOWN TO REVEAL --

-- PETER'S BODY lies in the middle of the street. His head has burst open, his body broken and twisted.

ON THE PAVEMENT: a line of blood appears, moving down the center of the screen. As if hitting grooves we cannot see --

-- the blood slowly forms the shape of two KANJI CHARACTERS. A translation appears over them: "**The Grudge.**"

A blur of movement as hundreds of people stream up from a subway tunnel. Most are Japanese. We're not in Kansas.

Standing in the middle of the rush-hour pedestrian traffic is

KAREN (20s, American). She faces upstream, looking for someone. The flow threatens to carry her away in a heartbeat. She looks fragile, intimidated by the madness.

DOUG (O.S.)

Karen!

She turns to see her boyfriend DOUG (20s, American) approaching. With a reassuring smile he takes her hand --

-- and together, they force their way through the throng, trying to escape the flow. They're jostled and crushed by the crowd, and Doug protectively pulls Karen closer.

KAREN

I'll never get used to this.

DOUG

Maybe we should find a different train station.

He abruptly stops, right in the middle of traffic, still holding Karen's hand. She turns, wondering what's going on. She sees the smile on his lips a moment before --

-- he sweeps Karen into his arms and kisses her. As if the crowd of businessmen surging around them isn't there at all.

It's tender and loving, and she responds... at first. But then she pulls away, shy.

KAREN

A public display of affection is considered rude in Japan.

There's an opening ahead into a SIDE STREET. Doug and Karen deftly slip out of the traffic --

2a OMITTED 2a

2b EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY 2b

-- and walk hand-in-hand down the much quieter street, away from the crowded thoroughfare.

Doug smiles as they pass by two JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOL COUPLES, making out on the street corner. He turns to give Karen a sarcastic look --

-- but she didn't notice the school kids. She's looking in the other direction, at a trickle of SMOKE wafting up over a nearby fence.

KAREN

What's that?

Doug follows as she walks toward an OLD TEMPLE, nestled beneath a skyscraper. A collision of the ancient and modern. The fence surrounds a GRAVEYARD adjacent to the temple.

DOUG

We walk past this temple every day,
Karen --

KAREN

Yeah, but I've never seen this
before.

A JAPANESE MAN stands before an ornate headstone, lighting a bundle of incense and bowing before the grave.

KAREN

It's a Buddhist ritual. The
incense smoke carries the prayers
to the spirits of his ancestors, to
help them remain at peace.

CLINK. She turns as Doug, grinning, lights a cigarette with his Zippo, flicking it shut and pocketing it.

DOUG

It's amazing. You're like this
infinite storehouse of wisdom. Or
trivia. I'm not sure which.

KAREN

It's not trivia. It's what they
believe. And it's far better, by
the way, than your little *pollution*
ritual.

Doug's grin softens to a smile. He doesn't respond... but the way he's looking at Karen makes her curious:

KAREN

What?

He turns away for a moment, almost shyly, dropping his cigarette and crushing it. Finally:

DOUG

Nothing. I just -- I like that about you. You seem to be able to remember everything that's really important.

She smiles. A tender moment. Then... he checks his watch.

DOUG

Except the time.

Karen checks her own watch, realizing --

KAREN

Oh, crap --

She grabs his hand and starts to walk quickly.

KAREN

C'mon, you're gonna be late.

2c EXT. CAMPUS - DAY 2c

An international college in Tokyo. The autumn chill doesn't deter the students from enjoying the beautiful day.

Karen and Doug, still holding hands, enter the campus.

2cc EXT. NURSING CARE CENTER - DAY 2cc

Karen and Doug approach the doors of a NURSING CARE CENTER. She pulls him to the side just as he's stepping under a WORKMAN'S LADDER by the doors.

KAREN

Uh-uh. Seven years of bad luck.
(before Doug can respond:)
And I might have a vested interest
in those years.

DOUG

Is that right?

KAREN

Maybe.

Doug smiles, kissing her romantically. Then:

DOUG

Will I see you tonight?

KAREN

I'll call you when I get home.

With a flourish, Doug SWINGS HIMSELF back under the ladder.

DOUG

Fourteen. I hate odd numbers.

2d INT. NURSING CARE CENTER - DAY 2d

Through the front doors, we see Doug kiss Karen again. They finally separate, and Doug walks off.

Then Karen walks through the doors into a bright, atrium-like lobby area. She waves "hello" to the RECEPTIONIST.

Leaning against a desk behind Reception is Karen's boss ALEX (40s, American). He's got a phone to his ear -- it's ringing. An ANSWERING MACHINE picks up in Japanese.

Alex mutters and hangs up. Then he notices --

ALEX

Karen!

She's started up a STAIRCASE in the center of the lobby. She turns and comes back down, walking over to Alex.

ALEX

Are you free this afternoon?

KAREN

I just came by to pick up some books I left here. I'm not scheduled to work today --

ALEX

I know. But are you free? Do you have class?

KAREN

(shaking her head:)
Just a test to study for. Why?

Alex smiles, holding out a file.

ALEX

Your wish has been granted.

Karen takes the file and opens it, looking at the first page -
- a picture of an OLDER WOMAN (EMMA) is attached.

ALEX

It's Yoko's case, but she didn't
show up for work this morning, and
I can't reach her at home. She
must be sick, or something. And
she has the damn house key.

Studying the file, Karen squints.

KAREN

What's this phrase?

ALEX

"Mild dementia with severe
lethargy." Apparently she sleeps
through most of the day. Her
daughter-in-law doesn't work, so
she'll probably be there.

Karen seems unsure. It's a big step for her.

ALEX

You're the one who's been bugging
me about getting out there on your
own. Besides, it's an English-only
house.

One of Alex's CO-WORKERS appears in the doorway, motioning to
him. Alex quickly hands Karen a card:

ALEX

Here's the address. Use the wall
chart if you need help -- and don't
forget to bring a map.

Karen looks at THE ADDRESS -- a string of thirty numbers and Japanese characters. She glances up at

THE WALL CHART: a color-coded diagram shows how the long address string is broken down into Postal Code, Prefecture, City, Ward, District, Block, Sub-Block and House Number.

ALEX

Don't worry Karen, you're ready.

Karen nods. But she's not quite as confident.

3 OMITTED 3

4 OMITTED 4

4a INT. RAIL STATION - DAY 4a

People rush madly around Karen as she studies A LARGE MAP on the wall. It's the Tokyo rail system -- daunting, at best.

4b OMITTED 4b

4bb INT. TRAIN - DAY 4bb

Karen sits uncomfortably on the crowded transit car, squeezed in tightly by the people around her. The LOUD CRYING of a baby adds to her discomfort.

5 EXT. RAIL PLATFORM - DAY 5

The transit car pulls to a stop and a handful of people get out. Karen is one of them, shouldering her backpack.

5a EXT. SHOPPING DISTRICT - DAY 5a

Karen walks down the populated sidewalk, weaving through STREET VENDORS, and passing a large GROCERY STORE.

She pauses, looking at the address on her card. She approaches a WOMAN and her DAUGHTER (6) and speaks to them in Japanese. The woman nods, pointing towards a small ALLEY.

Karen gives the daughter a smile; the girl hides behind her mother's leg.

6 EXT. TOKYO NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 6

Karen exits the alley, entering a quiet, narrow street. She's still not sure if she's in the right place.

But then her eyes fix on something. She begins to walk towards it, her gaze never leaving it --

6a EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY 6a

-- it's THE HOUSE. Cozy and shaded, nestled into the dead end of the street. Large by Tokyo standards.

She double-checks the address and opens the gate, walking around a BICYCLE leaning against the wall and following the stepping-stone path to the front door. She knocks. No answer. She tries again. Nothing.

Then, an afterthought, she tries the handle. It's unlocked.

7 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY 7

Karen pokes her head inside the *genkan* (entry hall).

KAREN
Hello? Mrs. Williams?

Nothing. She tentatively steps inside, and the door closes behind her. It's dark and musty -- the blinds are drawn.

KAREN
Is anyone here?

She turns and LOCKS THE FRONT DOOR.

8 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 8

Karen stands in the doorway, surveying the room. The place is in a complete state of disarray.

A SCRAPING sound grabs Karen's attention.

HER POV: at the far end of the room, a FROSTED-GLASS PANELED DOOR leads to an adjacent room.

A HAND is visible on the other side, clawing at the glass.

Karen runs over and slides open the door, revealing --

8a INT. TATAMI ROOM - DAY 8a

EMMA (60s, American). The older woman in the picture from Karen's file. She's lying on her stomach on a stained mattress, feebly looking up at Karen.

KAREN
Oh my God... are you alright? --

Karen immediately kneels down next to the infirm woman, helping her sit up. Emma looks dazed and disoriented.

Karen's eyes sweep the room. It reeks of neglect.

9 EXT. THE HOUSE - PORCH - DAY 9

Emma sits on the back porch, staring vacantly. But her expression isn't simply blank - there's an odd sadness there.

Karen is washing the dirty sheets in a bucket and hanging them to dry. She finishes, turning to her charge.

KAREN

Okay, Emma. Let's try again: my name is Karen. Do you remember? I'm from the Health Center. I'm substituting for Yoko, just for today.

Emma doesn't respond -- and there's no indication that she remembers Karen introducing herself before.

Kneeling in front of Emma, Karen notices a BAND-AID around one of her fingers. Blood has soaked through it.

KAREN

Looks like you need a new Band-Aid. How'd this happen, Emma?
(still no reaction)
Would you like a bath? Maybe that will help you feel better.

Emma doesn't even turn towards her.

10 INT. THE HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY 10

Karen turns on the water, puts the stopper over the drain.

11 INT. THE HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY 11

Karen supports Emma's weight as she leads the old woman slowly down the hallway to the bathroom entrance --

-- Emma stops at the doorway. Eyes fixed on THE TUB.

KAREN

It's okay, Emma.

She takes Emma's hand and walks inside. But Emma doesn't budge. Her free hand TIGHTLY CLUTCHES the door frame.

Her eyes are wide. Staring at the bathtub.

12 EXT. THE HOUSE - PORCH - DAY 12

Karen uses a sponge to bathe Emma, her robe rolled to her waist. Emma stares absently at the sky.

13

INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

13

With Emma back in bed, Karen steps out of the back room and slides the door shut. Leans against it for a moment. A tough first day on the job.

14 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DUSK 14

Karen has straightened up the room, and is vacuuming the floor. Something under the couch catches in the vacuum intake, jamming it.

She turns off the vacuum and feels underneath, pulling out A CRUMPLED PHOTO -- ripped into pieces, compressed in a ball.

15 INT. THE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK 15

Karen sits at the kitchen table, flattening and taping together the pieces of the photograph. She finishes.

ON THE PHOTO: a grinning JAPANESE BOY holds a cute BLACK CAT. His MOTHER and FATHER stand beside him. They're all beaming at the camera -- a perfect, happy family.

But there's a piece missing. The MOTHER'S FACE.

Karen walks back into the Living Room. She looks underneath the couch for the missing piece. Can't see anything.

She lays down and sticks her arm under the couch, feeling around. Nothing.

Karen sticks her arm in deeper, to the shoulder, straining...

She suddenly jerks her arm back, wincing. She has a small cut on her finger.

Karen looks under the couch for what cut her --

-- a small FURNITURE NAIL sticks out underneath.

KAREN
Nice one, Karen.

She gets to her feet, folding up the incomplete picture and stuffing it into her pocket.

16 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DUSK 16

Karen steps into the foyer with the vacuum cleaner. She looks up at A RAILING overhead. Some trash is visible sticking over the edge. Karen shakes her head:

KAREN
How did you get up there?

She gathers up the vacuum and heads up to the SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. There's a nearby door, closed (the FRONT ROOM), and an open door at the end (the REAR ROOM).

As she looks for an outlet, she hears a SCRATCHING SOUND.

Karen stands there for a moment, listening. Silence.

Then she walks towards the open door at the end of the hall.

17 INT. THE HOUSE - REAR ROOM - DUSK 17

Karen steps inside. MOVING BOXES are stacked against the wall, next to a desk. It's an unfinished room.

She listens. No scratching. Nothing unusual here. Except --

Karen notices a lone object sitting on an otherwise empty shelf. It's a BLACK CERAMIC CAT. Facing the wall. Strange.

And then Karen hears the SCRATCHING SOUND again.

18 INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DUSK 18

Karen steps into the hallway and listens. There it is again, and this time there's no doubt --

The sounds are coming from the room by the stairs.

Karen walks to the door. She pauses, disturbed by the eerie sounds from inside. Then she reaches for the doorknob.

THUD. THUD. Karen hesitates. The strange rhythmic THUDDING continues, coming from beyond the door.

KAREN
(nervous:)
Hello?

Karen takes a breath. And turns the doorknob.

19 INT. THE HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DUSK 19

The sounds immediately stop as Karen enters the MASTER BEDROOM. It's dark, thick blinds covering the windows. A frosted window, overlooking the foyer, isn't helping much.

She stands there for a moment, listening. Silence.

Then --

SCRATCH SCRATCH. Startled, she gasps and turns towards THE CLOSED CLOSET DOORS. That's where the sound is coming from.

And then she notices something strange about the closet door:

It's been sealed shut with duct tape.

The SCRATCHING quickens, as if sensing a presence nearby.

And then there's a muffled MEOW. There's a cat in there?

Karen pulls off the duct tape. She reaches for the door handle, slowly sliding it open a crack and peering inside --

The closet seems empty, except for a large BOOK on a shelf. Karen reaches inside and picks it up.

Then she sees, in the darkened far corner of the closet, a SMALL BLACK CAT. It's sitting on something, watching her.

Karen slides the door the rest of the way open --

-- revealing A YOUNG JAPANESE BOY (age 7) sitting in the corner, staring at Karen. The cat is curled up on his lap.

Startled, Karen drops the book and falls backwards.

20 INT. THE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

20

Karen is on her cell phone:

KAREN (INTO PHONE)

Yes, he was shut in a closet!
There was tape around the -- No,
they're not home yet. I don't
know, Emma hasn't said a word to me
-- He's still upstairs -- yes, I'm
sure he's Japanese -- But -- Yes,
alright, Alex. Just please get
here as soon as you can.

Karen hangs up, putting the phone down on the kitchen table. She leans against the counter, exasperated.

Then her attention turns to THE BOOK she found in the closet.

Karen can't resist. She opens it.

THE BOOK is a large journal, filled with elegant Japanese writing. Karen flips through it, stopping on --

A PHOTOGRAPH. A handsome young man, smiling at the camera.
We recognize him. It's PETER, from the opening scene.

21 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 21

Karen walks to the front door, reaching out to unlock it --
-- but she pauses, realizing something.

She reaches into her pocket, pulling out THE PHOTO she found.
It only takes a second to verify --

-- THE BOY in the photo is the one she found in the closet.

Karen lowers the photo, bewildered. Then she looks up,
startled by --

THE BOY. He's kneeling on the second floor landing above,
watching her through the bars of the metal railing. Creepy.

Karen takes a step forward, forcing a smile.

KAREN (IN JAPANESE)
Hello there.

The boy just stares at her. Really creepy.

KAREN (IN JAPANESE)
My name is Karen. What's yours?

THE BOY
Toshio.

Before she can respond --

RING! RING! The phone in the next room startles her.

22 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 22

Karen enters the room as the ANSWERING MACHINE picks up, the
voices of a happy couple on the GREETING (in English):

MATTHEW & JENNIFER (ON MACHINE)
*"Konnichiwa! Matt and Jennifer
aren't around, leave a message."*

SUSAN (ON MACHINE)
*"Hey, guys, it's Susan. Matt, are
you there? Pick up..."*
(MORE)

SUSAN (ON MACHINE) (cont'd)
*Okay, well, I'm leaving work now so
 you can try my cell, or just call
 me at home later."*

The caller pauses. Karen steps closer to the phone base, curious, listening:

SUSAN (ON MACHINE)
*"I just wanted to make sure Mom is
 okay. Yesterday was... a bit
 weird, and -- I'm just a little
 worried."*

Karen, reluctant but realizing she should pick up, reaches for the phone...

...but the PHONE BASE is empty. The cordless is missing.

As Karen tries to figure out how to answer with the base:

SUSAN (ON MACHINE)
*"Listen, just give me a call when
 you can, okay?"*

CLICK. Too late -- the caller hangs up.

Silence returns to the room... but not completely. Karen hears the soft sound of WHISPERING from nearby.

Beyond her, we see a PALE FACE (KAYAKO) pressed against the frosted window of the sliding door of the TATAMI ROOM.

The face pulls away from the glass just before Karen turns towards it. But the sound of WHISPERING continues.

As she slowly walks to the door, we can make out some words:

EMMA (O.S.)
 ...I've told them over and over...
 I've told them over and over...

Karen listens for a moment, then slides the door open.

23 INT. THE HOUSE - TATAMI ROOM - NIGHT

23

It's very dark in the room -- the lights have been turned off. Emma, sitting up in bed, turns towards Karen.

KAREN
 Emma, who were you talking to?

That's when Karen notices THE INDENTATION in the mattress, across from where Emma is sitting. Where someone else would be, if the old woman was having a conversation.

Emma looks up at Karen with pleading eyes.

EMMA

I just want her to leave me alone.

Karen sits down next to her.

KAREN

You should get some rest, Emma.

She helps Emma lie back --

-- but as the old woman's eyes move to the ceiling, they suddenly grow wide, her mouth opening in fear --

-- Karen follows her gaze, looking up --

-- and she SCREAMS, falling off the mattress, backing away --

A MURKY BLACKNESS is lowering from the ceiling. Formless at first, but flowing and shifting... like a FIGURE draped with black silk. Drifting down until the shadowy "head" is only inches from Emma's terrified face.

And then the "head" slowly turns, rotating towards Karen.

In the midst of the blackness are TWO DISEMBODIED EYES. Filled with an intense rage. Focused directly on Karen.

Off Karen's NERVE-SHATTERING SCREAM, we...

CUT TO BLACK.

24 INT. THE HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT 24

MATTHEW and his wife JENNIFER are in bed. He sleeps soundly, she doesn't. She's staring at the ceiling, listening to --

-- SOUNDS coming in through the open bedroom door. Someone moving downstairs, fumbling around, bumping into things.

Jennifer, frustrated, lets out a sigh.

25 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - MORNING 25

Matthew comes downstairs, dressed in a business suit. He pauses to pick up some of the RUBBISH on the stairs.

26 INT. THE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

26

Jennifer watches the last drops of coffee fall into the pot. She pours herself a mug, takes a big sip. Looks exhausted.

Matthew enters, surprised to see her.

MATTHEW

You're up?

JENNIFER

Mmmmmm.

Matthew glances into the back room through another sliding door -- the windows on this one are clear, not frosted like the living room.

HIS POV: Emma is asleep on her mattress.

MATTHEW

I wonder if Mom's okay. She's been sleeping ever since we got here.

JENNIFER

Not at night.

Matthew turns to her, surprised.

JENNIFER

I told you, Matthew, you can sleep through anything.

Matthew comes over, kisses her.

MATTHEW

I'm sorry, sweetheart. It was probably just the move -- I'm sure she'll get back on schedule.

Jennifer nods, not convinced.

MATTHEW

You seen my travel mug?

JENNIFER

I didn't unpack it yet.

Matthew kneels down next to a pair of MOVING BOXES in the corner -- '*KITCHEN*' written on the side. He explores it.

MATTHEW

Maybe you should say something to the helper, what's her name?

JENNIFER

Yoko.

MATTHEW

Who knows? Maybe there's something she can suggest.

JENNIFER

Yeah. Maybe.

He finds his travel mug, wrapped in the sports section of an American newspaper. Matthew scans it as he fills his mug.

MATTHEW

I miss seeing this every morning.

No response from his wife. He turns to see Jennifer looking down at Emma through the window.

Matthew walks over, puts an arm around her.

MATTHEW

Hey, kiddo. You okay?

JENNIFER

I went for a walk yesterday. Just to explore. I got lost and couldn't find anyone who could speak English, who could help me. I felt so... stupid.

MATTHEW

This will get easier soon, for Mom, for all of us. I promise.

She turns to him.

JENNIFER

Or else?

MATTHEW

Or else I'll tell the company it's just not working out, and that we're going back to the States with or without my old job. They can get someone else to crunch their numbers.

This makes Jennifer feel better.

MATTHEW

But until then -- promise me you'll
give it a good try, okay Jen?

JENNIFER

Deal.

27 EXT. THE HOUSE - MORNING

27

The door opens and Matthew walks outside, stopping to look at a familiar BICYCLE, leaning against the house near the door.

MATTHEW

Is this Yoko's bike?

JENNIFER

I think so.

MATTHEW

It's been here all night.

Matthew rolls the bike from the porch to the gate, leaning it against the wall (where we saw it earlier).

He turns back to Jennifer, giving her a kiss.

MATTHEW

I'll probably be home late, maybe
around nine or so.

Jennifer gives him a look.

JENNIFER

I knew you'd forget.

Matthew pauses, looks back blankly. Jennifer just smiles.

JENNIFER

Dinner, your sister? At seven?

MATTHEW

Oh yeah. Right.

JENNIFER

You were going to cook.

MATTHEW

I have a big conference. They
usually run long.

Jennifer rolls her eyes.

JENNIFER

I'll do the shopping. Just call me
if you're going to be late.

She goes back inside, closes the door.

28 INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY 28

Jennifer stands by a cart, looking pale under the stark fluorescent lighting. She also looks shell-shocked.

HER POV: before her is a WALL OF JAPANESE PRODUCTS. Barely a lick of English on any of the brightly-colored packages.

Jennifer is, in a word, clueless. She looks around for assistance -- but she's lost in a whirl of Japanese faces.

She tentatively reaches towards a bowl-shaped package. Studies the Japanese writing.

Stealing a glance around her, she quietly tears open a corner of the bowl. Peeks inside. Sniffs it. She smiles.

29 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 29

CLOSE ON the same package, a microwaveable soup bowl, now open with a spoon sticking out of it. Resting, with a glass of water, atop the *kotatsu* table.

PAN TO REVEAL a pair of feet on the lip of a MOVING BOX next to the table. It's Jennifer, asleep on the couch.

A CLATTERING sound wakes her, followed by the sound of FOOTSTEPS running away. We PULL BACK as Jennifer sees her bowl, and the glass next to it, have been knocked over.

She sits up, looking into the TATAMI ROOM. Emma sits on the edge of her mattress, staring blankly at her.

Jennifer gets up, sternly walks over.

JENNIFER

If you need something, all you have
to do is say so --

She stops short as she sees...

FOOTPRINTS. Formed from the broth, and noodles, of her spilled soup. They're the footprints of a child.

And they lead away from the back room, down the main hallway.

Jennifer looks back up to see Emma watching her.

30 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY

30

Jennifer follows the DAMP FOOTPRINTS. They're getting lighter, and cease altogether in the foyer.

She stands there for a moment, bewildered. Then she tenses, as if sensing she's being watched. She slowly turns to see --

-- A BLACK CAT. Sitting on the first landing of the stairs. Staring at her with bright yellow eyes.

As Jennifer takes a step towards it --

TWO CHILD'S HANDS reach around the corner, and pick up the cat, pulling it out of view.

Jennifer freezes.

JENNIFER
Who's -- who's there?

No response. She walks up the stairs and looks around the corner. Nothing there.

She takes a deep breath, and starts to climb.

31 INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

31

Reaching the top, Jennifer catches a glimpse of a familiar BOY running into the FRONT ROOM.

She slowly walks towards the open door -- we can't see inside the room from the hallway. But she pauses as she hears --

THUD. THUD. The same rhythmic thumping that Karen heard.

After a moment, Jennifer steps inside the room, disappearing from our sight.

We hear her suddenly draw a GASP.

A beat. As we DRIFT CLOSER to the doorway, we notice something strange: the room appears to be growing darker.

A SHARP BREATHING can be heard from inside... quick, panicked gulps of air. Growing faster.

Just as we reach the doorway, the harsh breathing stops.

A moment of stillness.

Then the door is SLAMMED SHUT from the inside.

32 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 32

Matthew enters from work, jacket slung over his shoulder.

MATTHEW
(calling out)
Sorry I'm late, it took awhile to
wrap things up.

He leaves his briefcase by the door and turns to the hall --
-- noticing the house is completely DARK.

MATTHEW
Jen? Susan?

33 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 33

Matthew turns on the lights. The room has reverted to its
messy state, even worse than before.

He looks down at A PICTURE, formerly hanging on the wall, now
lying on the ground. The glass is broken.

MATTHEW
What the hell? --

He quickly goes to the BACK ROOM. Emma sits on the edge of
her bed, dazed and staring. In the darkness.

MATTHEW
Mom? Are you alright?

No answer. He kneels down next to her.

MATTHEW
Where's Jennifer, Mom?

Still nothing. He surveys the mess in the room. Angrily:

MATTHEW
Did Yoko come today, Mom?
Remember? The pretty girl?

He gets to his feet, looking at the SPILLED SOUP in the
living room, now hardened and crusty.

34 INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT 34

OVER THE RAILING: Matthew re-enters the foyer, looking up.

MATTHEW

Jen? Are you up there?

He climbs up the stairs, walking to --

35 INT. THE HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

35

Matthew stands in the doorway of the dark room. He tries the light switch. Nothing happens.

MATTHEW

Dammit.

He slowly enters, feeling his way through the room. We can barely make him out in the darkness... we see the shape of THE BED by a window...

Matthew feels his way to a table next to the bed. Switches on a small lamp --

-- JENNIFER IS RIGHT NEXT TO HIM. Lying in bed, staring wide-eyed at the ceiling. Matthew, startled, falls backwards.

MATTHEW

Jennifer? What is it --

Matthew rushes to her, shaking her. She's unresponsive. The only sign she's alive is that HER FEARFUL EYES slowly fix on him. Her mouth opens, as if she's trying to speak.

MATTHEW

What's wrong? What happened???

She tries harder to form words, but can only produce a CROAK.

MATTHEW

I'll... I'll call an ambulance...

36 INT. THE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

36

Matthew runs into the kitchen grabbing A LARGE BOOK on one of the moving boxes. The Japanese equivalent of a YELLOW PAGES.

He whips it open -- hardly a word of English in it.

37 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 37

A stack of BOOKS sit on the very top of a tall bookshelf. Scissors and a roll of DUCT TAPE rest atop them.

Matthew pushes everything aside to get at a JAPANESE/ENGLISH DICTIONARY underneath. The DUCT TAPE falls to the floor.

He tears across the room to THE PHONE BASE -- but the cordless phone is missing.

MATTHEW

Dammit!

38 INT. THE HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT 38

Matthew re-enters, out of breath. He sits next to Jennifer, who hasn't moved. Puts a hand on her chest to make sure she's still breathing. She is.

MATTHEW

Jesus Christ...

He looks through the dictionary, finding the word he needs:

MATTHEW

'Ambulance'... "kyukyusha".

Then he quickly rips open the Yellow Pages --

-- seeing, in plain English, 'EMERGENCY' on the first page. Below that: 'FIRE/AMBULANCE -- DIAL 119'.

He drops the book and reaches across the bed for a phone, on a table at the far side --

-- THE BOY (TOSHIO) stands up, between Matthew and the phone.

But he looks different from before: his skin is discolored, his lips and eyes are ringed and sullen.

MATTHEW

Who are you? What -- what are you doing here?

Toshio makes a STRANGE SOUND. Looks at Jennifer, then turns to Matthew, SNARLING at him like a CAT.

Matthew, shocked, falls backwards off the bed, hitting the table with the lamp. It drops to the ground --

-- and TOSHIO'S SHADOW, cast by the fallen light, begins to STRETCH AND GROW across the ceiling. The shadow creeps over Jennifer, shifting and coming towards Matthew --

-- Matthew grabs the lamp. He reaches it, holding it up --

At first, it looks like both Jennifer and Toshio have disappeared. But then --

-- Jennifer, suddenly back on the bed, SITS UPRIGHT, jerkily, as if she's been yanked up and forward. Her mouth is wide and gasping --

-- and then she falls back onto the bed. Dead.

Matthew, stunned, backs away from the bed, against the closet. Terrified, he doesn't notice --

-- the THUD THUD sound growing around him. Then --

-- TOSHIO'S HEAD comes into frame behind him. Matthew hears a GROWLING SOUND and turns, seeing Toshio right there! --

39 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 39

The DOORBELL rings. Then a few more times.

SUSAN (American, late 20s) enters, with two bottles of wine.

SUSAN

Hello?

She kicks off her shoes.

SUSAN

You guys in the kitchen?

40 INT. THE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 40

Susan walks in, puts the wine on the table. Looks around.

SUSAN

(calling out:)

I thought you guys were gonna cook!

She goes into the BACK ROOM. Sits next to Emma.

SUSAN

Hi, Mom. How are you feeling?

Emma turns to her with her usual vacant look.

There's a CREAK from above. Susan looks up at the ceiling.

SUSAN
I guess I came at a bad time, huh?

41 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

41

Twisting a corkscrew into a wine bottle, Susan leans into the foyer, yelling upstairs:

SUSAN
I'll give you guys one minute to
finish whatever you're doing up
there and get your butts down here.

As she heads back towards the kitchen, we CRANE UP to see --
MATTHEW. He's walking down the second floor hall. He looks
different: the expression on his face is troubled, occupied.
And he's dragging his dead wife's body. By the hair.

He pulls her inside the REAR ROOM -- the doorway looks more
imposing, more ominous, than before. It's dark and
malevolent, the threshold to a secret that won't stay buried.

We CRANE BACK DOWN to see Susan in the kitchen. She's poured
a glass of wine and sighs impatiently.

She walks back down the hall into the foyer.

SUSAN
I mean it, guys.

Silence from upstairs. Shaking her head:

SUSAN
Well, I warned you. Prepare to be
emotionally scarred.

She starts up the stairs and turns the first corner --

-- MATTHEW is sitting there, hands on his knees, looking
harried. Susan YELPS.

SUSAN
Matthew! Don't scare me like that!

He's shaking slightly. His eyes drift up to hers.

SUSAN
What's going on? Where's Jennifer?

MATTHEW

She went out. Something came up.

SUSAN

I hope she's not long. I'm absolutely starving.

Matthew looks back down at his feet. Susan misreads:

SUSAN

I knew it. You guys forgot to go shopping, didn't you?

Matthew abruptly stands. Looming over his sister.

MATTHEW

I'm sorry. This is a bad time.

SUSAN

Are you okay? What's going on?

MATTHEW

You should go.

He moves forward, right into her. His momentum pushes Susan back into the foyer. She holds onto his shirt:

SUSAN

Did something happen? What's --

Matthew's hands suddenly TIGHTEN ON HER SHOULDERS. His eyes grow wide, filled with anger, as he whispers fiercely --

MATTHEW

She doesn't love me... she never loved me...

Susan watches as he repeats himself, over and over. Growing scared, she finally SHAKES HIM.

SUSAN

What are you talking about?

Matthew slowly looks up. Malice on his face.

He steps forward. Susan backs away.

SUSAN

Stop it, Matthew.

MATTHEW

Leave me alone.

SUSAN
Matthew, please --

MATTHEW
(yelling)
GO AWAY!!!

Susan fumbles with the front door. She gets it open and runs out just before Matthew reaches her.

ON MATTHEW: he stands there, head tilted down, for a moment. Then he straightens. Slowly closes the front door.

Matthew heads back upstairs. He reaches the second floor and opens the door to the rear bedroom.

The room beyond is dark. But A DARK FIGURE is visible, standing in the far corner, facing Matthew.

He steps inside, and the door slowly swings shut behind him.

42 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

42

It's an overcast afternoon. Swollen clouds hang low over The House. It looks a bit more imposing than usual.

THE MAILBOX is adorned with the Japanese equivalent of a "For Sale" sign -- weather-worn, and looks like it's been there for years.

SUZUKI (30s, Japanese), a Real Estate agent, waits by the gate. Then he notices something. Waves, and smiles.

It's SUSAN, approaching with MATTHEW, JENNIFER and EMMA.

Susan shakes Suzuki's hand and they exchange a greeting in Japanese. She turns to her brother.

SUSAN
This is Suzuki-san, he's the Real
Estate broker.

Suzuki bows at Matthew and Jennifer, says something.

MATTHEW
What did he say?

SUSAN
He said: "welcome to Tokyo". And
that you must be very important to
your company for them to rent this
place for you.

Matthew grins. Susan rolls her eyes.

43 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY 43

Everyone enters, checking the place out. Suzuki and Susan slip off their shoes. As Matthew steps into the foyer:

SUSAN
Your shoes.

MATTHEW
Oh. Right.

He kneels down, untying his shoes. Jennifer looks perplexed.

JENNIFER
Even in our own house?

SUSAN
Even in your own house.

Suzuki smiles as Matthew and Jennifer take off their shoes. Susan says something to him in Japanese and he laughs. They walk down the hall, and Matthew and Jennifer follow.

44 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 44

Suzuki opens the blinds, letting some light into the place. It's not helping much -- it's still pretty dreary.

MATTHEW
Isn't the layout great? Wait 'till
you see the back room. It's
perfect for Mom -- she won't have
to deal with the stairs.

Jennifer follows him through the room. She doesn't look quite as enthusiastic.

Matthew slides open the door leading to the TATAMI ROOM.

MATTHEW
Her bed won't be here until next
week, but we can put the mattress
on the floor. What do you think?

Jennifer warms a bit. The wooden room is beautiful.

Susan asks Suzuki a question in Japanese, and he responds.

SUSAN

He says no one has lived in this house for three years.

JENNIFER

Why?

Susan asks Suzuki in Japanese. He shrugs.

SUZUKI

(trying his English:)
Ex-pen-sive.

Matthew suddenly realizes:

MATTHEW

Where's Mom?

We slowly CRANE UP to the SECOND FLOOR HALL, moving towards the REAR ROOM at the end. The door is ajar.

44a INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY 44a

Susan comes up the stairs, worried.

SUSAN

Mom? Where are you?

44b INT. THE HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY 44b

Susan looks inside -- Emma isn't there. She's about to leave when something catches her attention. She walks to

THE CLOSET. The door is open. Susan kneels down, looking at something inside it. She picks it up --

-- it's the CERAMIC CAT Karen found earlier. As Susan examines it, she notices something on the wall of the closet (which we don't see). Her face softens, and she smiles.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

Did you get her?

SUSAN

(under her breath:)
Take a pill, will ya?

Susan stands and walks out of the room. But we stay in the closet, PANNING TO REVEAL the closet wall. It's covered with BLACK CRAYON, low to the ground, the work of a child. The images are dozens of BLACK CATS.

47 INT. THE HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

47

Suzuki enters, looking at THE TUB: filled to the brim.

After a moment, Suzuki kneels down next to the bathtub. He pulls the thin CHAIN connected to the rubber stopper --

-- but the end of the chain comes out of the water. Hmmm. It's not connected after all.

Suzuki eyes the plug at the bottom of the tub.

Then he takes off his jacket. Rolls up his shirt sleeve.

And reaches into the water for the rubber stopper.

It's just out of reach.

He rolls up his sleeve a little more. Reaches deeper --

-- suddenly there's a BURST OF SOUND: a dull THUMPING, something THRASHING in water, the SCREAMING of a YOUNG BOY, voice MUFFLED by water --

-- Suzuki recoils as water SPLASHES UP around him --

-- he falls away from the tub in horror, landing on his butt.

THE BATHTUB: Filled to the brim. Still and silent. Not so much as a ripple on the surface.

That couldn't have just been his imagination, could it?

As he slowly stands, he sees something out of the corner of his eye --

-- a DEAD CAT, bloody and torn, in the corner of the room.

As Suzuki backs away from it, eyes widening in horror, he's startled by --

MATTHEW, standing in the doorway. Beaming at him.

MATTHEW
It's perfect. We'll take it.

Suzuki looks back to the corner. There's no dead cat.

A RINGING SOUND comes into focus -- the BEEPING of a phone, waiting for someone to pick up and make the connection...

47a OMITTED

47a

47b OMITTED 47b

47c OMITTED 47c

48 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SUSAN'S FLOOR - NIGHT 48

It's after-hours in this office space: CUBICLES fill the center, surrounded by glass-windowed OFFICES. The glittering lights of the Tokyo cityscape beyond show a hell of a view.

One light still burns in an office towards the end --

-- SUSAN'S OFFICE. She's working late. She wears a phone headset while she types lines of code into her computer.

No one's answering. A familiar answering machine picks up:

MATTHEW & JENNIFER (ON MACHINE)
*"Konnichiwa! Matt and Jennifer
aren't around, leave a message."*

SUSAN (INTO PHONE)
Hey, guys, it's Susan. Matt, are
you there? Pick up... Okay, well,
I'm leaving work now so you can try
my cell, or just call me at home
later.

She pauses. Leans back, away from the keyboard.

SUSAN (INTO PHONE)
I just wanted to make sure Mom is
okay. Yesterday was...
(MORE)

SUSAN (INTO PHONE) (cont'd)
 a bit weird, and -- I'm just a
 little worried. Listen, just give
 me a call when you can, okay?

She hangs up, taking the headset off. Concerned.

49 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - 10TH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT 49

Susan walks through the hallway. She hears a strange scraping sound -- it sounds as though something is being dragged.

Susan turns around, but the hallway looks normal. Is it just her imagination?

The sound starts again, coming closer. Susan gets scared and opens the door to the emergency stairwell beside her.

49a INT. STAIRWELL - 10TH FLOOR - NIGHT 49a

The hallway is chilly -- Susan shivers. She's about to start walking down when she looks up, noticing THE LIGHTS at the top floor FLICKERING.

A wind suddenly blows through the center of the stairwell with an eerie ROAR.

Susan looks disconcerted as she starts walking down...

Then we hear the SCRAPING SOUND again. Startled, Susan pauses and looks down, over the railing.

There's nothing there -- but the sound continues, growing louder, like something is moving up towards her.

SUSAN
 (calling out:)
 Is anybody there?

Just then, the lights on the top floor finally GO OUT.

Susan's breath catches in her throat as she looks up --

The lights on the next floor go out. And the next. The darkness above growing closer with each darkening floor.

Susan nervously looks back down -- the SCRAPING is even closer. And then, for an instant, she sees A SKINNY PALE HAND on the railing two floors down.

Terrified, Susan starts to back up -- but stops as she realizes that the darkness from above is almost upon her.

Then Susan sees A FINGERTIP of the hand at the corner of the floor where she stands, and A HEAD COVERED WITH BLACK HAIR slowly crawling up on the wall.

Susan's mouth opens in a silent screen. With nowhere to escape, she opens the same door and rushes back into the hallway --

49b OMITTED

49b

49c OMITTED 49c

49cc INT. OFFICE BUILDING - 10TH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT 49cc

-- but her lucky RABBIT'S FOOT gets caught on the door latch. Panicking, Susan struggles to free herself --

Through the crack, she sees the darkness continuing to come down. The lights on Susan's floor FLICKER.

Susan looks up to see A PALE BOY on the landing to the higher floor. The SAME BOY is also standing on the landing of each floor above. They're all staring down at Susan.

Susan screams as she desperately tries to yank her chain free... and then she sees THE PALE HAND clutching her rabbit's foot!

The door shuts, and Susan falls backwards into the hallway.

She jumps to her feet and runs down the hall.

50 OMITTED 50

51 OMITTED 51

52 OMITTED 52

52a OMITTED 52a

53 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT 53

A cramped room. Susan stands in the doorway, animatedly talking to a young SECURITY GUARD sitting at a desk lined with VIDEO MONITORS. She's speaking rapidly, and shaking:

SUSAN (IN JAPANESE)
 In the stairs... there was...
 something... a strange person...
 all the lights were going out...

The Guard doesn't understand her -- in her panic, Susan's MISPRONOUNCING HER WORDS, and she knows it.

Susan takes a breath, frustrated and frightened.

SUSAN
 (pleading, in English)
 Please. Help me.

The Guard stands, placing a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

GUARD (IN JAPANESE)
 I'll take a look. Wait here.

The Guard leaves. Susan doesn't look thrilled to be alone.

54 OMITTED 54

54a OMITTED 54a

54aa OMITTED 54aa

54ab INT. 10TH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT 54ab

Holding a flashlight, the Guard walks down the hallway, checking the doors.

54b INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT 54b

Susan takes a breath and sits down, trying to relax. It's obvious that she feels safer, here in the Security Room.

Then she notices movement on one of the SECURITY MONITORS --

ON THE SCREEN: -- the GUARD continues down the 10TH FLOOR HALL, stopping at the door to the stairwell.

Susan leans toward the monitor for a better view.

ON THE SCREEN: the Guard opens the stairwell door and leans inside, checking it out.

ON SUSAN: her eyes are glued to the screen. Waiting.

ON THE SCREEN: the Guard, finding nothing out of the ordinary, closes the door and continues on down the hall.

SUSAN leans back, exhaling. Relieved.

Then the video CRACKLES with a sudden quick burst of static.

And Susan GASPS, sitting upright, as she sees --

ON THE SCREEN: the stairwell door OPENS AGAIN. And then --

-- something DARK moves out of the stairwell, entering the hallway.

ON SUSAN: she recoils from the screen in horror, unable to tear her gaze away. Her mouth opens in a silent scream, her eyes widening as she watches --

-- and then she finds the strength to get to her feet.

55 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - FOYER - NIGHT 55

Susan bursts out of the security room and runs through the empty lobby, towards the front doors.

56 OMITTED 56

56a EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT 56a

Susan rushes out of the front doors and runs to the street. She frantically hails a cab and gets in.

56b INT. TAXI - NIGHT

56b

Susan presses herself in the corner of the back seat, purse clutched tightly in her white knuckles.

There's something strange about his voice: it's oddly flat,
without inflection.

SUSAN (INTO PHONE)
Matthew! Are you alright?

MATTHEW (PHONE)
I'm downstairs. What number are
you again?

SUSAN (INTO PHONE)
702. I'll buzz you in.

She presses a button on the phone, and is about to hang up --

Almost immediately there's a LOUD KNOCK at her door. She
gets to her feet, surprised. How did he get up so fast?

Susan goes to the door and looks through the peephole.

HER POV: Matthew's face, distorted by the fish-eye glass.
He's looking into the peephole, with a sneer on his face.

Susan opens the door.

SUSAN
I don't know what you're up to, but
this is not cool --

She catches her breath. THERE'S NO ONE THERE.

Then the phone emits the THROATY CROAKING sound. Quickly
growing louder and LOUDER...

Susan cries out and drops the phone. It BREAKS OPEN on the
hallway floor as Susan slams her apartment door.

61 INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

61

Susan quickly draws the chain lock. Then she builds the
courage to step forward, and look through the peephole --

HER POV: the phone lies broken in the middle of the floor.
Otherwise, the hallway is empty.

Susan backs away from the door, shaking in fright.

Breathing hard, she backs into --

62 INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 62

Susan enters, turning off her cell phone and unplugging the bedroom phone from the wall.

Then she retreats to the safety of her bed, eyes on --

THE APARTMENT DOOR, next to the kitchen. Silence.

Susan's breathing slows. But she looks around the room, still anxious -- it's too quiet in here. Her panic builds. But she's alone in the room, isn't she?

As we MOVE IN on Susan, the room starts to become quieter. The SOUND OF TRAFFIC from outside, the HUMMING REFRIGERATOR in the kitchen... everything fades to a stifling silence.

And Susan notices, all right. Her breath, now suddenly loud, catches in her throat.

A long moment of silence. Then --

-- DRIP. DRIP.

It's coming from the KITCHEN SINK.

Susan stares at it. She finally stands, and --

62a INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 62a

-- slowly walks into THE KITCHEN. She reaches out and turns the faucet handle. Tightens it. The dripping stops.

Relieved, Susan turns away --

-- DRIP. DRIP. It begins again. Louder, more intense.

Scared, Susan turns back to the sink. Water is now GUSHING OUT from the faucet, filling up a bowl in the sink.

She slowly reaches out a hand and turns the faucet, as tightly as she can manage --

-- tighter... tighter... straining with the effort..

Until the water stops. Only then does she let go --

-- just then, a CHILD'S PALE HAND quietly rises to the surface from water in the bowl, and starts VIOLENTLY SPLASHING the surface.

Susan screams and runs back to her bedroom --

62b INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

62b

She lies down, shivering, pulling the quilt to her chin. A final retreat.

SUSAN
Please... stop it...

The SPLASHING SOUNDS in the kitchen continue for a while. Then, it suddenly stops.

Susan is so terrified that she almost faints.

Then her breathing stops. Her eyes widen.

Her hand reaches up under her pillow, feeling around --

-- and she comes out with HER LUCKY RABBIT'S FOOT.

The one she left behind in the stairwell.

Susan suddenly CRIES OUT, her head tilting back, her body abruptly going stiff. We soon see why:

A LUMP begins to rise at the foot of the bed. A big one. Moving slowly up Susan's body. Reaching the edge of the quilt, which slowly rises --

-- revealing a QUICK FLASH of the PALE FACE OF THE JAPANESE WOMAN WITH LONG DARK HAIR on top of her!

Susan SCREAMS, and is abruptly pulled under the covers --

CUT TO BLACK.

The knocking has stopped. Silence.

Then Karen's cell phone suddenly LIGHTS UP, ringing.

It rings four times, then goes to voice mail.

67 INT. THE HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

67

A new SOUND breaks the silence: movement outside. Crunching footsteps on gravel, someone brushing past tree limbs.

A SHADOW falls over the window. A face looks inside --

-- it's ALEX, Karen's boss. He walks away from the window and continues down the side of the house --

-- we TRACK down the hallway, past the bathroom, through the kitchen, following his progress into --

THE BACK ROOM: Alex is visible through the sliding door leading to the back porch. He peers inside.

HIS POV: A FIGURE covered head-to-toe in a white sheet lies on the mattress. Unmoving.

Alex tries the sliding door -- it's open. He steps inside.

ALEX

Karen?

Silence greets him. He stares down at the figure in the bed.

Alex licks his lips, nervous. Finally walks to the mattress, kneeling down next to it.

Raises a hand and grabs the sheet. Raises it over the head --

-- it's Emma. As we last saw her, eyes on the ceiling, mouth and eyes wide open in fear.

But now it's clear, from the *tache noire* in the eyes, the blanched skin, the rigidity of her body: she's dead.

Alex falls back onto his butt, staring at Emma. He pulls himself away from the corpse --

-- and freezes. There's something right behind him.

He whirls around --

-- it's KAREN. In the corner, looking pale and dazed.

68 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

68

Two POLICE CARS and an AMBULANCE are parked out front.

An UNMARKED CAR pulls up, and DETECTIVE NAKAGAWA (40s) exits the passenger side. He looks up at The House with dread.

The driver, DETECTIVE IGARASHI (30s), moves next to him.

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)

I can handle this myself, you know.
It's just a routine call. I don't
know why you wanted to come.

He turns to Nakagawa, awaiting a response. He doesn't get one. Nakagawa just stares up at The House.

69 INT. THE HOUSE - LATER

69

The house feels completely different: all the interior lights are on, a few POLICE OFFICERS mill about, two EMTs wheel EMMA'S BODY out the front door on a gurney.

Alex sits at the kitchen table, frazzled. He turns to --

-- KAREN. She's sitting in the living room, wrapped in a blanket, being attended to by a FEMALE NURSE and speaking with Nakagawa and Igarashi, who is taking notes on a pad.

Karen says something and the Detective looks over at Alex. Then he speaks to the Nurse, who helps Karen to her feet.

Nakagawa and Igarashi enter the kitchen. In perfect English:

NAKAGAWA

I am Detective Nakagawa. This is
Detective Igarashi, my assistant.

ALEX

Is Karen okay?

NAKAGAWA

She is very shaken. We would like her to stay in the hospital tonight, under evaluation.

He hands Alex a wedding picture of MATTHEW AND JENNIFER.

NAKAGAWA

Do you know these people?

ALEX

Matthew Williams, and his wife Jennifer. He's Emma's son, the woman Karen came here to see.

NAKAGAWA

When was the last time you saw him?

ALEX

I met them when they came to register. It's standard procedure, though the visits were arranged by his employer. He works at --

NAKAGAWA

We've spoken with his employer. He did not show up for work today.

Something about this gives Alex pause. Nakagawa speaks briefly to Igarashi in Japanese, then hands Alex a card.

NAKAGAWA

If you could please come by tomorrow to make a statement, the address is there, at the bottom --

ALEX

(realizing)
Yoko.

NAKAGAWA

I'm sorry?

ALEX

Karen was a substitute -- Yoko is the girl who is normally in charge of Emma. She's also been missing from work.

NAKAGAWA

For how long?

ALEX

For the last two days.

Nakagawa and Igarashi exchange a look.

ALEX

I think I saw her bike outside.

Nakagawa heads for the front door as Igarashi continues to interview Alex.

70 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

70

Nakagawa stands outside by the front gate, looking at --

-- YOKO'S BICYCLE. He looks down at it, frowning.
 Then he suddenly cocks his head. As if sensing something.
 He turns to look up at A WINDOW ON THE SECOND FLOOR.
 It's empty.

71 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 71

Igarashi stands by the ANSWERING MACHINE. The message counter reads '1'. He presses PLAY.

SUSAN'S MESSAGE replays, and he listens carefully. As it ends, he turns to see NAKAGAWA standing in the doorway.

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)
 That's Matthew's sister.

He shows Nakagawa a PHOTO of Matthew and Susan, brother and sister, grinning at the camera.

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)
 This must be her.

The look on Nakagawa's face is grave.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)
 Call her at work, then at home. If
 no one answers, send someone to --

He trails off, looking down at --

-- the PHONE BASE. The cordless phone is missing.

Nakagawa reaches down, pressing the 'LOCATE' button.

A distant BEEPING SOUND can be heard.

Everyone in the room stops what they're doing. They listen.

72 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 72

Nakagawa and Igarashi enter from the hallway, followed by their men. They look up to the second floor.

The BEEPING is definitely coming from upstairs.

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)

God!

Nakagawa sits in front of the bodies, examining them.

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)

What the hell... what is going on?

Nakagawa sees the beeping CORDLESS PHONE a few feet away.

SOMETHING next to it attracts Nakagawa's interest. We can't see what it is, but there's some DEEP RED in it, and something very WHITE --

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)

What is that?

-- Nakagawa's eyes widen as he realizes what he's looking at.

76 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

76

The POLICE CARS outside have attracted a small crowd. The TWO BODIES are being loaded into a POLICE VAN.

Nakagawa stands with THE CORONER. The CORONER'S ASSISTANT, wearing a face mask and rubber gloves, approaches. He holds something small, wrapped in a bloody white sheet.

The Coroner slowly unfolds the sheet. We can't see what he's looking at -- but it elicits quite a reaction.

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)

Who does this belong to?

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)

We don't know.

The Coroner quickly re-covers the object.

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)

I can use the blood to help identify the person.

As the Coroner and his assistant walk away:

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)

Is it possible that someone could live without... that?

The Coroner turns back, his face pale.

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)
I certainly hope not.

Nakagawa turns away to see Igarashi approaching, talking into a cell phone. He looks disturbed. As he hangs up:

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)
Someone just reported another
death. It's not in our district...
but I think we should check it out.

Nakagawa realizes something's troubling his partner.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)
Why?

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)
The cause of death is not clear...
but it is the man who sold them
this house.

77 EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY 77

CLOSE ON the spinning wheels of a bicycle. A familiar one.

The pedals are being pumped by a beautiful young Japanese woman -- this is YOKO (early 20s).

Yoko turns, riding down a small side street. It ends, and she rounds a corner stopping in front of --

77a EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY 77a

Yoko opens the gate and walks her bike to the front door, leaning it against the wall nearby (exactly where we saw Matthew bump into it earlier).

She rings the door buzzer. Waits. She seems to have expected this: she pulls a KEY from her pocket, with a plastic LABEL on it.

78 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY 78

Yoko steps inside. She instinctively slips off her shoes. She calls out, in decent English:

YOKO
Hi, excuse me?

There's a small ENVELOPE with YOKO'S NAME resting on a small table by the door. She takes it, opens it.

THE LETTER says, simply: "*Out for a walk, back later.*"

YOKO
Emma? It's Yoko. I'm coming in.

79 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 79

The house is the least "moved-into" that we've seen so far: although the main furniture is in place, MOVING BOXES are stacked in every room, in various stages of unpacking.

But there's also an unusual amount of mess in the house -- a disarray, much like the opening sequence, that isn't exactly related to moving in.

Yoko surveys the room, dismayed by the mess.

Then she sees EMMA at the far end of the living room, her back to Yoko. She's looking down at something in her hands.

YOKO
Hi, Emma. It's good to see you
again.

Emma turns. Looks blankly at Yoko, who approaches. Realizing the woman doesn't remember her:

YOKO
My name is Yoko.

The old woman still gives no sign of recognition. Yoko gently takes her arm.

YOKO
You should be in bed --

Then she sees what Emma was looking at: the roll of DUCT TAPE. She's cut her finger on the serrated cutting blade.

YOKO (IN JAPANESE)
You shouldn't be playing with this!

Shaking her head, Yoko takes the duct tape and looks around for a place where Emma can't get at it --

-- she puts the tape ON THE STACK OF BOOKS at the top of the bookshelf, next to the scissors (where Matthew found them).

80 OMITTED 80

81 OMITTED 81

81a INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY 81a

From the entrance, we see Yoko come out of the kitchen holding a tray with a teapot and cup.

She walks into the BACK ROOM, looking down at Emma's bed. The old woman must be asleep: Yoko gently lays down the tray, quietly steps out of the room and slides the door shut.

Then Yoko moves through the LIVING ROOM to the PHONE BASE --
-- she picks up THE CORDLESS, finally where it belongs.

Yoko dials a number as she walks into THE ENTRANCE HALL. She begins a conversation (in Japanese) as she looks at the scattered rubbish on the ground, shaking her head.

She climbs up to the SECOND FLOOR, pausing to kneel and pick up some pieces of crumpled paper, chatting all the while.

THUD. THUD. Yoko pauses, turning towards the open door to the front room. The rhythmic THUMPING continues.

82 OMITTED 82

83 OMITTED 83

84 INT. THE HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY 84

The room is a mess. The bed is unmade, clothes are strewn on the floor. Looks like a storm swept through it.

Yoko stands in the doorway, listening for the THUMPING sounds. But they've stopped.

She finishes her call and hangs up. Sighs. She sticks the cordless phone into her pocket and starts to clean the room.

As Yoko straightens the bedspread, she hears something. Pauses. And we hear it too --

-- a familiar THROATY CROAKING SOUND. Quiet and muffled.

Yoko, a bit unnerved by the strange sound, pulls a small MP3 player and headphones from her pocket. She puts them on, and goes back to work.

84aa INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY 84aa

Yoko backs into the hallway, humming along to the music. Preoccupied, she doesn't notice as --

The DOOR TO THE REAR ROOM, at the end of the dark hall behind her, SLOWLY SWINGS OPEN.

Yoko turns and walks down the hall towards it.

84a INT. THE HOUSE - REAR ROOM - DAY 84a

Yoko enters the room, which is also a mess. The MOVING BOXES are tumbled about the small room. She sighs.

Then she notices the CERAMIC CAT on the shelf, FACING HER (where Susan left it). Apparently she's not a big fan of felines: she uneasily turns it to FACE THE WALL instead.

Yoko turns back to the room, staring to stack the moving boxes (the way we saw them before). As she does --

-- she pauses again. The music in her headphones starts PHASING, digital noise creeping in...

Yoko takes off the headphones. Stares at them.

And then there's another CROAKING SOUND. From close by.

Yoko draws a breath, quickly looking up --

-- AT THE CEILING, directly above her. That's where the horrible sound is coming from.

Freaked out, Yoko backs away, and opens the bedroom door --

85 INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY 85

-- the hallway is COMPLETELY DARK. An unnatural blackness. The skylights above, which were previously filled with sunlight, are now completely opaque.

Yoko stands in the doorway, scared, afraid to step into the darkness. Then she looks down --

HER POV: the murky blackness of the hall seems to be slowly CREEPING IN, phantomlike, around the edges of the door.

86 INT. THE HOUSE - REAR ROOM - DAY

86

Yoko stumbles back into the room. Her eyes fixed on --

-- THE DOORWAY: the creeping darkness is now coming in around all sides, not just the bottom.

Yoko backs up to the bed, still clutching the CORDLESS PHONE.

She looks back at the door, suddenly CRYING OUT --

-- A BLACK CAT sits in the doorway. Tail wrapped around itself, sitting perfectly still, like a statue. Staring at Yoko with its yellow eyes. Something unnatural about it.

Yoko backs away towards the closet. Nowhere to go.

The cat suddenly HISSSES AT HER --

-- and that's all Yoko can take. In a panic, she opens the closet door, ducks inside.

87 INT. CLOSET - DAY

87

Yoko slams the door shut, pulling herself up onto a raised shelf. Breathing hard, looking down at --

-- the crack under the door. The light is beginning to dim.

Yoko presses back into the closet, trapped.

The closet is starting to get dark. Quickly.

Yoko looks around desperately. Looking up, she sees --

-- THE ATTIC PANEL above her is wide open.

Caught between a rock and a hard place. Yoko decides:

She shakily stands on the shelf and reaches up to pull herself into the attic.

88 INT. ATTIC - DAY

88

Yoko's head appears. Then her shoulders. She looks around, but can't see a thing in the darkness.

She's about to pull herself all the way up --

-- when she hears the THROATY CROAKING SOUND.

Coming from the darkness.

Yoko stiffens, her breath catching in her throat.

ANOTHER POV: we're at the far end of the attic, suddenly and rapidly RACING FORWARD TOWARDS YOKO...

ON YOKO: something brushes her face. Long, black hair.

There's a head, just inches from hers. Almost nose-to-nose.

Yoko is paralyzed with fear, eyes wide. A long beat.

Then she reaches into her pocket, pulling out a LIGHTER.

Yoko raises it and flicks the wheel --

-- we get a glimpse of a PALE FACE, surrounded by long black hair, eyes wide and mouth open, the THROATY SOUND suddenly increasing in pitch and volume --

-- as the face moves forward --

CUT TO BLACK.

89 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

89

Karen slowly wakes up in bed. As her eyes clear, she sees --

DOUG. He sits on the edge of the bed, slightly slumped, his back to her.

He slowly turns -- and a relieved smile crosses his face. He moves closer, and reaches out a hand.

DOUG

It's okay. I've got you.

Karen nods, lacing her fingers in his. But her eyes are glazed and unfocused -- she's exhausted.

DOUG

Your boss told me what happened.
I'm sorry.

She turns away, the memory bothering her. Doug takes her hand, massaging her fingers, worried.

DOUG

I talked to your teachers. They said you can take as much time as you need. We could go to Kyoto for a weekend, see those temples you're always talking about.

Karen tries to smile back, but her heart's not in it.

KAREN

Running away won't help.

DOUG

There's nothing to run away from,
Kat. No one blames you for what
happened.

KAREN

I'm not even sure what did happen.

DOUG

You went to help someone who was,
quite simply, beyond help.

KAREN

No, that's not what I mean...

She trails off, trying to remember. Doug waits.

KAREN

That house. There was something...

Doug sees her frustration, and tenderly brushes a hair from her face.

DOUG

Don't beat yourself up searching
for a greater truth, Kat. An old
woman passed away in her sleep.
It's sad, but that's all it is --

KAREN

Is that how they said she died?

DOUG

I'm sorry this happened to you.
But maybe, in a way, it will help
you later. Death is an unfortunate
but integral part of your future
career. There's no avoiding it.
Maybe now you'll be more... ready
for it.

KAREN

I don't think I'll ever be ready
for something like that.

She turns away. Doug wraps an arm around her. Karen leans into him, and he strokes her hair.

The moment is broken by a soft KNOCK. Detective Nakagawa stands in the doorway, holding a thick FILE.

NAKAGAWA

I'm sorry to disturb you, Miss Davies. I was wondering if you could answer some additional questions?

Doug stands, intercepting Nakagawa. He sticks out a hand.

DOUG

I'm Doug. Karen's boyfriend.

Nakagawa nods. Fixes Doug with a blank stare. Taking the hint, Doug turns to Karen.

DOUG

You up for this?

KAREN

(nodding:)

Why don't you find out when I can check out of here.

Reluctantly, Doug kisses her brow, then exits. Nakagawa pulls a chair up to the bed and sits, putting the file on a small table.

NAKAGAWA
How are you feeling?

KAREN
Okay. Tired.

NAKAGAWA
You are an exchange student?
(Karen nods:)
And you have been volunteering at
the Health Center for...?

KAREN
Three months. I needed a social
welfare credit.

NAKAGAWA
You said this was the first time
you'd been in that house?

KAREN
Yes.

She notices Nakagawa isn't taking notes. He seems somewhat uncomfortable, as if he's building to something:

NAKAGAWA
About the Japanese boy you said you
saw there --

KAREN
Did you find him?

NAKAGAWA
No, not yet. You said the boy had
been taped into the closet?

KAREN
Yes, that's right. He was...
holding a cat. A black cat.
(remembering:)
There was a book in the closet,
too. I think it was a journal.

NAKAGAWA
Did it belong to the boy?

KAREN

I don't think so. I think it
belonged to a woman.

Nakagawa looks up. Karen tries to explain:

KAREN

The writing. It looked feminine.

KAREN

I left it on the kitchen table.

Nakagawa frowns, scribbles a note.

NAKAGAWA

I didn't see any book on the table.
Perhaps someone moved it. Did you
speak with the boy after you opened
the closet?

She thinks, recalling:

KAREN

I asked him his name. He said
'Toshio'.

Nakagawa immediately tenses. A long beat. He can see how
exhausted Karen is. But something's troubling him:

NAKAGAWA

One more question, please.

He slowly reaches into his pocket and pulls out THE PHOTO
Karen found, and taped together. He shows it to her.

NAKAGAWA

We found this in the room where...

Karen looks at the picture.

KAREN

This is him. This is the boy.

NAKAGAWA

Are you certain?

KAREN

Yes. Positive.

Nakagawa stares down at the picture in his hands.

And Karen notices -- Nakagawa's hands are shaking.

KAREN

Detective Nakagawa?

He looks up at her, a faraway look in his eyes.

KAREN

The whole time I was in that house,
I felt something was... wrong.

From the expression on Nakagawa's face, she's onto something.

KAREN

What happened there?

Nakagawa holds Karen's gaze for a moment. Even in her exhausted state, it's clear -- she's as frightened as he is.

NAKAGAWA

The bodies of the son and daughter-in-law of the woman you were caring for were found in the attic.

Karen just stares at him, stunned.

NAKAGAWA

It seems that the son killed his wife, and then himself --

There's a KNOCK on the door. Igarashi stands in the doorway. He speaks to Nakagawa in Japanese.

NAKAGAWA

(to Karen)

Please excuse me for a moment.

Nakagawa puts the photo down and steps into the hallway and closes the door, but not all the way. Karen watches and listens through the crack:

90

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

90

IN THE HALLWAY: the men speak with hushed voices.

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)

We checked the apartment of Susan, the sister. She wasn't there...

He trails off, hesitating.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)

Yes?

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)

The chain lock had been drawn from the inside. And the deadbolt. But we found no one in the apartment.

Nakagawa takes this in.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)

Get the surveillance tapes from the office building.

Igarashi nods. But doesn't move. After a moment, quietly:

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)

They were the first family to live in that house since the incident three years ago --

Nakagawa's harsh look silences him. Then the Detective turns, noticing KAREN watching them. He pulls the door shut.

91 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 91

Nakagawa's stern voice is muffled by the closed door. Karen sits back in bed, disturbed.

Then her attention turns to THE FILE on the table.

She considers. Then reaches for it. Opens it.

It's a POLICE REPORT, in Japanese.

Karen scans it, and turns the page. She draws a breath --

-- it's a photo of THE HOUSE. Cordoned off with police tape. An ambulance out front. Like the scene she just left...

...only the picture is dated three years ago.

THREE DETECTIVES are visible beyond the open front door, conferring in the entryway.

The photo of the house is attached to a POLICE REPORT, with THREE PICTURES. A stern-looking Japanese man (TAKEO), a somber woman (KAYAKO), and a YOUNG BOY we know very well --

Karen makes the connection. She picks up the taped-up photo and compares it to the file... the boy and his father are the same as in the newspaper.

Karen gently touches the "missing" face of KAYAKO -- then her eyes move to the picture of THE BOY.

Her eyes widen as she reads THE JAPANESE TEXT under his face:

KAREN
Toshio...

92 INT. NURSING CARE CENTER - NIGHT 92

The place is quiet, completely deserted. Except for --

-- Alex. He's behind his desk in the reception area, staring off into space. Alex finally glances up at a clock -- it's almost ten o'clock.

He gets up, turns off his computer, switches off the lights, and walks around the reception desk towards --

THE FRONT DOORS. He hits a final light switch and is almost to the exit, when --

-- he suddenly SLIPS. Almost falls. Saves himself by throwing a hand up against the wall.

He looks down. What the hell did he slip on?

A pool of liquid. Right by the front doors, where the ladder stood earlier. It's too dark to make out what the fluid is.

Alex looks down at HIS HAND -- it's covered in the liquid. And there's a dark HANDPRINT where he grabbed the wall.

HIS POV: a trail of FOOTPRINTS lead from the pool of liquid, around the base of the stairs.

His eyes on his dirtied hand, Alex slowly reaches for the nearby light switch. The overheads come on --

-- the liquid is deep red. Blood.

Alex looks across the room. Shaking, he starts to walk forward, following the footsteps.

He pauses at the bottom of the stairs, seeing --

-- the BLOOD TRAIL has stopped. Right by the bottom step.

Alex looks up the staircase. No blood.

After a moment, Alex starts to walk up. As he reaches the first landing --

He freezes. Sensing something behind him. He turns to see --

YOKO. Head lowered, clothing is torn and bloody. She's slowly climbing up the steps, but she's MOVING JERKILY, like a marionette, her limbs making a strange CREAKING as if tendons and muscles are being pushed to their limits.

And there's BLOOD DRIPPING DOWN, splattering on her shoes.

ALEX

Yoko?

She keeps moving, straining, climbing... towards him.

ALEX

What... What happened, Yoko?

Now she finally stops, two steps away. A long beat.

ALEX

Say something, please...

Yoko slowly raises her head towards him --

-- the lower half of her face is missing. Her jawbone has been ripped out, her tongue hanging limply on her chest.

Alex stumbles backwards... and his foot lands right in a puddle of blood. His legs fly out from under him and he CRACKS HIS HEAD AGAINST THE GROUND.

HIS POV: everything goes blurry, and canted 90 degrees. But it looks like there's A FIGURE standing in the hallway, watching the scene...

...a small boy holding a black cat...

Dazed, Alex plants a hand on the ground and pulls himself into a seating position --

-- and coming face-to-face with YOKO, kneeling down directly in front of him. Her bloody tongue dripping, lolling...

ON ALEX: eyes wide, he opens his mouth to scream --

HARD CUT TO:

93

INT. POLICE STATION - NAKAGAWA'S OFFICE - DAWN

93

Nakagawa sits at the desk. Exhausted, dark circles under his eyes, he's staring down at --

THE FILE on his desk. As if he's afraid to even open it.

But he does. He flips through the photos, pausing on that of TOSHIO, but continuing on to THE BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO of The House from three years ago (the one Karen saw), with the THREE DETECTIVES.

Nakagawa turns to a FRAMED PICTURE on his desk -- it's YOUNGER NAKAGAWA at a bar with THREE FAMILIAR DETECTIVES. They're off-duty, grinning at the camera. Buddies.

The two photographs share THE SAME THREE DETECTIVES.

As Nakagawa looks at the crime scene photo, he realizes something. He slowly stands, in shock, trembling.

The phone RINGS, startling him.

Nakagawa walks over, picks up the phone.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)

Hello?

He listens.

His face goes blank. He slowly lowers the phone.

94	<u>OMITTED</u>	94
95	<u>OMITTED</u>	95
96	<u>OMITTED</u>	96
97	<u>OMITTED</u>	97
98	<u>OMITTED</u>	98
99	<u>INT. MORGUE - DAY</u>	99

The CORONER sits on a stool, staring at the floor. TWO BODIES lie under bloody white sheets on two STEEL TABLES. Between them is a small cart -- a bloody cloth on top.

Nakagawa and Igarashi enter. The Coroner stands, nervous. He walks to one of the tables and pulls back the sheet.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)

Have you determined a cause of death?

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)

Not yet. The blood on his body -- isn't his. It belongs to her.

He points to the other table. But doesn't look at it.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)
I don't understand. He killed
Yoko, before he died?

The Coroner shakes his head. Nakagawa looks to Igarashi,
then walks up to the second body, pulling back the sheet.

IT'S YOKO. Still missing her jawbone.

Nakagawa and Igarashi stare down at her in disbelief.

The Coroner walks to the small table, removing the cloth.
Yoko's JAWBONE is underneath it.

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)
The jawbone you found in the attic
yesterday with the American couple
belongs to this girl. I estimate
it was -- removed -- from her body
two or three days ago.

IGARASHI (IN JAPANESE)
But I thought you said her body was
found with this man, tonight.

The Coroner nods. Eyes on his shoes.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)
Then how did she get from the house
to the Health Center?

*

The Coroner, lost in his imagination, answers quietly:

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)
I have no idea.

A beat. Nakagawa walks to the jawbone. Stares at it.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)
She survived for two days without
this?

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)
It would seem so.

NAKAGAWA (IN JAPANESE)
How is that possible?

The Coroner looks up at him, his face pale.

CORONER (IN JAPANESE)
I don't believe it is.

100 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

100

Doug sits on the bed, next to a DRESSING CURTAIN. Karen's silhouette is visible behind it, pulling on her clothes.

He watches the curtain for a beat, concerned. Then:

DOUG

I got us a guidebook to Kyoto. I thought maybe we'd leave tomorrow --

The curtain suddenly SLIDES BACK. Karen, dressed, stares at him. She looks angry.

KAREN

Why didn't you tell me?

DOUG

Tell you what?

KAREN

About the bodies they found in the attic.

DOUG

You were recovering from a shock. I didn't want to --

Karen turns away, picking up her backpack and slinging it. She walks past him, disappointed, and leaves the room.

DOUG

Karen -- wait --

He quickly grabs his coat and bag.

100a INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

100a

Karen paces down the hall towards a RECEPTION AREA. Doug catches up with her, turning her towards him.

DOUG

Look, I'm sorry. I was just worried about you, and -- I know you, Karen.

Karen turns to him. A sober look on her face.

KAREN

The same thing happened three years ago, Doug. To a Japanese family, who lived in that house. They were all found dead.

Doug studies her for a moment.

DOUG

So you think the events are connected?

KAREN

How would you explain it?

She watches Doug as he thinks. Carefully.

DOUG

Okay. How about this: the American family knew about what had happened there before, and this knowledge subconsciously caused them to repeat the same events.

Karen gives Doug a skeptical look.

DOUG

It's exactly how superstitions survive: if you walk under a ladder and think uh-oh, you're in for some bad luck, sure enough, what do you know? You trip over --

KAREN

(heard it before:)
-- trip over the curb and sprain your ankle.

DOUG

Makes sense, right?

Karen stops walking. Considering something.

KAREN

Okay. Then explain this: when I went to that house, I didn't know anything about its past. But yet I still saw...

She hesitates, realizing she's said too much.

DOUG

Saw what? Karen?

KAREN

Emma and I were alone in that room, but -- there was something else there. I'm sure of it.

DOUG

You watched a woman die, Kat. That's a horrible thing to experience. I can't imagine how you must feel. But sometimes the mind tries to cope with terrible things in a way that distorts what actually occurred.

Karen's eyes never leave his. Softly, but firmly:

KAREN

You might be right, Doug. But I know what I saw.

(then, faltering:)

I *think* I know what I saw...

After a moment, Doug pulls her into a hug.

DOUG

You just need to rest. We'll get you home, get a good night's sleep.

KAREN

Yeah.

But her eyes speak differently. She covers it well, stepping back and glancing over at the reception desk:

KAREN

You've got class, and I'm sure I only have to fill out a few forms or something --

DOUG

You sure?

KAREN
I'm fine, Doug. Really.

He kisses her, then exits. He pauses at the front doors to give her a little wave. She smiles... but the smile droops as soon as he's out of sight.

After a moment, she turns and walks to the front desk.

DISSOLVE TO:

Karen clicks it. The article fills the screen.

As Karen reads it, we catch glimpses of names -- 'Toshio', 'Kayako', 'Takeo'. And an ominous phrase: "MURDER/SUICIDE".

Karen clicks a link marked 'IMAGE'. A scanned picture of the newspaper appears -- the article is on the front page, with familiar photos of Toshio, Kayako and Takeo.

But then Karen's eyes drift to another picture at the bottom of the page --

-- PETER. She quickly recognizes him from the picture she found in the journal. His name is printed below the photo. A picture of Peter and Maria's CONDO BUILDING is next to it.

She looks at the headline: "AMERICAN ENGLISH TEACHER THROWS SELF FROM BUILDING".

Karen scans the article, thinking. Then she looks up at --

-- TOSHIO'S PICTURE.

DISSOLVE TO:

104 INT. POLICE STATION - NAKAGAWA'S OFFICE - NIGHT 104

Nakagawa is looking at the same picture, in his file.

OFFICER #1 appears in the hall. Knocks gently on the door.

OFFICER #1 (IN JAPANESE)
This just came in. It's the
surveillance video you requested.

It takes a moment for Nakagawa to snap out of it.

He finally nods, takes the tape. He opens the envelope and looks at the cassette. Like he doesn't want to watch it.

Then he turns to a TV/VCR combo and inserts the tape.

ON THE SCREEN: the 10TH FLOOR HALLWAY from Susan's office building, and the door leading to the stairwell.

A beat. The image FLICKERS for a moment.

Then the door suddenly bursts open and Susan, terrified, runs from the stairwell and down the hall.

ON NAKAGAWA: he fast-forwards the video. Until --

ON SCREEN: -- the SECURITY GUARD appears in the hallway. As Susan saw earlier, he opens the door to the stairwell and looks inside. Then he closes the door and continues o.s.

ON NAKAGAWA: he reaches forward to turn off the video --

ON SCREEN: -- but then the video CRACKLES with a quick burst of static. And the door to the stairwell opens again.

ON NAKAGAWA: he's watching, entranced, terrified. He can hardly believe what he's seeing --

ON SCREEN: -- A DARK FIGURE EMERGES FROM THE STAIRWELL. It's the shape of a woman with long hair --

-- but the figure is BLURRY AND SHIFTING, as if the black shadow has loosely compacted itself into the form of a human.

NAKAGAWA watches, breathless, as THE FIGURE slowly enters the hallway, passing by, underneath the camera.

The image stops flickering. An empty hallway now. A beat.

Nakagawa, his hand shaking, reaches forward, about to turn off the television set, when --

DARKNESS SUDDENLY OVERTAKES THE SCREEN, rising up from the bottom until everything is dark. A strange HUMMING RATTLE comes from the speakers, and the image JITTERS madly.

Nakagawa leans forward, right up to the screen, trying to make out an image in the swirling blackness --

Two eyes open, staring at Nakagawa.

Terrified, Nakagawa stands and turns away, closing his eyes.

And when he finds the strength to look back --

-- THE EYES are still there.

Locked onto him, even though he's moved.

Unflinching. Unblinking.

105 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

105

Nakagawa stands at the front door. Gathering his courage.

He opens the door. Nothing but yawning darkness inside.

Nakagawa picks up TWO HEAVY OBJECTS, one in each hand, and, ducking under the police tape, enters the house.

106 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 106

Nakagawa puts the two heavy objects by the front door and closes it. Now we can see what they are --

-- GASOLINE CANS. Two gallons each. Full.

Nakagawa catches his breath. Then he reaches for the lid of one of the cans, starting to unscrew it. His hands are shaking, and the gasoline SPLASHES AROUND inside --

-- but then there's ANOTHER SPLASHING SOUND. From nearby.

Nakagawa freezes. The splashing continues. His eyes go to --

THE BATHROOM DOOR. It's closed. The SPLASHING is coming from inside, accompanied by a series of THUDS. The sounds of a small child, STRUGGLING...

Nakagawa fearfully reaches for the door handle --

106a INT. THE HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT 106a

Nakagawa's eyes widen as the door swings open. He sees --

A YOUNG BOY kneeling by the edge of the tub, overflowing with water. His head hangs below the surface.

Nakagawa immediately drops to the boy, lifting his lifeless head from the water. It's TOSHIO. He's dead. Drowned.

Before Nakagawa can understand what's happening, the boy's eyes SUDDENLY OPEN, fixing on Nakagawa --

-- and then a PALE HAND grabs Nakagawa's head from behind and roughly pushes it into the water, holding him under.

Nakagawa's LEGS flail and kick as he struggles, his SCREAMING muffled by the water. But finally, his legs become still.

107 OMITTED 107

108 OMITTED 108

109 OMITTED

109

109a OMITTED

109a

110 INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - DAY 110

THE WALL by Karen's computer desk is now covered with WEBPAGE PRINT-OUTS: NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS of TOSHIO and his parents, KAYAKO and TAKEO; MATTHEW and JENNIFER; PETER; and DETECTIVES NAKAGAWA and IGARASHI, plus reports on THE EARLIER INVESTIGATION.

In the center of it all is a picture of The House.

ON THE DESK is a PRINT-OUT: the newspaper article about Peter's death, with the photo of his CONDO. Below the photo, Karen has written the number '224'.

We hear the sound of RUNNING WATER -- it's the shower. We drift away from the desk and towards the bathroom...

110a OMITTED 110a

110b OMITTED 110b

111 INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY 111

Karen is in the shower. She stands there, glassy-eyed, as the water runs over her. She's looking at --

-- HER REFLECTION in the mirror. It fogs up, obscuring the view. This snaps Karen out of her trance.

She rinses her hair and squeezes some shampoo into her hand. Starts a nice lather.

FROM BEHIND: Karen works the shampoo into her scalp. But, as she does, we see something...

... A PALE HAND BURIED UNDER HER HAIR, as if someone is behind her, with a hand on her head.

Karen's fingers brush the hand. She CRIES OUT and turns --

-- there's no one there. She's alone.

112 OMITTED 112

113 OMITTED 113

114 INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - DAY 114

There's the sound of the front door UNLOCKING and Doug enters, carrying a bag. He closes the door behind him and walks in, turning the corner --

-- finding Karen, looking a bit dazed, standing right there. He's startled, but quickly recovers:

DOUG
I come bearing gifts.

Karen smiles weakly. She takes the bag and enters the kitchen. He watches her go, worried. Then he notices --

HER DESK. Doug walks over, looking at the printouts she's taped to the wall. And the photo of The House in the center.

Bewildered, he sits down, leaning forward and taking a good look. His eyes stop on the picture of TOSHIO.

Doug turns to see Karen staring at him from the kitchen. It's an awkward moment: he's concerned, but doesn't know what to say. And neither does Karen.

Finally she approaches, looking at Toshio's picture:

KAREN

That's the boy who was there
yesterday. In that house. But
this boy, he's --

Her voice trembles, her fear showing through.

KAREN

-- he's supposed to be dead.

A beat. Karen's eyes plead with Doug.

KAREN

I saw him, Doug. I talked to him.
He told me his name. A boy who was
killed by his father three years
ago told me his name.

Doug looks away, shaking his head.

KAREN

You don't believe me.

DOUG

How can I believe you, Karen?

Karen's face darkens. Before she can retort --

-- the phone RINGS. As Karen walks across the room to answer
it, Doug starts reading the newspaper article.

KAREN (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

She listens. Her face slowly drops.

KAREN

(almost a whisper:)
What?

She numbly lowers the phone. Doug turns to her, seeing that
something's very wrong.

Snapping to life, Karen walks to the desk, picking up the
photo of Peter and Maria's condo and a map of Tokyo.

Doug puts a hand on her shoulder. She finally looks at him.

KAREN

Alex and Yoko are dead.

Doug, surprised, doesn't know what to say. Karen doesn't
give him a chance to figure it out:

KAREN

(intense:)

There's something wrong with that house, Doug. Something really bad.

(re: Peter's photo)

The boy in that house, he had a photo of this man. He died on that same day three years ago. I need to talk to his wife... widow. If I can find out what happened, or if... maybe --

DOUG

Maybe, what?

Karen pulls away, making for the door. Doug follows.

DOUG

I'm concerned about you going out while you're so upset --

KAREN

You don't understand. I have to, Doug.

DOUG

Why?

KAREN

Because I've been inside that house, Doug. Don't you get it? I've been inside!

A beat. We see the resolve come over Karen's face. She reaches out and touches Doug tenderly.

KAREN

I love you. But I have to go.

She leaves.

Doug, troubled, turns back to the desk.

He looks up at the wall, tracing a finger over the photo of The House. Beneath it, is the address...

115 EXT. CONDO BUILDING - DAY

115

The same building from the newspaper clipping. Monolithic against a cloudy, bleak sky.

Karen stands before it, staring up at it.

Then she walks to the intercom and looks at the directory, finds 'M. Kirk'. She activates the intercom and dials the number. It rings a few times, and then a voice picks up:

MARIA (INTERCOM, IN JAPANESE)

Yes?

KAREN

I'm looking for Maria Kirk?

MARIA (INTERCOM)

Who is this?

KAREN

My name is Karen Davies. I'm a student at -- I'm sorry to bother you, but I was wondering if I could ask you a few questions.

A long beat. Karen stares at the intercom.

KAREN

Ms. Kirk?

MARIA (INTERCOM)

Questions about what?

KAREN

I'm here because... I need to speak with you about your husband.

When Maria's voice comes back through the intercom, she sounds different, shaken:

MARIA (INTERCOM)

Leave me alone.

KAREN

Maria --

MARIA (INTERCOM)

Please.

Karen stands there for a moment. Then, as she walks away --

CLICK. The electronic door lock disengages behind her.

115a OMITTED

115a

115b OMITTED

115b

116 OMITTED 116

116a INT. PETER & MARIA'S APARTMENT - DAY 116a

The front door opens. MARIA (early 30s) has changed from when we first saw her -- she wears a revealing outfit, and her natural beauty now smolders beneath the surface.

She regards Karen warily.

MARIA
I'm late for work.

KAREN
I just need a couple minutes.

Maria finally steps aside, letting Karen in.

The APARTMENT is small, and completely unkempt. The kitchen is a mess, clothes lie everywhere.

MARIA
(sarcastic:)
Make yourself at home.

Karen looks for a place to sit. She decides to stand.

Maria sizes her up. A beat. Then:

MARIA
Well?

KAREN
Your husband, Peter. Three years ago he...

She trails off, in delicate territory.

MARIA
He what?

KAREN
He killed himself.

Maria eyes her blankly. Then she turns to look at something o.s. Karen follows her gaze --

-- to the open door of THE BEDROOM. And THE WINDOW beyond.

KAREN
(almost ashamed:)
I'm... sorry.

Maria turns back to her, sadness on her face. Then:

MARIA
Thank you.

Maria reaches for a pack of cigarettes. Lights one. Offers them to Karen. She shakes her head.

MARIA
How did you know Peter?

KAREN
I didn't.

MARIA
Then what are you doing here?

KAREN
I think there's a connection
between your husband's death and
something that happened to me.

MARIA
What happened to you?

KAREN
It's... hard to explain.

Maria takes a drag from her cigarette. Waiting.

KAREN
Look, I know this sounds strange,
but... I don't think your husband
wanted to die.

MARIA
(even:)
Then why would he throw himself out
a window?

Karen struggles to find the answer.

MARIA
Let me guess: 'hard to explain'?

Karen nods. Maria's brave face slips. She turns away.

MARIA

I put all this behind me. I don't want to open it back up again.

KAREN

If that's true, then why are you still here in Japan?

Maria turns back. She only looks defensive for a moment.

MARIA

Because I can't leave. I tried. But I couldn't. Not without...

Maria speaks softly, forming words she's never spoken aloud:

MARIA

He usually didn't wake up before me. But that morning, he did. He made coffee for us. Then he sat there and waited for me to wake up. And when I did, he looked me right in the eye. And then he jumped. The night before we'd been talking about having children together...

She wipes away the tears in her eyes.

KAREN

Did you know a woman named Kayako?

MARIA

No.

KAREN

Did Peter?

MARIA

I don't think so.

Maria turns away, growing tense.

KAREN

Maybe it was someone he worked with?

MARIA

Look. I've had the police up here, I talked with Detectives, I even hired a P.I.--

(composing herself:)

(MORE)

MARIA (cont'd)

I don't know what you're going through, or what you think you know about my husband. But I don't have any answers. I'm sorry.

She turns back to Karen -- to find the young woman sitting slumped on the edge of a sofa, tears in her eyes.

Maria softens as Karen looks up at her, pleading:

KAREN

Please. I don't know what else to do. Please help me.

117 INT. CLOSET - DAY 117

Maria reaches up to a high shelf. She moves a few things aside to get to TWO SHOEBOXES buried towards the rear.

118 OMITTED 118

118a INT. PETER & MARIA'S APARTMENT - DAY 118a

Maria re-enters the room, laying the shoeboxes on a table.

MARIA

This is all his stuff from school.

She stares at the boxes, afraid to open them. Karen sits down and gently removes the lid of one of them.

THE BOX contains stacks of PHOTOGRAPHS and notes. Karen removes a pile of photos and starts looking through it.

After a moment, Maria sits down next to her. She opens the other box and pulls out another stack of photos.

She looks at the first one, sadness crossing her face.

MARIA

This was our first date.

She shows Karen THE TOP PHOTO: a "self-portrait" of Peter and Maria in a park lined with blooming cherry trees.

The pain returns, and she puts the picture away.

Karen works through her own pile: she's looking at pictures of Peter from his University days.

Her eyes widen as she sees --

Kayako. She looks young and alive... but yet somehow sullen and withdrawn, as if she feels she doesn't belong there.

She's with a group of fellow students. PETER is in the group, although he and Kayako aren't next to one another.

Karen turns to the next picture -- it's a graduation party.

Kayako is in this one too: standing to the side, watching PETER AND MARIA as they give a goofy grin to the camera.

As Karen flips through them, a definite pattern emerges --
-- Kayako is in practically every picture.

And in most, she's not smiling at the camera. Rather, she's
staring at Peter.

KAREN
(under her breath:)
Oh my God.

MARIA
What? Did you find something?

We move to THE GROUP PHOTO. Peter with Maria, surrounded by
classmates. Kayako off to the side, her eyes on Peter.

DISSOLVE TO:

119 INT. COLLEGE - PETER'S OFFICE - DAY (THREE YEARS AGO) 119

The same GROUP PHOTO is in a frame on Peter's desk.

Peter stands behind the desk, using a small mirror to knot his tie. His open door reads: '*DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH*'.

A CO-WORKER (20s, Japanese) enters with a stack of mail.

PETER
Happy Monday.

CO-WORKER
Yeah, right. Here's your mail.

He hands it to Peter. On the top is a small BLUE ENVELOPE. The name in the return address is 'Kayako'.

CO-WORKER

Another one, huh?

Peter shakes his head, looking distastefully at the letter.

PETER

I don't even know her. She says I used to tutor her, but I don't know who the hell she is.

The co-worker shrugs and leaves. Disturbed, Peter fingers the blue envelope.

His eyes go to one of his desk drawers. He slides it open.

More BLUE ENVELOPES are inside. All from 'KAYAKO'.

Peter's face darkens. He dumps the letters into a trash can.

120 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

120

Peter stands in front of The House.

He glances down at the BLUE ENVELOPE in his hand. He stuffs it in his pocket, unsure about what he's going to do.

Then he opens the gate and goes in, walking to the front door. Knocks. Silence from inside. He rings the bell. Waits. No one comes. He's about to leave --

But then he hears something from around the side of the house. It sounded like a muffled SPLASH of water.

120a EXT. THE HOUSE - SIDE - DAY

120a

Peter peers around the side of the house, a narrow walkway lined with bushes and trees. It's quiet.

PETER (IN JAPANESE)

Hello? Excuse me?

After a moment, Peter decides to check it out. As he steps around a bush, he suddenly stops, surprised to see --

PETER'S POV: two ARMS hang from a window at the side of the house. They look disembodied, mottled and bruised.

It takes Peter a moment to recover. He slowly walks over.

PETER (IN JAPANESE)
Are you alright?

As Peter helps the boy to his feet, he glances at the bathtub. It's filled, literally to the brim, with water.

124 INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

124

Peter holds Toshio's hand as he leads him back to a couch in the living room.

PETER (IN JAPANESE)
Are you alone? Where are your
parents?

The boy sits in the couch, slumped over, still looking dazed.

Peter studies him, looking at the ugly BRUISES on his arms and legs. There's also a big one around his neck.

PETER (IN JAPANESE)
What happened to you?

Peter reaches out to lift Toshio's chin, but he FLINCHES, pulling backwards. His eyes manage to focus on Peter.

Then the boy looks away. Lowers his head. A long beat.

Peter's worried. This really doesn't look good. He scans the messy room, eyes falling on something.

He reaches down and picks up PIECES OF A PHOTOGRAPH, lying next to a broken frame -- they've been crumpled into a ball.

ON THE PHOTO: Peter unfolds the pieces and rearranges them. We've seen this picture before --

-- a FAMILY PORTRAIT. TOSHIO, holding a cute BLACK CAT. Standing with his mother and father -- KAYAKO and TAKEO. They're all beaming at the camera, a perfect, happy family.

Except that the mother's face has been torn out.

Then there's a muffled MEOW. Peter looks over at the window. Did that come from outside?

Another MEOW. Peter walks to the window, looking out.

FROM OUTSIDE, LOOKING IN: a worried look crosses Peter's face as the MEOW becomes more of a GROWL, as if in warning. He looks outside, but can't see anything --

-- but we see, over Peter's shoulder, that TOSHIO is now
LOOKING DIRECTLY AT HIM, eyes wide --

-- the MEOWING emitting from his wide open mouth --

125 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

125

Karen enters quickly, going up to the front desk.

OFFICER #2, filling out paperwork, doesn't look up.

KAREN (IN JAPANESE)
Excuse me, I need to speak with
Detective Nakagawa.

Officer #2 looks up at her. Blankly.

KAREN (IN JAPANESE)
It's an emergency.

OFFICER #2 (IN JAPANESE)
One moment.

Officer #2 walks to the end of the desk, where two more
OFFICERS speak in hushed tones with DETECTIVE AOKI.

Officer #2 interrupts their conversation. And they all look
over at Karen. A beat. Then Detective Aoki approaches.

AOKI (IN ENGLISH)
You are asking for Detective
Nakagawa?

KAREN
Yes, I have important information
for him about a case...

She looks around. Everyone is watching her. The mood is
decidedly grim. She can tell something's up.

AOKI
Detective Nakagawa is not here
right now. Can you tell me what
case this is regarding?

There's something behind the Detective's words.

KAREN
His partner, Detective Igarashi?
Can I speak with him?

Aoki exchanges a look with the officers.

AOKI
Can you tell me your name, please?

Karen looks at the somber faces in the quiet station. She backs away from the desk as the realization sinks in.

KAREN
They're dead, aren't they?

Karen turns and runs for the exit.

AOKI
Miss, wait please --

But she's long gone.

126 INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

126

A reading light on the computer desk provides the only illumination in the dark apartment.

Karen enters, standing in the doorway for a moment. Shell-shocked. As she slides off her coat:

KAREN
Doug?

No answer. She slowly walks to the bedroom and looks inside. He's not there. This seems to worsen Karen's mood.

Karen looks down at a NOTEPAD. She's written THREE JAPANESE NAMES. The detectives in charge of the case three years ago.

They all have red lines drawn through them.

Then we PAN UP to see that these are the last names on a longer list. We recognize the other names: MATTHEW, JENNIFER, and EMMA WILLIAMS; YOKO and ALEX; NAKAGAWA and IGARASHI. Everyone who's been in The House.

Everyone who died. All the names have been CROSSED OUT --

-- except 'Nakagawa' and 'Igarashi'. Karen picks up a red pen and draws a line through them.

Then we see one final name at the bottom:

'Me.' Now the only one not crossed out. The only one left.

Karen puts down her pen. Then she looks up at --

-- THE WALL, where's she's taped all the pictures and articles in a circle.

Karen realizes something. She reaches for the lamp, and turns it closer --

-- the picture in the middle of the "spider's web" is gone.

The photo of The House.

Karen draws a breath. Then, out of the corner of her eye, she sees something she hadn't noticed before --

-- a faint red FLASHING from a small table by the kitchen.

She slowly stands. Walks over to it. The flashing red light is barely visible on her face, as she looks down at --

-- HER ANSWERING MACHINE. The message light is blinking.

'1 MESSAGE'.

She reaches out a shaky finger and presses 'PLAY'.

DOUG (ON MACHINE)

*"Hey, Karen. It's me. I just
wanted to say -- I'm sorry. I know
I wasn't hearing you.*

(MORE)

DOUG (ON MACHINE) (cont'd)
*If all this is real to you, then
 it's important to me, and I'm gonna
 check that house out. So just sit
 tight, I won't be long. I love
 you."*

Karen presses the STOP button.

She stands there for a moment, in the near-darkness.

Then, softly:

KAREN
 No.

126a EXT. KAREN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 126a

Karen runs outside, struggling to pull on her coat. She races down the sidewalk at top speed.

126b EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 126b

Doug stands at the gate, lighting a cigarette, looking down at the POLICE TAPE sealing the entrance. He pockets his Zippo and ducks under the tape, walking up to --

THE FRONT DOOR. Doug tries the handle, and the door swings open. He stands on the porch, looking into the dark place.

126bb EXT. STREET - NIGHT 126bb

Karen runs down the steps from the train, racing into the SHOPPING DISTRICT.

126c INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 126c

Doug steps inside, trying the light switch. Nothing happens. But he smiles, shaking his head, completely unafraid.

DOUG
 Hello?

As he takes a step forward his foot bumps THE GAS CANS, still sitting by the front door.

He's confused -- and then he gets a good idea. He tosses his cigarette outside and closes the front door.

126d INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 126d

Doug walks through the living room, glancing inside the small KITCHEN, then he slides open the door to the TATAMI ROOM.

He winces as his eyes meet the STAINED MATTRESS.

126e INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 126e

Doug re-enters the entryway, looking back up to the second floor. He starts up.

126f INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT 126f

Doug walks to the FRONT ROOM door and opens it. He leans inside, trying to let his eyes adjust to the dark.

Then he walks down the hall to the REAR ROOM. Does the same. Nothing but darkness beyond.

Doug closes the door and turns away from it, wondering why he's here, what he's looking for.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his cell phone. Speed-dials Karen's number. As he raises it to his ear --

-- he doesn't notice the door to the rear room SLOWLY SWINGING OPEN BEHIND HIM --

127 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 127

Karen runs towards us, breathless, stopping as she reaches --

-- THE HOUSE. Looming over her. Waiting.

She only hesitates a moment before running inside.

128 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 128

Karen enters, calling out:

KAREN
Doug! Where are you???

A MUFFLED SOUND from upstairs. A voice.

KAREN
Doug???

Karen immediately runs up the stairs to --

THE SECOND FLOOR. Before she reaches the top of the stairs, Karen suddenly realizes:

THE VOICE she's hearing isn't Doug's.

VOICE (O.S.)
Hey, Maria, it's me. Yeah, I'm
still at school...

Karen slowly looks up to see --

-- PETER. She recognizes him immediately. He's standing in the hallway, talking on his cell phone.

PETER (INTO PHONE)
 ...I know, I'm sorry -- these staff meetings always run over -- maybe another ten minutes or so -- okay, I'll be home soon -- I love you too.

He hangs up. Leans against the wall. Looking into --

THE FRONT BEDROOM. Karen gasps as she sees TOSHIO through the open door. He's sitting on the ground, making drawings of BLACK CATS. This is his bedroom.

PETER
 (under his breath)
 Guess your mom's late, huh?

Then Toshio suddenly looks up. Right at Karen.

Following Toshio's gaze, Peter quickly turns to face Karen. But even though she's right there, he doesn't see her:

She's seeing something that happened three years ago.

As if sensing her presence, Peter walks right to the edge of the stairs, looking down. Then:

A RUSTLING SOUND comes from the dark hallway. Peter turns towards the REAR BEDROOM at the end of the hall.

129 INT. THE HOUSE - REAR BEDROOM - NIGHT

129

Peter stands in the doorway, looking into the MASTER BEDROOM of Toshio's parents. His attention is drawn to something near the door --

-- a DESK. It's got a computer, some files. Someone's personal work space.

Peter steps to the desk. He picks up A STACK OF PHOTOGRAPHS. Family pictures: with father (TAKEO), mother (KAYAKO), and son (TOSHIO), holding his black CAT.

KAYAKO'S FACE has been torn out of every one.

Peter notices something underneath the pile of photos -- a familiar JOURNAL. The same one Karen found in the closet. He opens it.

HIS POV: it's a journal Kayako kept. As Peter flips through it, KAYAKO'S VOICE speaks the words...

...and even though it's mostly Japanese, there's one word we recognize, that she's written repeatedly --

-- "Peter". It's been written over and over, in both English and Japanese, as if she couldn't get enough of seeing it.

Past the early pages Karen saw, THE WRITING becomes more manic, the delicate script becoming a frantic scrawl, KAYAKO'S VOICE becomes more desperate and pleading.

Taped on the final page is A PHOTO: PETER with a group of his University friends, at a party. Kayako has scribbled hearts around his head, and SCRATCHED OUT the other faces.

A bloody THUMBPRINT distorts Peter's face. It's still wet.

Peter slams the book shut and drops it. As he does, a PHOTOGRAPH falls out from inside, landing right-side up.

THE PHOTO is of PETER at a college party, talking with MARIA. It's clear they're having a great time with one another...

...but the photo is TORN IN HALF, splitting Maria's face. And KAYAKO is visible between them, sadly and stoically watching Peter, strands of hair falling down her face.

Peter and Karen both reach to pick up the photo at the same time -- and they BUMP SHOULDERS. Karen falls backwards, against the wall.

In disbelief, Peter looks around wildly. He reaches out a tentative hand, feeling around... Karen moves out of the way. She can't understand how this could be happening.

As Peter is about to stand back up, SOMETHING small flutters down from above, landing on the floor in front of him.

It's KAYAKO'S FACE. One of the missing pieces from the torn-out photographs.

Peter slowly looks up to see --

-- ALL THE MISSING KAYAKO FACES have been pinned to the closet door. Many of the pins go through HER EYES.

And that's when Peter and Karen hear THE FLIES. Buzzing anxiously. Sounds like there's a lot of them.

It's coming from THE CLOSET. Just behind the torn-out faces.

Karen watches, terrified, as Peter reaches out a hand --
-- and slides the door open.

He immediately recoils. A terrible stench inside.

The BUZZING of the flies is louder. Coming from above.

Peter pulls a book of matches from his pocket. Lights one.

And looks up.

HIS POV: the attic panel is slightly open.

Peter reaches up to open it fully --

-- AND THE UPPER HALF OF KAYAKO swings down.

She's been wrapped in plastic sheeting, mottled splotches of
blood on the inside. Her neck hangs at an odd angle.

Peter backs away in horror --

130 INT. THE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT 130

Peter backs into the hallway, breathing hard.

Then a familiar sound reaches our ears: THUD. THUD. THUD.

It's coming from Toshio's room. And it's the same rhythmic THUDDING we've heard coming from this room before.

Peter wrenches his gaze from the horrific sight and heads quickly down the hall (with Karen following him):

PETER

Toshio! We have to --

He stops short at the door, as he sees --

-- TAKEO, Toshio's father. Eyes rolled back in his head, tongue swollen and lolling from his blue lips.

He's dead -- he's hanging from the ceiling by BLACK HAIR that seems to cover its entire surface. Kayako's hair.

TOSHIO, now back to his "dead" appearance, playfully swings the body. Takeo's feet THUD rhythmically against the wall.

KAREN

Oh my God...

Peter doesn't stay to see any more. He runs.

131 INT. THE HOUSE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT 131

Peter tears down the stairs and runs for the front door, passing a mirror --

-- he freezes. He saw SOMETHING in the reflection as he passed. Something wrong.

He takes a step back and looks --

-- it's not his reflection in the mirror. It's KAYAKO.

Peter stares at the image in disbelief. Then he notices TOSHIO standing next to Kayako, looking up at her.

As Peter slowly turns to look down, a small PALE HAND slips into his own. Peter jerks backward in shock as --

A SERIES OF IMAGES, THE ORIGIN OF "THE GRUDGE", FLASH BY:

-- TAKEO, looking down at THE JOURNAL, reading his wife's words, his face contorted with rage... he turns to see KAYAKO, home from work, standing in the doorway...

-- KAYAKO running down the steps, TAKEO chasing her, tackling her before she can reach the door... sitting on top of her, he wraps his hands around her neck...

-- KAYAKO seeing TOSHIO, her son, watching through the bars of the second floor railing as...

-- TAKEO snaps Kayako's neck with an audible CRACK...

-- KAYAKO, not dead, but paralyzed, watching as...

-- TAKEO drowns a flailing TOSHIO in the bathroom tub...

-- TAKEO tears apart TOSHIO'S CAT, still alive, in the bathroom sink...

-- KAYAKO letting out a HORRIBLE CROAKING, the only sound her broken neck can emit, as TAKEO advances on her with a knife, his eyes filled with a manic madness...

-- TAKEO in THE ATTIC, stuffing KAYAKO and TOSHIO, both very dead, wrapped in plastic sheeting, into a corner...

-- KAYAKO suddenly TURNING HER HEAD and GRABBING TAKEO'S ARM... her lifeless eyes focusing on Takeo's as she CROAKS... Takeo's eyes go wide with fear... and TOSHIO suddenly reaches from his plastic grave, grabbing Takeo's other arm...

BACK TO THE PRESENT:

We PAN FROM Peter to THE REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR --

It's not the pale, frightening Kayako anymore. Rather: a beautiful, young Kayako with eyes filled with sorrow.

We PAN BACK to see KAREN standing there, instead of Peter.

Karen slumps to the ground in front of the mirror, the revelation taking everything out of her.

A beat. Then:

THUMP. That came from upstairs.

Karen looks up as the sound continues. We PAN OVER towards the stairs as A DRAGGING sound moves across the ceiling. Accompanied by a strange SCRAPING, like plastic.

KAREN

No more... please, no more...

She suddenly freezes, sensing something next to her. We see it now, as she turns her head, almost hidden in the darkness--

-- a PALE FACE in the darkened hallway, staring up at the ceiling. Eyes wide and rolled back, mouth yawning open in abject terror --

-- it's DOUG'S BODY. He lies on his back, his top half sticking out from a niche by the stairwell. It's been right next to her all along.

KAREN
DOUG! NO!!!

Karen takes Doug into her arms as the SOUNDS continue above, growing closer. But it's no use -- he's dead.

And now there's a new sound, moving down the stairs. A familiar THROATY CROAKING SOUND, along with a strange SKITTERING, like the world's biggest cockroach.

Karen turns to the staircase to see --

-- KAYAKO, crawling down the stairs. Still wrapped in the plastic sheeting, she moves like a wounded animal, neck hanging limply, struggling to pull herself forward --

-- her eyes locked on Karen, CROAKING horribly --

Karen sorrow turns to abject terror. She tries to lift Doug's body and pull it to the front door. It's too heavy.

And KAYAKO is getting closer.

Sobbing, Karen drops Doug and falls back against the front door, bumping into --

THE GAS CANS. The one Nakagawa unscrewed TIPS OVER, spilling gasoline into the entryway.

As Doug's arm flops to the floor, his outstretched HAND lands next to Karen. She sees something clenched in his fingers --

-- his ZIPPO LIGHTER.

Realization dawns over Karen as she feels the liquid spilling onto her hands. The odor is unmistakable.

Karen immediately reaches forward, trying to loosen Doug's grip on the lighter as --

-- Kayako reaches the bottom of the stairs. Her broken neck makes a horrific CRACKING as she swivels to face Karen.

Karen finally gets the lighter. She pushes back against the door with legs too numb to stand. Her eyes drift up to see --

-- TOSHIO, watching from the railing above, as before, his cold eyes locked on hers.

Karen grabs another can, and spins the lid until it pops off. She tips it onto the floor, spilling more gas.

Kayako doesn't seem to care. She crawls over Doug's body and pulls herself through the gasoline, slowly, drawing inexorably closer --

Karen drops the empty gas can and opens DOUG'S LIGHTER.

She flicks it. Nothing.

Karen tries the lighter again. And again. Nothing.

Kayako reaches out, blood dripping from her gaping mouth --

The lighter CATCHES.

Karen flails with her free arm and opens the front door --

-- just as Kayako GRABS HER ANKLE.

Karen reaches outside, anchoring a hand to the door frame --

-- but she can't pull herself free, as --

-- Kayako pulls herself closer, her CROAKING intensifying --

-- resigned, Karen slowly lowers the flame to the gas can --

-- and ignites the gas! There's a sudden BRIGHT FLASH that overtakes the screen --

FADE TO WHITE:

132 OMITTED 132

132a EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 132a

The flashing lights of POLICE CARS wash over the formerly quiet neighborhood, illuminating --

KAREN. She's lying on a gurney, regaining consciousness. Japanese EMTS are speaking to her as she's being loaded into the back of an ambulance.

KAREN'S POV: the blurry forms of FIREMEN rush by in slow motion. Everything is dizzy and incoherent...

Karen tries to sit up -- but a YOUNG EMT lays a gentle hand on her arm, deftly sliding a needle under her skin. The sedative takes hold almost immediately.

Karen sinks back into the gurney, her eyes rolling back in her head. She's fading fast.

132b INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT 132b

The EMTs secure the gurney inside and close the doors. Karen fights the drug, but its grip is inevitable: she finally gives up, sliding into a medicated sleep.

We slowly MOVE IN on her face, until it fills the screen.

Then...

132c INT. AMBULANCE - DAY 132c

...the light CHANGES. Darkness becomes morning sunlight spilling across Karen's face. The tranquil sound of birds CHIRPING surrounds us. But it sounds like a distant echo.

Karen's eyelids flutter. She opens her eyes and sits up, now wide awake -- but peaceful and calm.

She gently swings her legs from the gurney and walks to the window, confused by the daylight. She looks out to see --

132d EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY 132d

It's the most beautiful we've ever seen it. A lush springtime bloom fills the trees and bushes around the place.

VOICES off-screen (Japanese) are audible, getting closer --

ON KAREN, as she is surprised to see...

KAYAKO. Beautiful and meek. She's smiling, walking hand-in-hand with TAKEO. A happy couple.

As they reach the front door and go inside, Kayako turns back to the front gate. She smiles and gestures, "come on".

And then TOSHIO walks forward, through the gate. His attention is on a tiny BLACK KITTEN in his arms.

At the door, Toshio turns to look back over his shoulder --

-- DIRECTLY AT KAREN. They hold each other's gaze for a moment, as if he somehow sees her in the ambulance.

Then Kayako gestures to Toshio, and he turns away, entering The House and closing the door.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END

133	<u>OMITTED</u>	133
134	<u>OMITTED</u>	134
134a	<u>OMITTED</u>	134a
135	<u>OMITTED</u>	135
136	<u>OMITTED</u>	136
137	<u>OMITTED</u>	137
138	<u>OMITTED</u>	138