

The 49th Day

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Craig Peters

2434 Langdale Ave.

Eagle Rock, CA 90041

(323)258-1044

[craigpeters@roadrunner.com](mailto:craigpeters@roadrunner.com)

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FADE IN:

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

DIANA, a Japanese-American girl of seven, chases a ladybug in flight across a verdant lawn. She has a slender body, olive skin, and sparkling, almond eyes.

DIANA  
(to the ladybug)  
Where are you going?

FLOWER GARDEN

Diana follows the ladybug from flower to flower. All around her, the garden bursts with blooms. Yellow daisies, pink roses, sunflowers, and star jasmine.

She tries to catch it, but it eludes her.

DIANA  
Come back here!

The ladybug explores a daisy, then lights on Diana's hand. She watches it closely, whispers.

DIANA (cont'd)  
What's your name?

SWIMMING POOL

NOBU, Diana's brother, ten, climbs onto the diving board. He's grinning ear to ear and wears a whistle around his neck.

NOBU  
Ready?

BA-CHAN, the children's great-grandmother, a serene, ancient Japanese woman, folds origami cranes at a table by the pool.

BA-CHAN  
I watching.

Nobu BLOWS THE WHISTLE, tosses it into the water, and launches himself down the diving board.

He does a wobbly front flip, landing with a huge SPLASH.

## UNDERWATER

Nobu swims down in pursuit of the whistle. He grabs it just before it hits the bottom.

## ON THE SURFACE

Nobu pumps his fist, whistle in hand.

NOBU

Yeah!

BA-CHAN

That one better.

NOBU

I'm going to go even higher next time!

## FLOWER GARDEN

The ladybug crawls up Diana's arm.

DIANA

You tickle. I think I'll call you Pumpkin.

It takes to the air.

DIANA (cont'd)

Bye, Pumpkin.

## SWIMMING POOL

Nobu climbs out of the pool, heads back for the diving board.

NOBU

What are you always folding cranes for, Ba-chan?

BA-CHAN

Good for fingers. Good for luck.

NATHAN, the children's father, a fair-skinned Caucasian of forty-five, appears at pool side, briefcase in hand. He's got a sturdy build and a confident, athletic stride.

Nobu's eyes light up.

NOBU

Dad!

Nobu tosses him the whistle.

NATHAN

All right, let's see it.

Nathan BLOWS THE WHISTLE, throws it into the water.

Nobu launches himself down the diving board.

FLOWER GARDEN

Diana wanders through the blooms, sniffs a bunch of roses.  
There's the sound of a SPLASH.

A butterfly appears. Diana holds perfectly still as it flits  
all around her, then flies off.

DIANA

You're leaving?

SWIMMING POOL

Nobu surfaces with the whistle. Nathan applauds.

NATHAN

Nailed it! Yeah!

He turns to Ba-chan.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Tomoko?

BA-CHAN

In studio.

Nobu climbs out of the pool.

NOBU

Dad, wait! Knock, knock!

NATHAN

Who's there?

NOBU

Harry!

NATHAN

Harry who?

NOBU

Harry up and get to work!

NATHAN

Got me.

Nathan turns to leave.

NOBU

No, wait! Wanda! Wanda who?  
Wanda when you're coming back!

LAWN

Diana follows the butterfly out of the garden, across the grass, past the swimming pool, toward a small studio that sits in the far corner of the expansive back yard.

The butterfly sails away.

DIANA

Bye.

Her head lost in the sky, she runs straight into her father.

NATHAN

Whoa.

DIANA

Daddy!

Before he can speak, she puts a finger to her lips.

They play a quick clapping game, then both move on, without a word.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

TOMOKO, the children's mother, forty, a stunning, graceful Japanese woman, works on a stained glass portrait of a meditating Buddha, carefully fitting a piece of glass into place.

Nathan RAPS on the outside of the window.

NATHAN

I've got that meeting, then I'll be  
back about nine, OK? Maybe you can  
get the kids to bed early...

TOMOKO

(with a sly grin)  
I'll pencil you in!

Nathan trots off.

Diana bursts through the door.

DIANA

Momma, I just saw the prettiest butterfly! It was orange with a black design and spots!

TOMOKO

Just a moment, sweetie.

DIANA

It was in the garden! Want to see if it comes back?

TOMOKO

Just let me finish this.

Tomoko returns to her work, sets another piece of glass in place.

Diana turns away, idly wanders the room. Stained glass, beveled glass, and crystals hang in all the windows catching the bright sunlight. Spectrums flash on the walls.

Diana spins a crystal, watches the colored light twirl all around her.

DIANA

Rainbow dance!

Across the room, a piece of beveled glass glimmers, catches Diana's eye. She strolls over for a closer look.

In the glass, SHYLA appears, a smiling, ten-year-old girl with blonde hair and blue eyes. Diana checks to see if her mother is watching, then whispers to the image.

DIANA (cont'd)

Hi.

SHYLA

(surprised)  
You see me?

DIANA

Uh-huh.

SHYLA

Cool! I'm Shyla.

DIANA

I'm Diana.

SHYLA  
I know. Want to play a tapping  
game?

Tomoko slices her finger on a piece of glass.

TOMOKO  
*Ai! Itasu!*

DIANA  
You OK, Momma?

TOMOKO  
Just a little cut.

Blood trickles from her finger. She licks it off.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
It's a beautiful day. Why don't  
you go swimming with Nobu?

DIANA  
Maybe I'll paint instead.

Diana gazes into the piece of beveled glass. Shyla flickers  
and starts to fade.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Where are you going?

SHYLA  
To find someone else to play with.

DIANA  
You coming back?

SHYLA  
Yes, no, maybe so! No, yes, take a  
guess!

Diana skips over to her easel and selects a paint brush.

DIANA  
(to Tomoko)  
What should I paint?

TOMOKO  
Just let me finish this last little  
bit, OK?

DIANA  
I know. I'll paint Nobu.



EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Nobu readies himself on the diving board.

NOBU  
Watch, Ba-chan! I'm going to do a  
back flip this time!

BA-CHAN  
I watching.

Nobu BLOWS HIS WHISTLE, tosses it in the water, charges down  
the board.

He slips on his take off. His feet fly out from under him.

The back of his head strikes the diving board.

His neck SNAPS.

His body SPLASHES into the water.

UNDERWATER

Nobu's whistle descends deeper and deeper, settles on the  
bottom.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana works quietly at her easel, paint brush in hand. She  
smears an oval, a mouth, eyes, a few tentative strokes --  
then stops, puzzled. She closes her eyes, concentrating.

DIANA  
Momma? I can't see him.

Tomoko fits another piece of glass in place.

DIANA (cont'd)  
How come I can't see his face  
anymore?

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Nobu floats face down. Ba-chan screams, rises from her  
chair.

BA-CHAN  
Nobu! Nobu!

Ba-chan totters over and picks up the skimming net. Reaches for Nobu. Slaps at the water.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
You take pole! Nobu! You take pole!

The net slips from her grasp, floats away.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
Tomoko!

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana stands frozen before the easel, eyes shut tight, paint brush in hand.

DIANA  
I only see the back of his head,  
like he's looking the other way.

TOMOKO  
Maybe you should paint something else.

DIANA  
No, I want to paint Nobu.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Ba-chan struggles down the ladder into the water. Holding the ladder with one hand, she tries to grab Nobu, but can't quite reach him.

BA-CHAN  
*Hi-mago!* You swim! You swim to me!

She screams again toward the art studio at the far end of the yard.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
Tomoko!

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Tomoko eyes the Buddha portrait, carefully slides the last piece of glass into place.

TOMOKO  
There you are.

BA-CHAN (O.S.)  
*Mago! Tasukete chodai!*

Tomoko's head pops up. She dashes out the door.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Ba-chan clings to the ladder, reaches for Nobu with her free hand. She loses her grip. Tumbles into the water.

Tomoko races toward the pool with Diana right behind.

TOMOKO  
 No! No!

DIANA  
 Momma!

Tomoko dives in, swims to Nobu. Lifts his head out of the water. Pulls him toward the shallow end of the pool.

Ba-chan thrashes, struggles to stay afloat.

Diana throws a kickboard to her.

DIANA (cont'd)  
 Grab it! Grab it, Ba-chan!

Tomoko drags Nobu up the stairs, out of the water.

The kickboard slips from Ba-chan's grasp. She cries out, goes under.

DIANA (cont'd)  
 Ba-chan!

Tomoko dives back in, gets hold of Ba-chan -- but Ba-chan flails wildly and drives her under.

Tomoko fights back up to the surface. Grabs Ba-chan from behind. Pulls her to the shallow end.

Ba-chan clutches the side of the pool. Gasps for breath.

Tomoko scrambles up the stairs to Nobu's side. Starts CPR.

TOMOKO  
 Breathe, Nobu! Breathe!

Water gurgles from Nobu's mouth.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
 Breathe, Nobu! Listen to me!  
 Breathe! Breathe!

Ba-chan struggles out of the pool. Collapses on the grass beside Nobu.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
 Come on, Nobu!

As Tomoko pumps Nobu's chest, his head flops over to the side. Ba-chan stares straight into his eyes.

BA-CHAN  
 He gone.

Tomoko breaks into hysterical sobs.

TOMOKO  
 No! No! No!

DIANA  
 Momma?

A GONG SOUNDS, vibrant, echoing.

UNDERWATER

Nobu's whistle rests on the bottom of the pool.

INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

The room is packed with family and friends, filling all the seats, flooding the aisles.

REVEREND MORITA, sixty, a solemn, dignified Buddhist priest, STRIKES THE GONG, chants the Nembetsu. The chamber resounds with the soothing tones of the service.

REVEREND MORITA  
*Namu amida butsu...*

Diana sits in the first pew between her mother and father. Fair-skinned, sandy-haired Nathan looks out of place in this sea of Asians.

Beside them sit Ba-chan and GRANDMA, sixty-five, a timid, taciturn Japanese woman, Diana's grandmother.

Diana is enthralled by her splendid surroundings -- the shining gilt paintings, the drifting incense, the splashes of colorful flowers, the rich tones of the GONG.

She strokes her mother's hand.

DIANA  
How sad are you, Momma?

TOMOKO  
Very sad.

DIANA  
Very, very sad? Sadder than you  
can count the tears?

Tomoko hangs her head and weeps.

Diana's eyes light up.

DIANA (cont'd)  
I see him, Mommy!

She points toward the altar, the polished wooden urn.

DIANA (cont'd)  
He's standing right there by his  
box!

NATHAN  
(hushing her)  
Diana, sit still.

DIANA  
Hi, Nobu!

NATHAN  
Inside voice.

DIANA  
Watch me zip my lip.

She zips it shut, then nestles against her mother.

Ba-chan turns to Grandma, her daughter. Ba-chan's stern face  
shines with defiance.

BA-CHAN  
Not right, so young. Why Nobu go?

GRANDMA  
I don't know, Mom.

BA-CHAN  
I stand in front!

Diana tugs at Tomoko's sleeve.

DIANA

What happens when you die? Do you  
fly way up to the sky?

TOMOKO

That's right. To be with Buddha.

Reverend Morita strikes the GONG, and the chant comes to an  
end. He bows, addresses the assembly.

REVEREND MORITA

We will now have the incense  
offering.

DIANA

(whispering)

Now we burn incense. For Nobu.  
Because he left us. Right, Momma?

Sobs wrack Tomoko's body. Nathan wraps an arm around her and  
pulls her close.

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

Diana, Tomoko, Nathan, Ba-chan, Grandma, and the other  
mourners descend the temple steps.

GRANDMA

(to Tomoko)

Nobu will play at Buddha's feet,  
waiting for us to join him. One  
day we'll all be together again on  
the other shore.

Nathan, carrying the urn, quickens his pace. Distances  
himself from the others.

FLASHBACK - INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Nathan, on hands and knees, plays with his son. LITTLE NOBU,  
a toddler, is just learning to walk.

NATHAN

Come on, Nobu! You can do it!

Nathan claps his hands, urges Little Nobu on.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Come to Daddy! Who's the biggest,  
bravest boy in the whole wide  
world? You are! You are!

Little Nobu takes a couple steps. A smile lights his face.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
Yes! Yes! That's it! You're  
walking!

Little Nobu takes a couple more steps. Starts to fall.  
Nathan scoops him up.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
Look at you! Look at you walking!  
Let's go show Momma!

Beaming, he lifts his son onto his shoulders.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
Let's go home!

EXT. JAPANESE GARDEN - DAY - (BACK TO PRESENT)

Nathan leads the grave assembly down a path past a fountain,  
koi pond, and well-tended flowers and shrubs.

He hugs Nobu's urn to his chest, tears streaming down his  
face.

NATHAN  
Let's go home.

Ba-chan pulls Diana aside.

BA-CHAN  
Come, walk with me.

They linger behind the others.

DIANA  
He looked right at me!

BA-CHAN  
I see too, little bit. We only  
ones in family who see. It is gift  
for Ba-chan and Diana and no one  
else. You understand?

Diana shakes her head.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
I no think so. How Nobu look?

DIANA  
Surprised.

BA-CHAN

He no understand that he gone. Now  
Nobu watch over family. He stay  
for 49 Days, then move on to Pure  
Land. Maybe I see once more before  
he go. But eyes getting old.

DIANA

Mine are new!

They stroll by the GURGLING fountain.

BA-CHAN

Listen. Water saying goodbye to  
Nobu.

They pass the koi pond. Fish ripple the surface of the  
water.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

Fish, they sad too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nobu's urn rests on a table. It's surrounded by candles,  
incense, flowers, Nobu's baseball glove, his soccer ball, a  
couple of books, and pictures of the family.

Four generations pray before Nobu's makeshift altar, ancient  
Ba-chan, Grandma, Tomoko, and Diana.

Ba-chan adorns the altar with the origami cranes she'd been  
folding when Nobu met his death.

BA-CHAN

You take on journey.

Ba-chan strikes a long wooden match, lights a candle.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

*Mata aimasho. Hi-mago,* now you  
have favorite things all around  
you.

She passes the match to Grandma. She lights a candle.

GRANDMA

*Mata aimasho, Nobu.*

She whispers to Tomoko.

GRANDMA (cont'd)

Where's Nathan?



TOMOKO  
He needs to be alone.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Nathan POUNDS a heavy punching bag savagely. He's bare-chested, bare-fisted, drenched in sweat.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Grandma passes the match to Tomoko. Tomoko lights a candle.

TOMOKO  
*Mata aimasho*, my kind soul.

She offers the match to her daughter.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
Do you want to do one? This is how  
we say goodbye.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Nathan throws himself at the bag like a wild animal -- screaming with every blow.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Diana lights the final candle.

DIANA  
(to the urn)  
*Mata aimasho*. Is that right,  
Momma?

Tomoko nods. She takes the match, blows it out, sets in on the altar.

Diana places her hands on the urn, feeling the burnished wood. She rests her cheek against it.

DIANA (cont'd)  
You're still warm, Nobu. Momma, I  
can still feel him.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Nathan bobs, weaves, attacks the bag with all his might. His knuckles are bleeding, his eyes on fire.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Diana and Nathan wolf down their breakfasts. Tomoko's food is untouched, her tearful gaze fixed on the empty chair across the table.

TOMOKO  
He should be here now.

NATHAN  
(gently)  
Try to eat something, OK?

Diana, off in her own world, plays with her toy telephone.

DIANA  
Ring! Ring!

She answers it.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Hi. Me too. What?

She listens, then speaks into the phone.

DIANA (cont'd)  
I like sourdough best. With lots  
of butter. You do too?

Diana listens, turns to her mother.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Momma, Shyla says I must be lonely  
now that Nobu's gone up to the sky.  
She wants to be my new friend.

TOMOKO  
(fighting back her tears)  
He should be here.

Nathan reaches for her hand, his knuckles scraped and raw.

DIANA  
(into the phone)  
I've got to finish breakfast now.  
Maybe we can talk later, OK?

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana lies in bed, tossing and turning. Ba-chan sits beside her.

The walls are plastered with vivid, detailed watercolor paintings, drawings, and collages. Bright, vibrant colors. Butterflies, ladybugs, rainbows, and sunflowers.

A painting of a little girl with curly red hair, freckles, and glasses hangs over her bed.

BA-CHAN

Your father and mother very busy.  
They be back late.

DIANA

You know I can't go to sleep  
without a story.

BA-CHAN

OK... My great-grandma in Japan  
tell me long, long time ago.

DIANA

A new one?

BA-CHAN

You never hear before. There was  
giant, very hungry, come down from  
mountain, always come to village.  
Take people away and eat!

DIANA

Like for dinner?

BA-CHAN

(nodding)

Men try to fight, but giant too  
big. Tall as trees! All village  
very scared. So one day little  
girl listen to bird in tree.

DIANA

How old was she?

BA-CHAN

Little girl like you. Bird talk to  
her. Tell her that giant no like  
bamboo. Make him sick. So, little  
girl very clever. Decide to make  
presents.

DIANA

Presents?

BA-CHAN

She braid bamboo necklaces for  
whole family.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

For Momma, Poppa, grandparents,  
all brothers and sisters. Next  
day giant come, feet pounding on  
earth -- boom, boom, boom, boom!  
Very hungry. But when he see  
bamboo necklaces, he no want to  
eat! He leave village, go back to  
mountain, never come back! You  
understand?

DIANA

She saved her family.

BA-CHAN

And nobody know but her. Now close  
eyes.

DIANA

Give me Amber first.

Ba-chan hands Diana her doll. Diana cuddles up, strokes  
Amber's hair.

DIANA (cont'd)

You have the prettiest hair. Ready  
for bed?

Sunshine, her orange tabby, comes in through the cat door in  
the window screen.

DIANA (cont'd)

Sunshine! Good kitty!

Sunshine curls up with Diana and Amber on the bed. Ba-chan  
flips off the light.

BA-CHAN

(singing a Japanese  
lullaby)

*Nen nen kororiyo okororiyo...*

Diana drifts off to sleep.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tomoko's deep in slumber. Nathan sits beside her on the bed,  
correcting test papers.

An old black and white photograph of a stern looking man and  
his wife rests on his night table. He glances at it, then  
places it face down.

Nathan hears the sound of FOOTSTEPS, sits up, slides out of bed.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Nathan discovers an empty bed.

LIVING ROOM

A flickering candle near Nobu's urn sheds the only light.

Diana sleepwalks, eyes half-closed, her face flushed with fury. She speaks to thin air.

DIANA  
I know you're here!

Nathan enters from the hall.

NATHAN  
Diana?

DIANA  
(to the shadows)  
Go away!

He approaches his daughter, astonished. Diana yells into the darkness.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Get out of here!

Nathan draws near.

NATHAN  
Diana.

She turns toward her father. Flies into a rage. Swings at him with clenched fists.

DIANA  
Go away! Go away!

NATHAN  
It's Daddy!

DIANA  
You leave us alone!

Nathan backs off. Tomoko dashes in from the hall. Diana shrieks into the darkness.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Go back to the mountain where you  
belong! And never come back!

Tomoko approaches, kneels before her, gently takes her hands.

TOMOKO  
Diana, sweetie, wake up. You're  
having a bad dream.

Diana's eyes flutter open.

DIANA  
Momma?

TOMOKO  
Daddy's here too.

DIANA  
But I saw him!

TOMOKO  
Who?

Diana spins around, searches the room.

DIANA  
Where did he go?

TOMOKO  
It's just us. Time to go back to  
bed.

She brushes Diana's hair back from her face, takes her hand,  
and leads her down the hall.

Nathan blows out the candle on Nobu's altar. The room falls  
into darkness.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana's eyes blink open.

DIANA  
Ring! Ring!

She picks up her toy telephone.

DIANA (cont'd)  
I knew you'd call! I just saw  
him... You did too? He took Nobu,  
but I'm not going to let him take  
anyone else!

SHYLA (V.O.)

But Ba-chan said he's as tall as the trees! How are you going to stop him?

DIANA

I'll keep watching all the time. When I see him, I'll tell everyone to run and hide!

SHYLA

But what if he's standing right there in front of you and you can't get away?

DIANA

(thinking for a moment)  
Daddy's got a gun.

MASTER BEDROOM - WALK-IN CLOSET - DAY

Diana, standing on a chair, lowers a box from the top shelf. Opens it. Inside is a 357 Magnum. Shyla watches, her visage shining from the window.

DIANA

He shoots it at the range. I'm not allowed to touch it.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Crystals catch the bright morning sunlight, throwing rainbows against the walls.

Diana, alone, stands before her easel. Her face set in concentration, she paints a picture of a little girl with blonde hair and blue eyes.

A piece of beveled glass shines, catches Diana's eye. Shyla's face appears.

DIANA

Hi.

SHYLA

Is that me?

Diana nods, checks Shyla's face in the beveled glass, then studies her painting.

DIANA  
It's hard to get the yellow right  
for your hair.

SHYLA  
How old do you think I am?

DIANA  
Ten?

SHYLA  
No, older.

DIANA  
Twelve?

SHYLA  
I'm older than Ba-chan.

DIANA  
No one's older than Ba-chan.

SHYLA  
I'm as old as the sky!

DIANA  
You're making up stories! How old  
do you think I am?

SHYLA  
Seven.

DIANA  
How did you know?

Shyla shrugs. Diana takes a long look at her face, returns  
to her painting.

DIANA (cont'd)  
I have to mix blue and white just  
right for your eyes.

SHYLA  
When you're finished, want to play  
a tapping game?

DIANA  
OK!

SHYLA  
Actually, we already started!

DIANA  
We did?



SHYLA  
The first time we met.

DIANA  
What are the rules?

SHYLA  
I hide, then I try to sneak up and tap your shoulder.

DIANA  
That's it?

SHYLA  
That's it. But if you catch me, I have to hide again and start all over.

TOMOKO (O.S.)  
Diana!

DIANA  
I've got to go now. Grandma's coming over for lunch and I'm helping Momma with the *onigiri*.

SHYLA  
Grandma's coming?

TOMOKO (O.S.)  
The *gohan* is ready!

Diana puts away her brushes.

DIANA  
I'll finish your picture later  
OK, Shyla?

SHYLA  
We're going to be best friends -- I can tell! Most people look right through me like I'm not even here!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tomoko scoops steamed rice from a bowl, presses it into molds. Step by step, Diana copies her every move.

TOMOKO  
Grandma showed me how to do this.

DIANA

And you're showing me, and Ba-chan showed her?

Tomoko nods.

DIANA (cont'd)

Grandma taught me how to say the shapes.

TOMOKO

The round one is called?

DIANA

*Mauri.*

TOMOKO

So smart! And the flower?

DIANA

*Hana?*

TOMOKO

That's right. *Hana.*

Shyla appears, shimmering on the refrigerator door. As Diana forms a rice ball, Shyla's hand reaches out to touch her shoulder.

DIANA

I see you, Shyla.

SHYLA

You're good at this.

DIANA

I've got to help Momma finish the *hana* now.

SHYLA

(fading from sight)

That's OK. I've got lots of friends to play with.

DIANA

Momma, when will she get here? I can't wait!

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - VERANDA

Bright, colorful flowers bloom in pots along the railing. Grandma trims a yellow daisy with pruning shears, humming happily.

She moves on to the next plant, trips over the hose. Tumbles head over heels down the stairs.

She crashes to the bottom, cries out in pain. Dazed, she feels her chest. The pruning shears are embedded deeply, right beneath her collarbone.

She yanks them out. Blood seeps down her chest, coloring her blouse red. She covers the wound with her hand, moans in anguish.

She crawls up the stairs, only makes it halfway. Calls to a PASSERBY on the street to no avail.

She crawls up couple more stairs and collapses, a few feet from the front door. She cries out and loses consciousness, leaving a trail of blood down the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Diana closes her eyes, concentrating.

DIANA  
Momma? I thought I heard her.

TOMOKO  
What, sweetie?

Diana covers her ears.

DIANA  
She was calling to me. Now I can't hear her at all.

A GONG SOUNDS. Her eyes fly open wide.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Momma!

INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

Family and friends fill the room, quietly taking their seats, conversing in hushed tones. Incense swirls around Grandma's wooden urn. Flowers splash the altar with color.

In the first pew sit Diana, Tomoko, Nathan, and Ba-chan.

Reverend Morita strikes the GONG, chants the Nembetsu.

REVEREND MORITA  
*Namu amida butsu...*

Diana wipes away her tears.

DIANA  
She's flying way up to the sky.

TOMOKO  
To be with Nobu. To help him on  
his journey.

Tomoko closes her eyes in prayer. Diana sits bolt upright,  
points to the altar.

DIANA  
I see her! Right there! She's all  
flickery! Hi, Grandma!

NATHAN  
Shhh...

DIANA  
Don't you see her, Momma?

Tomoko shakes her head.

DIANA (cont'd)  
(cupping her ear)  
She's looking right at me and  
talking.

TOMOKO  
What's she saying?

Reverend Morita strikes the GONG, and the chant comes to an  
end.

REVEREND MORITA  
Two deaths, one closely following  
the other...

DIANA  
She's trying to tell me something.

NATHAN  
Diana, sit still.

REVEREND MORITA  
A child and his grandmother...

DIANA  
(cupping her ear)  
What, Grandma?

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - JAPANESE GARDEN - DAY

Diana, Tomoko, Nathan, Ba-chan, and other mourners tread the path through the manicured garden.

Nathan carries Grandma's urn. His other arm is wrapped around his wife.

NATHAN

I've got you.

Ba-chan pulls Diana aside. They linger behind the others.

BA-CHAN

Walk with me. You see Grandma on altar?

Diana nods.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

I no see nothing. Eyes all done.

DIANA

She looked scared.

BA-CHAN

I scared too.

They walk hand in hand along the path, past the fountain. It's turned off.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

Water is quiet. Nothing to say.

They pause by the koi pond. The surface is perfectly still with nary a ripple.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

See? Fish all hiding.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Grandma's urn rests besides Nobu's on the makeshift altar on the table.

Ba-chan, Tomoko, and Diana place pictures and a few of Grandma's favorite things around her urn -- a hand-painted ceramic bowl, a hair brush, and a Japanese cook book.

Ba-chan lights a candle with a long wooden match.

BA-CHAN

*Mata aimasho.*

She passes the match to Tomoko. Tomoko lights a candle.

TOMOKO  
*Mata aimasho, Mom.*

She passes on the match to Diana. Diana lights the last candle.

DIANA  
*Mata aimasho.*

Tomoko takes the match, blows it out, and sets it on the altar. Ba-chan strokes Diana's hair.

BA-CHAN  
 Not to worry, *hi-mago*. Nobu looking over family. He see everything that happen. He see Grandma die. Before he leave on 49th Day, he help us understand.

DIANA  
 Momma, how come Daddy never lights any candles?

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Nathan, bare-fisted, his eyes ablaze, POUNDS the heavy bag savagely.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Diana sits in a bubble bath, tearful and despondent. Shyla's face appears in the bubbles.

SHYLA  
 I'm so sorry about what happened to Grandma.

DIANA  
 Me too... What are we going to do now, Shyla? The giant came back and took her, and I never even saw him!

SHYLA  
 Well, maybe I can help you watch.

DIANA  
 And if we're both watching --

SHYLA

One of us will spot him for sure!

Diana scoops up Shyla's image in a mound of bubbles, whispers.

DIANA

Mommy and Daddy don't even know he's here. We can't let him take anyone else. It's up to us!

SHYLA

But what if he grabs your parents when we're not looking and he's about to eat them?

DIANA

I'll get Daddy's gun.

SHYLA

But you've never even touched it. Shouldn't you try it out sometime and see if you can shoot it?

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Tomoko tucks Diana into bed. Several paintings of Shyla now adorn the walls, alongside the rainbows, sunflowers, ladybugs, and butterflies.

DIANA

He never tucks me in anymore.

Tomoko settles beside her.

TOMOKO

Oh, sweetie... You know how Daddy lost his parents when he was about your age?

DIANA

Uh-huh.

TOMOKO

After that, he had no one. He grew up fighting for everything he got, and he's still fighting. He's so sad about Nobu, he doesn't know what else to do.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Nathan throws a flurry of punches, so exhausted he can barely stand. He stumbles forward, clutches the bag, and hangs on for dear life.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nathan sits at his daughter's bedside. He strokes her hair, his knuckles scraped and swollen.

NATHAN

I'm sorry, honey, but when you die,  
that's it.

DIANA

You mean Nobu's not watching us?  
Grandma's not either?

NATHAN

No, they're gone.

Diana turns her face into her pillow.

Tomoko hisses at him from the hallway.

TOMOKO

Nate!

MASTER BEDROOM

Tomoko and Nathan square off in bed.

NATHAN

I'm not going to lie to her.

TOMOKO

If it comforts her to believe that  
her brother and grandmother are  
still with us, that's fine with me!

HALLWAY

Diana listens outside their door as the quarrel heats up.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Come on, Tomoko. They're just  
Buddhist fairy tales!

TOMOKO (O.S.)

I don't see what harm it does.



Diana starts to knock, hesitates.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Do you actually believe that their spirits are hovering above us right now, watching our every move?

TOMOKO (O.S.)

That's not the point! I'm talking about what's best for Diana!

Diana returns quietly to her room, shuts the door behind her.

MASTER BEDROOM

Tomoko switches off the light, flops down.

TOMOKO

At least she's dealing with it. And what about you?

NATHAN

What about me?

TOMOKO

Hiding in the garage.

NATHAN

I'm not hiding!

TOMOKO

Then what do you call it?

DIANA'S BEDROOM

She cuddles up with Amber and Sunshine, pulls the comforter over their heads.

DIANA

Cover your ears.

INT. DIANA'S SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY

Tomoko and MRS. LEACH, Diana's spry sixty-year-old teacher, watch silently as Diana and her classmates, TERESA and MATT, assemble tangram puzzle pieces on their desks.

Teresa's got curly red hair, freckles, and glasses. She's the girl in the painting over Diana's bed.

The pieces are geometric shapes -- squares, rectangles, triangles, and parallelograms of various sizes and colors.

The object of the exercise is to place the pieces into a square. They need to be manipulated into place, turned over, flipped around, fitted every which way to make it happen.

Diana whips her pieces into a square in a few moments.

MRS. LEACH

Very good. Again.

Diana mixes up her pieces, starts over.

Teresa and Matt fiddle with their pieces, trying this, then that, getting nowhere. They aren't close to being able to accomplish the task at hand.

Diana finishes again.

MRS. LEACH (cont'd)

Once more, please. This time make a triangle.

Diana mixes them up and starts again.

TERESA

(exasperated)

They never fit, Mrs. Leach!  
Especially the last three!

MATT

Me neither!

MRS. LEACH

It's OK. Keep trying.

Try as they might, Teresa and Matt can't make it happen. Diana finishes up her third time.

MRS. LEACH (cont'd)

Very good! Thank you. You may go back to your reading now.

She pulls Tomoko aside.

MRS. LEACH (cont'd)

As you know, your daughter's as smart as a whip. Her test scores are simply astounding. But I've noticed a problem over the past couple of weeks. This imaginary friend...

TOMOKO

Shyla.

MRS. LEACH

Yes. She's been spending more and more time interacting with Shyla rather than participating in class -- retreating into her own world and shutting others out.

Diana, points out the window, speaks to thin air.

DIANA

Caught you! Were you trying to sneak up on me again?

MRS. LEACH

(to Tomoko)

Since her brother and grandmother passed away, the change in her personality has been dramatic. Have you spoken to her doctor?

EXT. DIANA'S SCHOOL - DAY

Tomoko and Diana stroll down the sidewalk.

A wretched, wild-eyed HOMELESS WOMAN pushing a shopping cart calls out.

HOMELESS WOMAN

You get away from her! You got no business following that little girl!

Tomoko spins around. There's no one behind them.

HOMELSS WOMAN

Leave her alone! Go on! You hear me?

Tomoko takes Diana's hand and they hurry on.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The walls of her room, once covered by a variety of colorful paintings and collages, are now plastered with picture after picture of Shyla.

The only painting that remains from before is the one of her classmate, Teresa, over her bed.

Diana lies on the floor, sock puppets on her hands. She gives voice to both puppets as they speak back and forth.

DIANA'S PUPPET

Why do people have to die, Shyla?

SHYLA'S PUPPET

They just do, that's all. I'm not happy when they die, but I'm not sad either.

DIANA'S PUPPET

Why not?

SHYLA'S PUPPET

Everybody's going to die someday.

DIANA'S PUPPET

Guess so... Want to paint?

SHYLA'S PUPPET

No thanks. I've got a better idea! I'll tell you a secret, then you tell me one.

DIANA'S PUPPET

OK.

SHYLA'S PUPPET

Then we can be best friends. Maybe you can even be my helper someday. I always need more helpers!

FOOTSTEPS down the hall. The door opens. Tomoko pokes her head in.

TOMOKO

Hi. What are you doing?

Diana puts down her sock puppets, looks away.

DIANA

Talking to Shyla. Can we be alone now?

Tomoko, perplexed, quietly slips out the door. Diana locks it, looks around.

DIANA (cont'd)

Hey! Where did you go?

Shyla's shimmering image appears in the mirror.

SHYLA

Over here!

DIANA

How do you do that?

SHYLA

I'm magic. I can do anything!

DIANA

Is that your secret?

SHYLA

No, before you tell your secret,  
you have to do this first.

Shyla licks her fingertip, touches her nose, blinks her eyes.

SHYLA (cont'd)

(whispering)

I've got lots of different faces.

DIANA

What do you mean?

SHYLA

I can look like anybody!

DIANA

You can?

SHYLA

I'll show you sometime. OK, your  
turn!

Diana licks her fingertip, touches her nose, blinks her eyes.

DIANA

(whispering)

Sometimes, right before I go to  
sleep, I pretend Nobu and Grandma  
are still alive -- and that I'll  
see them in the morning and we can  
all be together again.

Tears well up in her eyes.

SHYLA

You don't need anyone else. I'll  
take care of you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tomoko stands alone before the altar. She gently brushes her fingertips across Nobu's urn, then her mother's. She lights incense and chants the Nembetsu.

TOMOKO  
*Namu amida butsu...*

Nathan watches her from afar, listens to the chant. He opens the front door to leave.

NATHAN  
See you later.

Tomoko doesn't respond.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
I said, see you later!

Tomoko, eyes closed, nods and chants on.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Shyla watches from the mirror as Diana slides the box containing the pistol from under her bed.

SHYLA  
When did you get it?

DIANA  
Right after Daddy went to work.

Diana opens the box, looks at the pistol.

DIANA (cont'd)  
I'm scared.

SHYLA  
Go ahead.

Diana picks it up, holding it with both hands.

DIANA  
It's heavy. You've got to put bullets in. I've seen Daddy do it.

SHYLA  
You've got to try it sometime, right? So you can be ready in case the giant shows up.

Diana opens a box of bullets, slips one into the cylinder, then another.

DIANA  
They're slippery.

TOMOKO (O.S.)  
Diana!

Diana panics, shoves the pistol back in the box, pushes it under her bed.

DIANA  
Be right there, Momma!

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Nathan, alone, stands before the blackboard, contemplates an equation, dark circles under his eyes.

RICK, a fellow professor, fifty-five, ambles in.

RICK  
Jesus, you look thrashed. Ready for the meeting?

NATHAN  
In a second. Take a look at this, Rick, will you? Hamilton's Equation: Given the initial conditions of the particle, its motion is determined for all time.

RICK  
Yeah.

NATHAN  
It's so clear, so rational. But Tomoko and her Buddhism -- the candles, the incense, the rituals, the endless, pointless chanting...

RICK  
Some people need that. Come on, man, we're late.

NATHAN  
See you there.

Rick departs. Nathan studies the blackboard intently. It blurs before him. He rubs his eyes.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - EXT. NATHAN'S BOYHOOD HOME - DAY

Snow is falling. It's a blustery, freezing winter day. YOUNG NATHAN, eight, hides behind a big fir tree at the edge of the woods, still as can be. His breath fogs the air.

His FATHER and MOTHER wait by the car in the driveway.

NATHAN'S FATHER  
(fuming)  
Nathan!

NATHAN'S MOTHER  
Nathan, we've got to go!

NATHAN'S FATHER  
I know you can hear me and let me tell you, this burns me up! When we get back from Mass, there will be hell to pay!

NATHAN'S MOTHER  
(to her husband)  
It's almost nine.

NATHAN'S FATHER  
Mark my words! Hell to pay! You hear me, young man? You've always been a worthless child!

INT. NATHAN'S PARENTS' CAR - DAY

The car speeds down the icy road. Snow falls, obscures the view.

NATHAN'S FATHER  
He pulled this stunt last Sunday too! This is the last time!

NATHAN'S MOTHER  
Dear, slow down.

The car hits a patch of black ice. Skids sideways down the middle of the road.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The car slides off the road. Broadsides a tree. Tumbles down the side of a steep, dark gorge and is hidden by the falling snow.



INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY - (BACK TO PRESENT)

Nathan shakes his head to clear it. The equation before him on the black board comes back into focus.

NATHAN  
(to himself)  
The laws of physics make perfect sense.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. MAZMANIAN, thirty-five, Diana's pediatrician, confers with Tomoko and Nathan.

TOMOKO  
When I closed her door, she locked it on me!

DR. MAZMANIAN  
Considering the trauma she's been through, it's natural she might want to spend some time alone to try to find her bearings. I'm not as troubled with that as I am with the sleepwalking. Has she ever done that before?

Tomoko shakes her head.

NATHAN  
And she claims to see spirits at the temple. Palpable visions of Nobu and her grandmother.

DR. MAZMANIAN  
Children her age have extremely active imaginations, and when you add a high degree of emotional stress, it's like throwing gas on a fire.

NATHAN  
But she seems to believe that they're actually there -- as if she's having hallucinations or something!

TOMOKO  
No, Nate, she's just playing make believe. Pretending to see loved ones -- and that comforts her. Drop it, OK?

NATHAN  
(bristling)  
Drop it?

DR. MAZMANIAN  
(softening her tone)  
If you're truly concerned, you  
could always bring her to a  
specialist. Otherwise, just give  
her time.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tomoko and Ba-chan prepare tempura. Tomoko stirs the wok,  
unnerved, on edge.

TOMOKO  
He's convinced there's something  
wrong inside her head!

BA-CHAN  
What? I no think so.

Oil splatters on Tomoko's hand.

TOMOKO  
*Shimatta!*

Diana wanders in.

BA-CHAN  
Good to see you out of room.

DIANA  
I was wondering... No one else is  
going to die, right?

Tomoko falls to her knees, searches Diana's eyes.

TOMOKO  
No, sweetie! That's all over and  
done with! We're all going to be  
fine! Right, Ba-chan? Right?

BA-CHAN  
You finish tempura. Maybe I take  
for walk.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Ba-chan and Diana stroll through the blooms, hand in hand.

BA-CHAN  
Flowers so pretty, but they tell  
stories too. Here, you look.

She points out a rose.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
This one smell good, but thorns can  
cut. Over here, this vine wrapping  
around this one.

She points out a star jasmine that climbs a sunflower,  
wrapping itself around the stalk.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
It climb. It get tighter. Maybe  
it kill this one. It not stop.  
You see?

Diana nods.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
You be careful. Always watching.  
Giant not stop either. The more he  
eat, the hungrier he get!

DIANA  
How big is he?

BA-CHAN  
His head come to top of trees!  
Eyes like fire! Quiet now, *hi-*  
*mago*. Listen.

Ba-chan takes a few steps.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
You hear me walking? So quiet.

There's the rumble of DISTANT THUNDER.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
You hear thunder? Boom, boom,  
boom, boom!

The water in the birdbath ripples. Wind moves the trees.  
The THUNDER becomes the pounding of TAIKO DRUMS, louder and  
louder.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
Giant's footsteps shake earth!

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A CRACK of THUNDER sounds. RAIN SLASHES against the windows. Diana stirs, sits up in bed. Eyes half-closed, she speaks to thin air.

DIANA  
You did? When?

She slides out of bed.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Let me get my flashlight.

MASTER BEDROOM

Nathan lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. He looks over at his sleeping wife, listens to her slow, steady breathing.

NATHAN  
(whispering)  
How do you do it? I just lie here thinking about Nobu. I wanted to watch him grow and to be there for him every step of the way. I wanted to be the father my father never was. How do you sleep?

The CLICK of a lock and the SOUND of a door opening. Nathan jostles her awake.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Nathan and Tomoko look in, find an empty bed.

LIVING ROOM

Tomoko flips on the lights.

NATHAN  
The front door's open!

EXT. VERANDA - NIGHT

Nathan and Tomoko step outside. POURING RAIN. BOOMING THUNDER.

There's a flash of lightning. In that instant, the yard and street in front of the house are illuminated -- and there's Diana, standing in the middle of the road, flashlight in hand.

NATHAN  
What the hell?

TOMOKO  
Diana!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Diana, eyes half-closed, shines the feeble rays from her light up and down the road, searching.

DIANA  
(to thin air)  
Where did he go?

Nathan and Tomoko dash down the driveway.

TOMOKO  
Diana!

A car rounds the corner, heading right toward her.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A TEENAGE DRIVER has one hand on the wheel -- his other hand clutches a pint bottle of Tequila. He takes the last swallow, tosses the bottle out the window.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Diana sweeps the road with her flashlight.

DIANA  
I don't see him anywhere.

Putting her head back, she lets the rain wash over her face, sticks out her tongue to catch the raindrops.

Nathan and Tomoko race toward her.

NATHAN  
Diana! Wake up! Diana!

Through half-closed eyes, Diana spots the oncoming car. Shyla's visage glows in the headlights.

Diana's eyes fly open. She freezes.

DIANA  
Is that you?

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A flash of lightning illuminates the road ahead. The driver cries out. Yanks the wheel. SLAMS on the brakes.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The car swerves sharply, barely missing Diana. It SMASHES against a parked car, CAREENS back onto the road, SPEEDS off.

Nathan scoops her up in his arms. Tomoko, weeping, clutches her daughter to her breast.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana is nestled between her parents in bed.

NATHAN  
What's the last thing you remember?

DIANA  
Me and Shyla were looking for the giant.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana sneaks in, quietly closes the door. Shyla appears in the mirror.

DIANA  
There you are!

SHYLA  
I saw him!

DIANA  
Shhh. Don't wake them up.

SHYLA  
(whispering)  
I talked to him!

DIANA  
You did?

SHYLA

Uh-huh! He said if you promise to do three favors for him, he'll head back up to the mountain and never come back.

DIANA

He will? He'll go away?

SHYLA

For good!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nathan demonstrates the new dead bolt lock on the front door as Tomoko looks on. A heavy lock, it's placed high on the door.

NATHAN

See? Out of her reach, and hard to open. I'll put them on all the exterior doors. Problem solved.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Diana eyes a butterfly. She chases it, tries to catch it in her hands. Every time she gets near, it flits away.

Shyla face sparkles in the water in the birdbath.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nathan and Tomoko peer out the window.

TOMOKO

She's chasing butterflies.

He slides up behind her, massages her shoulders.

NATHAN

Maybe the worst is over.

TOMOKO

So happy. That's the girl I know.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Diana picks up the skimming net.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Diana chases the butterfly again, captures it in the net, pinning it to the ground.

Diana holds the butterfly by its wings. Slowly, deliberately, she pulls off one wing, then the other.

She places the pieces of the butterfly on the ground, squirts on lighter fluid, and lights it with a match.

Shyla watches from the water in the bird bath.

SHYLA

Killing things is hard at first,  
but you get used to it. It's not  
so bad after a while.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tomoko and Nathan can't believe their eyes.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

She watches the fire, her cheeks wet with tears.

DIANA

You were so pretty!

Tomoko and Nathan rush to Diana's side. Tomoko takes Diana by the shoulders.

TOMOKO

Why? Why did you do this?

DIANA

You won't believe me, Momma!

TOMOKO

Tell me! I want to know!

DIANA

Last night Shyla told me --

NATHAN

Stop it! We're talking about you,  
Diana. There is no Shyla! Stop  
making up stories! Why did you do  
this?



DIANA  
She's not pretend! She's real!  
You don't understand anything,  
Daddy!

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Stained glass colors the bright sunlight streaming through the windows. Hanging crystals and pieces of beveled glass throw rainbows against the walls.

Diana, alone, speaks to Shyla, a flickering image in a crystal. Shyla's cross.

DIANA  
I have to. Mom said.

SHYLA  
Why can't you stay and play with me instead?

DIANA  
I can't.

SHYLA  
But you've only done one of the favors! You need to do two more or the giant might get mad at you!

DIANA  
When I get back, OK? I've got to go now.

Diana spins the crystal on its thread. It catches the light. Images of Shyla twirl all around the room.

SHYLA  
Just tell her no, no, no, no, no!

DIANA  
Mom said I haven't been on a play date in a long time and I'm going, and that's it!

SHYLA  
OK... Teresa, right? She's got freckles and wavy red hair and glasses?

DIANA  
How did you know?

SHYLA

Her painting's on your bedroom wall.

DIANA

She's my best friend from class.

SHYLA

But I thought we were best friends!

Diana stills the crystal, holds it in the palm of her hand.

DIANA

We are. You can have two best friends, you know!

SHYLA

I guess so... Before you go, want to see something cool?

Diana nods.

SHYLA (cont'd)

I told you I've got lots of different faces, right? If I looked like that old homeless lady who lives by your school -- all dirty and pushing a shopping cart, you'd never talk to me. That's why I decided to look like this, so you'd like me and want to be my friend.

DIANA

But you can look like other people too?

SHYLA

See how this crystal changes light into colors? I can make my face change too!

In the crystal, Shyla dissolves -- and reappears as a grinning Nobu.

DIANA

Nobu!

The image changes to Grandma's face.

DIANA (cont'd)

Grandma, is that really you?

Then Teresa's face sparkles from the crystal.

## TERESA'S IMAGE

Guess what? Momma just bought me  
some new cards. Want to play  
speed?

Tomoko opens the door, shaking Diana from her reverie.

## TOMOKO

I've been looking all over for you.  
Time to go.

Diana looks back to the crystal. As Teresa's image fades.  
Shyla reappears.

## SHYLA

I guess I'll see if anyone else  
wants to play.

EXT. TERESA'S BACK YARD - TREE HOUSE - DAY

Teresa and Diana play a quick card game on the floor. Diana  
slaps down the winner.

## DIANA

Speed!

## TERESA

You win every time!

Diana shuffles.

## DIANA

I got lucky cards. I bet you win  
the next one.

## TERESA'S MOTHER (O.S.)

You guys want a snack?

## TERESA

Coming, Mommy!

Teresa scrambles down the rope ladder.

## TERESA (cont'd)

(to Diana)

We've got chocolate ice cream and  
whipped cream and cherries!

Her foot slips off a rung. She lurches forward to regain her  
balance.

One of the hooks holding the ladder rips out of the rotting  
wood above her. The ladder twists.

The ropes get tangled, wrapping around her neck. She struggles to free herself. Claws at the rope.

Diana flattens herself on the floor, reaches down.

DIANA

Teresa!

Teresa can't reach her hand. She kicks at the air. Gasps for breath.

Diana leans over farther and farther. Their hands finally touch. Teresa grabs hold.

Diana tries to haul her up -- but gets pulled over the edge. Tumbles through the air, crashes to the ground. Strikes the back of her head.

Teresa's arms and legs flail wildly. She chokes for breath, tries to cry out. Slowly, she stops struggling.

Her body goes limp.

Diana gets to her feet, in a daze, holding the back of her head. There hangs Teresa like a rag doll, swinging back and forth above her.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tomoko tries the door. It's locked. Nathan KNOCKS.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana's head is buried beneath her pillows.

More KNOCKING. Muttering outside the door. FOOTSTEPS down the hall.

DIANA

Ring! Ring!

Diana picks up her toy phone.

SHYLA (V.O.)

See what happens when the giant gets angry? He says he's not even sure he'll let you do the last two favors now. He might just stay!

DIANA

Talk to him for me, OK, Shyla?  
Tell him I'm really sorry.

DIANA (cont'd)  
I'll finish the favors whenever he  
wants.

Diana hangs up the phone, wipes her eyes. She takes Teresa's picture down from the wall.

LIVING ROOM

Tomoko chants the Nembetsu at the altar.

TOMOKO  
*Namu amida butsu...*

Diana enters from the hallway and places Teresa's picture beside the urns.

Tomoko pulls her close, chants on.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Ba-chan and Diana slowly traverse the yard, hand in hand.

DIANA  
I'm never going on a play date  
again. I'm going to stay home and  
play with Shyla and nobody else.

Ba-chan caresses the back of Diana's head.

BA-CHAN  
You have big bump.

DIANA  
It hurts. Sometimes I see lights  
behind my eyes. They flash on and  
off.

BA-CHAN  
Lights? You tell parents?

Diana shakes her head. Ba-chan's old eyes search the yard. She listens, sniffs the air.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
Giant still near, still hungry.  
Could be anywhere.

DIANA  
Daddy says there's no such thing.

BA-CHAN  
(quietly)  
Come, pick flowers.

## FLOWER GARDEN

Ba-chan and Diana mingle in the garden, snapping up bunches of yellow daisies.

DIANA  
Look how many!

BA-CHAN  
We give to your mother for dinner  
table.

Nathan, piling bags of bark across the yard, studies them from afar.

Ba-chan settles on a bench, arranges her flowers into a bouquet. She pulls Diana to her side.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
(whispering)  
Listen to Ba-chan. I too old to  
fight. Too tired. You. You the  
one! Understand?

DIANA  
I think so.

BA-CHAN  
You strong! Giant try to eat, but  
all you get is bump on head!

Nathan walks by with a bag of bark over his shoulder.

NATHAN  
What are you guys whispering about?

DIANA  
Nothing, Daddy.

Nathan drops the bark onto the ground.

NATHAN  
Ba-chan, please stop filling her  
head with scary stories. All this  
nonsense just makes it worse.

BA-CHAN  
It not nonsense.

NATHAN

Why the hell do you think she gets nightmares anyway?

BA-CHAN

I go see if Tomoko need help with dinner.

Ba-chan rises stiffly and walks away, bouquet in hand. Diana turns on her father, her eyes flashing with anger.

DIANA

Why are you so mean?

NATHAN

I'm not mean. You don't need to hear that, that's all.

DIANA

You don't even know what she was saying!

NATHAN

I have a pretty good guess.

Diana looks away, arranges her daisies.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Diana?

Nathan lowers his voice.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Your great-grandmother grew up in a tiny fishing village on an island off the coast of Japan. She's nearly a hundred years old. Stories were part of their lives and culture way back then. They made up folk tales about the sun and moon, about why the seas were calm or angry. They made up stories about everything, including why people die -- but that doesn't make them true!

Diana won't meet his eyes. She admires her flowers.

DIANA

These are for the table.

Exasperated, Nathan hefts the bag of bark and stalks away.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Diana finishes loading the 357 Magnum. She holds it with both hands, aims it at her reflection in the mirror.

DIANA

Pow!

INT. DIANA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Mrs. Leach confers with Tomoko. Diana's classmates, all in clusters, play board games, draw pictures, and experiment with magnets.

Diana sits alone at her desk, absorbed in writing.

MRS. LEACH

It's a letter to Shyla. I asked to see the last one she wrote, and she ripped it up.

TOMOKO

Ripped it up?

MRS. LEACH

She used to be such a sunny, outgoing child. Now her whole life seems to revolve around her imaginary friend.

TOMOKO

I keep hoping she'll come out of it and be herself again.

Matt, one of Diana's classmates, wanders over to her.

MATT

What's your mom doing here again? Are you going to have to go see the principal?

Diana covers up her letter, gives him an icy stare.

DIANA

No peeking!

MATT

I'm not!

Matt goes off, giving her wide berth.



MRS. LEACH

(to Tomoko)

She's become so furtive and solitary. It's like night and day.

TOMOKO

I miss my little girl.

MRS. LEACH

Maybe you'd like to schedule an appointment with the school psychiatrist.

Tomoko shakes her head.

TOMOKO

I just need to spend more time with her, that's all -- to help her through this.

MRS. LEACH

How are things at home?

TOMOKO

We're having a rough time, seeing Nobu's empty chair at the table and not having my mom around... I'm chanting. My husband's punching, bobbing, and weaving.

Diana turns quickly, points to thin air.

DIANA

You almost tapped me that time!

EXT. DIANA'S SCHOOL - DAY

Tomoko and Diana cross the street to avoid the crazed homeless woman with the shopping cart. She cries out.

HOMELESS WOMAN

I told you to leave that little girl alone! You got no business chasing her around like that!

Tomoko takes Diana's hand. They hurry on.

HOMELSS WOMAN

(to Diana)

She's right behind you! Run! Run!

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana, alone, paints at her easel. She murmurs happily to herself.

DIANA  
More yellow. That's better.

Tomoko walks in.

TOMOKO  
Here you are! I was about to start  
the *onigiri*. Do you want to help?

Diana shakes her head.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
You sure?

DIANA  
No thanks.

The stained glass portrait of Buddha that Tomoko had been working on earlier now hangs prominently in a window. Tomoko straightens it.

TOMOKO  
This turned out really well...  
Sweetie, we should paint a picture  
together or go out for ice cream.  
We haven't done that in a long  
time.

DIANA  
It's OK.

TOMOKO  
What are you working on?

DIANA  
A picture of Shyla, but she just  
left.

TOMOKO  
She did? Why?

DIANA  
She only likes to play with me.

TOMOKO  
Oh.

Tomoko cleans up her work table, arranges her tools, puts pieces of stained glass in drawers. She's agitated.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

These last few weeks have been so painful. I've been lost, just trying to put one foot in front of the other -- so I can only imagine how terrible it's been for you. What I mean is... This place is a mess!

DIANA

You don't come in here very much anymore.

TOMOKO

(blinking back the tears)  
I was standing here when he died!

She SLAMS a drawer shut, tries to compose herself.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

Diana, here's what I wanted to say. There's nothing wrong with pretending. There's nothing wrong with having imaginary friends.

DIANA

She's real, Mommy! You just can't see her!

TOMOKO

How about if you say goodbye to her for a while?

DIANA

Why?

TOMOKO

I'd like us to feel close, like a family again. Just the three of us, without Nobu, Grandma, and Shyla too.

DIANA

No!

TOMOKO

I need you to stop seeing her and writing her letters and painting her picture! Do you hear me?

Tomoko grabs a half-finished piece of stained glass and SMASHES it down on her work table. Shards of colored glass fly all over.

DIANA  
 (shocked)  
 Momma?

Tomoko rushes out the door.

NATHAN'S DREAM - INT. CHURCH - DAY

Young Nathan, eight, views his parents in their caskets. Their faces, even in death, are stern and uncompromising -- just as they appear in the black and white photograph on Nathan's night table.

Young Nathan's transfixed, his face a mask of pain. He touches his father's face.

YOUNG NATHAN  
 You're cold.

He looks up to find Nobu standing before him.

NOBU  
 Hi, Dad.

YOUNG NATHAN  
 Who are you?

NOBU  
 Your son, but I'm not born yet.

YOUNG NATHAN  
 What?

Nobu KNOCKS twice on his grandfather's wooden casket, looks into his father's eyes.

NOBU  
 Knock, knock.

Young Nathan is too stunned to speak.

NOBU (cont'd)  
 Dad, you're supposed to say, "Who's there?" It's not a joke this time. I died, but I wanted you to know I'm still here. That's why I came to see you in your dream.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY (BACK TO REALITY)

Two more KNOCKS. Nathan sits at his desk, eyes closed, head down. Rick stands at the door, KNOCKS again.

RICK  
Nathan?

NATHAN  
(startled)  
Yeah. Hi, Rick.

RICK  
You OK?

NATHAN  
Must have nodded off.

Rick wanders in.

RICK  
Man, you look like death warmed  
over! Want to shoot some hoop or  
go out for a beer or something?  
Might do you good.

NATHAN  
Yeah.

Nathan doesn't move from his spot. Rick pulls up a chair.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
I can't concentrate, can't sleep,  
and when I do, I'm plagued by the  
strangest dreams. Then there's  
Diana who's off in her own world,  
hiding behind her locked bedroom  
door...

RICK  
Call Jenny. She'll fit you in  
anytime. You know that.

NATHAN  
Thanks.

RICK  
How's Tomoko holding up?

NATHAN  
Better than me, I hope.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Diana holds the pistol with both hands, aims it at the bed,  
the window, the desk. Shyla appears in the mirror.

DIANA  
 I can't play now. It's all loaded,  
 and I've got to practice pointing.  
 Pow! Pow! Pow!

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Tomoko pulls weeds on hands and knees. She hears PEALS OF LAUGHTER.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Nobu stands with Diana on the diving board, urging her forward.

Lithe and graceful, Tomoko performs sun salutations, a yoga exercise, at pool side.

NOBU  
 You can do it!

DIANA  
 I'm scared.

NOBU  
 Just try!

He hands her the whistle.

TOMOKO  
 I'm right here, sweetie! You'll be OK!

NOBU  
 You can do it!

Diana takes a deep breath, BLOWS THE WHISTLE, tosses it into the water. She launches herself down the board, does a flip, SPLASHES into the water.

UNDERWATER

The whistle sinks toward the bottom. Diana swims down after it, deeper and deeper.

The whistle hits the bottom, but Diana can't go any further.

ON THE SURFACE

Diana gasps for breath, swims to the ladder.

DIANA

Too deep!

NOBU

You almost got it!

Nobu dives in.

TOMOKO

Good try! That was your best flip ever!

DIANA

It was almost at the bottom!

Nobu surfaces, tosses her the whistle.

NOBU

One more time. Don't flip this time, just dive headfirst. You'll go way deeper that way.

Diana climbs back onto the diving board.

NOBU (cont'd)

And kick really hard! You'll get it!

Diana BLOWS THE WHISTLE, tosses it, launches herself down the board, dives in headfirst.

UNDERWATER

The whistle sinks toward the bottom. Diana swims down, reaching, reaching. She's inches from the whistle, but can't grab it. She starts back up.

Nobu swims down beside her, snags it off the bottom, places it in her hand.

ON THE SURFACE

Diana gasps for breath, whistle in hand. Nobu pumps his fist in the air.

NOBU

I knew you could do it!

DIANA

But you helped!

NOBU  
 That's what big brothers are for!  
 I bet you next time you'll get it  
 all by yourself!

Nobu's grinning ear to ear. His laughter fills the air.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY - (BACK TO PRESENT)

Tomoko looks up from her weeding. The laughter she heard is actually the sound of WIND CHIMES ringing overhead. Tomoko gets to her feet, takes them down.

EXT. HOUSE - DRIVEWAY

Tomoko drops the chimes in a garbage can, walks away.

EXT. VERANDA - DAY

Ba-chan and Diana sit at a table, folding paper cranes. From inside comes the sound of Tomoko chanting the Nembetsu.

TOMOKO (O.S.)  
*Namu amida butsu...*

BA-CHAN  
 Then you turn here. See?

DIANA  
 Uh-huh.

BA-CHAN  
 Now flipping over.

Diana flips her crane over, stops, presses the heels of her hands to her eyes.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
 Lights?

Ba-chan removes Diana's hands, peers into her eyes.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
 Maybe we stop for now.

She holds Diana's face tenderly in her hands, kisses one eyelid, then the other.



BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
*Naku na.* Tomorrow is 49th Day!  
 We give cranes to Nobu to take on  
 journey!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nathan wakes up fighting, tangled in the sheets. He kicks them off, flips on a light. Tomoko stirs.

TOMOKO  
 You all right?

Nathan picks up the old black and white photograph of his parents that sits on his night table. He shoves it in the drawer, SLAMS it shut.

NATHAN  
 My father told me there would be  
 hell to pay, and he was right. Now  
 I've lost my son.

TOMOKO  
 (drowsily)  
 What do you mean?

NATHAN  
 It's karma! Like they're always  
 saying at the temple!

TOMOKO  
 What? No, don't say that! It's  
 not true!

NATHAN  
 It's all coming back to me!

TOMOKO  
 Stop shouting!

NATHAN  
 I'm not shouting!

Sliding out of bed, Tomoko pulls on her robe.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
 Where are you going? Tomoko...

She won't meet his eyes.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
 (gently)  
 Wait.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Tomorrow after the ceremony, it will all be over, right? Nobu will ascend to the Pure Land, and we'll finally be able to move on.

TOMOKO

I don't know.

NATHAN

Isn't that the essence of it? The 49th Day is a chance to say goodbye to our son one last time -- and leave all this grief and confusion and pain behind.

She turns to face him, her eyes burning with anger.

TOMOKO

I don't know! I don't know what to believe anymore!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana sits up in bed and slips her sock puppets on her hands. The two puppets speak back and forth, Diana giving voice to both.

SHYLA'S PUPPET

Diana, guess what. I snuck up on the hungry giant when he was sleeping.

DIANA'S PUPPET

You did?

SHYLA'S PUPPET

His tummy was growling and he was talking in his sleep.

DIANA'S PUPPET

What did he say?

SHYLA'S PUPPET

He didn't mention the favors at all. He just wants more to eat.

Diana's puppet jerks back.

DIANA'S PUPPET

He's coming back? When?

SHYLA'S PUPPET

Tomorrow!

Diana rips off the sock puppets and throws them on the floor.

DIANA  
I don't want to play anymore!

MASTER BEDROOM

Tomoko sleeps soundly. Nathan, dark circles under his eyes, deals solitaire on the bed.

DIANA (O.S.)  
Come on! Open up! Open up!  
What's wrong with you?

Nathan jostles his wife.

NATHAN  
Tomoko!

LIVING ROOM

Nathan and Tomoko flip on the light. There's Diana standing at the front door. Eyes half-closed, she pulls on the handle with all her might.

DIANA  
(terrified)  
We've got to hide! We've got to  
hide! We've got to hide!

The dead bolt doesn't budge.

INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

Ba-chan, Diana, Nathan, and Tomoko sit silently in the first pew, their eyes fixed on the altar. Behind them, friends and family converse in hushed tones.

Flowers and paper cranes adorn Nobu's urn. Burning incense swirls into the air.

Reverend Morita strikes the GONG, chants the Nembetsu.

REVEREND MORITA  
*Namu amida butsu...*

Ba-chan whispers to Diana.

BA-CHAN  
This last day Nobu here. You  
watch, you listen.

A shimmering image on the altar catches Diana's eye. A smile lights her face.

DIANA  
Hi, Nobu! What did you say?

Diana cups her ear, turns toward her father.

DIANA (cont'd)  
"Knock, knock." Daddy, Nobu says,  
"Knock, knock."

NATHAN  
What?

DIANA  
He says you look really surprised.  
Just like when you saw him in your  
dream.

Nathan is shocked beyond belief.

NATHAN  
That can't be. You're making up  
stories.

Diana shakes her head. Ba-chan puts her arm around her, whispers.

BA-CHAN  
What else he say?

DIANA  
(listening)  
The last thing he remembers before  
he died was... a little girl  
tapped him on the shoulder. He  
thinks the same girl tapped Grandma  
and Teresa too!

Diana leans forward toward the altar.

DIANA (cont'd)  
She has blonde hair and blue eyes?

Diana stops short, her eyes shining with wonder and pain.

DIANA (cont'd)  
You sure?

Reverend Morita strikes the GONG, and the chant comes to an end. He bows, steps forward.

REVEREND MORITA  
 Today Nobu begins his journey to  
 the Pure Land.

Diana stands, speaks toward the altar.

DIANA  
 Nobu!

REVEREND MORITA  
 A young child, so full of life, so  
 full of promise. Why did he die?  
 Who among us on this 49th day can  
 truly understand?

He strikes the GONG. The vibrant, echoing tones fill the  
 room.

DIANA  
 Nobu! Nobu!

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - JAPANESE GARDEN - DAY

Tomoko and Nathan lead the way down the path through the well-  
 tended garden. Nathan carries Nobu's urn.

Ba-chan takes Diana's hand. She pulls it away.

BA-CHAN  
 You no want to walk with Ba-chan?

Diana runs ahead. She sees an image of Shyla in the GURGLING  
 fountain.

DIANA  
 Caught you! You're not tapping me!

She hurries on. There's Shyla again in the ripples of the  
 koi pond.

SHYLA  
 Why are you running?

DIANA  
 I'm not talking to you!

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Diana hurries to the car with Ba-chan and her parents close  
 behind. She sees her reflection in the car window -- then  
 Shyla appears too, right beside her -- staring back at her  
 from the glass.

DIANA  
Go away!

TOMOKO  
What?

DIANA  
I was talking to Shyla.

TOMOKO  
Not now, OK?

NATHAN  
That game's over. It's time to  
stop playing make believe. I don't  
want to hear another word about  
Shyla! Understood?

They pile in. Nathan and Tomoko in front, Ba-chan and Diana  
in the back.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

They merge into traffic. Tomoko catches Diana's eyes in the  
rearview mirror.

TOMOKO  
(brightly)  
How about if we make tempura when  
we get home?

Diana doesn't respond.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
How does that sound? And *mochi* for  
dessert!

NATHAN  
Answer your mother.

Diana turns her head away.

NATHAN (cont'd)  
Diana, I told you --

TOMOKO  
It's OK! It's OK!

They travel in silence for a while. Ba-chan pats Diana's  
knee.

BA-CHAN  
 (whispering)  
 Nobu tell you secret?

Diana stares out the window.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
 You no want to talk to me?

A POLICE SIREN wails. Nathan slows down, pulls over.

An SUV races toward them from the other direction, veering dangerously through traffic.

There's a SCREECH of tires. The SUV races by, inches away. For a fraction of a second, Diana sees Shyla's smiling face in the SUV's window.

Diana lets out a scream. The SUV tears off down the street, the police car right behind.

Diana covers her eyes, buries her face against the seat.

DIANA  
 I can't stop seeing her!

Nathan POUNDS the steering wheel.

NATHAN  
 (to Tomoko)  
 We've got to put an end to this!

He composes himself and pulls back onto the road. Ba-chan strokes Diana's hair, singing a Japanese lullaby.

BA-CHAN  
*Nen nen kororiyo okororiyo...*

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana SLAMS the door, her face ablaze with fury. She searches the room.

DIANA  
 Where are you?

SHYLA  
 Over here.

Shyla shows herself in a piece of beveled glass, then disappears.

DIANA

Shyla!

Shyla appears again, across the room, shining in a crystal -- then she's gone.

DIANA (cont'd)

Stop it!

SHYLA

I thought you liked hide-and-seek.

DIANA

I want to see you!

SHYLA

I'm right here.

Shyla glitters in a piece of stained glass right before her eyes. Diana glares at her.

DIANA

Nobu said you're the one who's been taking everyone up to the sky!

SHYLA

Yes, no, maybe so.

DIANA

You're the hungry giant, aren't you? The favors are for you!

SHYLA

No, yes, take a guess.

DIANA

Tell me!

SHYLA

It's all a game, and it can be lots of fun.

DIANA

It's no fun at all! You tricked me!

SHYLA

Don't be mad.

DIANA

You told me you tap people. But you didn't tell me after you tap them, they die!



SHYLA  
Everybody has to die sometime.

DIANA  
I'm going to tell Mom and Dad!

SHYLA  
First, want to see something cool?

Shyla points outside the window at the hummingbird feeder. One of the hummingbirds flies away, then straight back into the window. It drops to the ground.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
See, it's easy. And watch this.

Shyla motions toward Diana. Diana stumbles forward.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
That's what I did to Grandma. A little shove was all it took.

DIANA  
I hate you!

SHYLA  
(smiling)  
Go on. You can tell your parents anything you want, but they'll say I'm all in your head.

Shyla points to one of Tomoko's stained glass hangings. It falls to the ground, SHATTERS.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Diana confronts her parents.

DIANA  
It's true! Every word!

TOMOKO  
No, sweetie.

Tomoko kneels to hug her. Diana breaks away.

DIANA  
Let me go!

NATHAN  
(to Tomoko)  
This has been building for weeks!

DIANA

That first day I met her, Nobu died! Remember? We were in the art studio! Then Grandma died a little while later!

NATHAN

Nobu hit his head on the diving board and Grandma fell down the veranda stairs. Shyla had nothing to do with it.

DIANA

Then she got mad at me and tapped Teresa too! It all started when Shyla showed up that first day!

TOMOKO

She's only pretend!

DIANA

That's what she said you'd say!

NATHAN

(bellowing)

Stop it! This game is over! There is no Shyla!

DIANA

No, you stop it, Daddy! I see things you can't see, and I know things you don't know!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana sits on her bed, stroking Sunshine.

DIANA

You're the only one who believes me, Sunshine. If you see her, you run and hide.

Diana closes her eyes, concentrating.

DIANA (cont'd)

I wish I could never see her again.

Her eyes pop open. She scans the room. Tears down pictures of Shyla, one after another, crumples them up, and stuffs them in the trash.

DIANA (cont'd)  
 Why did you come here in the first  
 place? No one asked you to! Go  
 back to where you came from!

All that's left on the walls is shreds of paper and pieces of  
 tape.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Ba-chan plucks flowers. There's the staccato POUNDING of a  
 JACK HAMMER down the street.

BA-CHAN  
 I hear you. Gnashing teeth. Look  
 at me. I no afraid.

The JACK HAMMER blends with the beating of TAIKO DRUMS.  
 Louder and louder.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)  
 Giant, I waiting for you!

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana, alone, assembles her paints and brushes on the table.

DIANA  
 Where are you?

Shyla shows up in a crystal.

SHYLA  
 You going to paint me again?

DIANA  
 No! I want you to go away!

SHYLA  
 But I like it here.

DIANA  
 You can have all my painting stuff  
 if you leave right now.

Shyla shakes her head. Diana takes a pile of books from a  
 cardboard box.

DIANA (cont'd)  
 And I'll give you my favorite books  
 too. Deal?

SHYLA  
Already read them.

Diana pulls her doll, Amber, from a shopping bag.

DIANA  
And maybe I'll even let you have  
Amber, if you promise to take good  
care of her and brush her hair!

SHYLA  
I'm way too old for dolls.

Shyla licks her fingertip, touches her nose, blinks her eyes.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
(whispering)  
Your parents think you're going  
crazy. Know that?

DIANA  
I am not!

SHYLA  
How do you know? You're only  
seven.

Diana grimaces, covers her eyes with the heels of her hands.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
The lights again? I bet they hurt  
a lot. I'm really sorry.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nathan, on edge, slices up vegetables on the cutting board.

NATHAN  
What do you suggest then? Since  
she cracked her head when she  
fell, things have been getting  
progressively worse.

TOMOKO  
I don't know.

NATHAN  
Don't tell me you don't know! Help  
me out!

TOMOKO  
You're too wound up, honey. You're  
going to cut yourself.

NATHAN

This imaginary friend is taking over her whole life! It's as if she's developing a split personality or something, and I'm not going to just stand here and watch it happen!

Tomoko takes the knife from him, places it gently down on the cutting board.

TOMOKO

I'll finish these later, OK?

She searches his face.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

Since Nobu died, we've both been hanging on the best we could. I find solace in my rituals, and you pound your punching bag till you can barely stand.

NATHAN

It dulls the pain.

TOMOKO

Yes. I said you were hiding. The truth is, we've both been hiding in our own way. My mom I can handle, but my son?

Her eyes well up with tears.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

Maybe we haven't been focusing on Diana enough. Ever considered that? Maybe we've been neglecting our daughter when she needs us most.

NATHAN

Rick's wife has worked with traumatized kids before. He said she'd fit us in anytime.

TOMOKO

But you're missing the point! If we had truly been there for Diana when her brother died, she would have never needed this imaginary friend.

NATHAN

I was thinking of heading over there this afternoon.

TOMOKO

She doesn't need a psychiatrist. She needs us to spend more time with her and focus on her needs for a change.

NATHAN

Then I guess I'll take her alone.

He picks up his knife, hacks away at the vegetables.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana stares at a piece of stained glass. There's Shyla's face, distorted by the colors and ridges in the glass, smiling back at her.

DIANA

Caught you! You're not tapping me!

Shyla's face pops up in a crystal across the room.

SHYLA

Over here. You may not believe me, but you're the best friend I've had in a long time.

DIANA

You're not my friend.

SHYLA

If you want me to leave, I will.

DIANA

You're a liar.

SHYLA

All you've got to do is the last two favors. Those were the rules.

DIANA

Then you'll go? Promise?

SHYLA

Cross my heart. You just need to be my helper for a little while, OK? I have so much to do, and I always need more helpers!

DIANA

For what?

SHYLA

Two little favors, that's all.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

DR. JENNY, Rick's wife, fifty-five, a child psychiatrist, patiently waits for an answer. Diana turns away, tight-lipped.

DR. JENNY

OK, then maybe we can talk about why Shyla's the only one you play with. Is she more fun than your other friends?

Diana stares at the wall.

DR. JENNY (cont'd)

Here's one for you! What came first, the chicken or the egg?

DIANA

That's easy. The egg.

DR. JENNY

Really? Why?

DIANA

Because dinosaurs were here before chickens, and dinosaurs laid eggs.

Dr. Jenny takes a moment, nods.

DR. JENNY

Good. Very good. I've been doing this for a long time, but that's a new one on me. High five!

She puts up her hand to slap, but Diana turns away.

Dr. Jenny pulls her chair close, takes Diana's hands.

DR. JENNY (cont'd)

You're cold. Would you like a cup of hot chocolate?

Diana still won't meet her eyes.

DR. JENNY (cont'd)  
Sweetheart, your parents are very  
concerned. Please tell me about  
Shyla. Is she here with us now?

## WAITING ROOM

Diana sits alone in a chair in the corner, presses the heels  
of her hands to her eyes.

DIANA  
Go away!

## MEDICAL OFFICE

Dr. Jenny confers with Nathan and Tomoko.

DR. JENNY  
I couldn't reach her. That's not  
unusual for a first visit, but let  
me make an observation. Being  
cruel to animals is a very  
disturbing sign. The next thing,  
she could start harming herself or  
other children.

TOMOKO  
She'd never do that.

NATHAN  
We never saw the butterfly coming.

DR. JENNY  
You also said you found her walking  
down the street in the dead of  
night and later discovered her  
trying to flee the house.

TOMOKO  
Those were just nightmares --

NATHAN  
(to Tomoko)  
Let her speak!

DR. JENNY  
Thank you. I think we should start  
therapy immediately. You might  
also want to consider putting her  
on medication for a while.

Tomoko shakes her head.



TOMOKO

Not a chance.

DR. JENNY

Very well, you're her mother...  
And finally, as you know, the X-  
rays on her skull were negative,  
but she did suffer a concussion,  
and we always take those very  
seriously. In my opinion, we  
should follow up with an MRI to  
rule out any possibility of damage  
to the soft tissue.

TOMOKO

You mean to her brain?

DR. JENNY

From internal hemorrhaging and the  
like.

INT. CAR - DAY

Nathan slams the car into gear. Tomoko hisses at him through  
clenched teeth.

TOMOKO

You want sedate her, pump her full  
of drugs? Over my dead body!

NATHAN

(under his breath)  
You have a better plan?

In the back seat, Diana strokes Amber's hair, cooing to her.

Shyla appears in the window, smiles.

SHYLA

Poke her eyes out, pull her head  
off, and toss her out the window.

DIANA

What?

SHYLA

You heard me. You still owe me two  
favors. Do it quick and it won't  
be so bad.

Diana checks to make sure her parents aren't watching. She  
pokes out the doll's eyes, rips off her head.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
See? It's just like taking off a  
Band-Aid.

Tomoko turns just then.

TOMOKO  
Diana!

DIANA  
I don't want her anymore.

She throws the headless doll out the window.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Nathan takes a few half-hearted stabs at his punching bag.  
Shoves it away.

He shadowboxes against the wall for a few moments. His face  
is flushed, his eyes bloodshot and weary. He feels his  
forehead, and slumps to the floor.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana, alone, searches the crystals and beveled glass,  
smoldering.

DIANA  
Come out! I got in lots of trouble  
because of you!

A crystal shines. Shyla shows up right before her.

SHYLA  
You still mad? All I need is one  
more favor, then I'll go.

DIANA  
For sure?

SHYLA  
(smiling)  
Just find Sunshine, point the gun  
at her head, and pull the trigger.

DIANA  
(horrified)  
No!

SHYLA  
Three favors. That was the deal.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Tomoko strolls toward the art studio.

DIANA (O.S.)  
I hate you!

Tomoko breaks into a run.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana shrieks at the face in the crystal.

DIANA  
I never want to see you again!

SHYLA  
You don't want to play anymore?  
Then I guess I'll have to tap  
someone else. Maybe your mother  
or father? Maybe Ba-chan. Do you  
have a favorite?

Shyla waves goodbye. Her image fades.

DIANA  
Wait! No, come back! Shyla!

Diana checks crystals, one after another, all around the room.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Shyla, please? Please? Shyla,  
come back!

Tomoko bursts in.

DIANA (cont'd)  
She left and I can't find her!

TOMOKO  
Oh, sweetie. You don't need her.  
I'm here.

Tomoko tries to hold her.

DIANA  
Let me go!

Tomoko sees the smashed stained glass in the trash can.

TOMOKO  
What's this? My beautiful piece...

DIANA  
Shyla did it.

TOMOKO  
(taking a deep breath)  
Stop lying to me. We both know  
that's not true.

DIANA  
Yes, it is! That's a promise!

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana sits on her bed, strokes Sunshine. Tears roll down her cheeks.

DIANA  
I almost named you Purry because  
you purr so much. But I like  
Sunshine better, don't you?

Diana grimaces and covers her eyes. She SLAPS herself hard across the side of her face. Then again.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Go away, lights!

MASTER BEDROOM

Nathan's in bed, shivering with fever and chills. Tomoko places a digital thermometer in his ear. It BEEPS.

TOMOKO  
103.

NATHAN  
What a time to lose it.

TOMOKO  
Should I knock again? Or maybe  
just give her a little space?

NATHAN  
She'll come out when she's ready.

He bundles up under the covers.

HALLWAY

Diana steps out her bedroom door, pistol in hand.

DIANA  
Shyla? You here?

She turns back to her room, whispers.

DIANA (cont'd)  
Come on.

Sunshine follows her down the hall.

#### KITCHEN

Diana creeps in with Sunshine right behind. She takes her mother's keys from her purse and checks the dead bolt on the back door. It's not locked.

DIANA  
(to Sunshine)  
Daddy forgot.

She slips outside.

#### EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Diana flips through her mother's keys, unlocks the basement door.

#### INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

It's a dark, dusty, shadowy place, filled with old storage boxes, rusted tools, and broken down furniture.

Diana steps inside, motions to Sunshine.

Sunshine follows her into the darkness. Diana flips on a light. It flickers on and off above her.

She shows Sunshine the pistol.

DIANA  
Don't worry. This is just in case  
we see the giant.

She places Sunshine on a blanket in the corner.

DIANA (cont'd)  
You stay here. I know you don't  
like the basement, but you've got  
to hide for a little while, OK?

DIANA (cont'd)  
 Be really quiet so Shyla doesn't  
 find you. I'll come down again as  
 soon as I can.

Suddenly Shyla's face appears in a cracked mirror across the  
 room.

SHYLA  
 Are we playing hide-and-seek?

Diana cries out. Turns. Aims the pistol at her.

DIANA  
 Go away!

SHYLA  
 How can I?

DIANA  
 I'm not kidding!

SHYLA  
 I'm inside your head. Haven't you  
 figured that out yet?

Diana advances on the mirror, holding the gun in both hands.  
 She fires. BLAM! BLAM! The mirror and Shyla's image are  
 blown to bits.

#### MASTER BEDROOM

Tomoko and Nathan start at the SOUND OF GUNFIRE. Another  
 shot rings out. BLAM!

#### BASEMENT

Shyla appears glimmering from the dusky glass of a window  
 across the room.

SHYLA  
 Missed me.

Diana spins, aims the pistol.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
 Think you can kill me? Here's  
 another secret.

Shyla licks her fingertip, touches her nose, blinks her eyes.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
 I can't die!

Diana shoots. BLAM! The window shatters. And Shyla's no where to be seen.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Nathan and Tomoko race toward the basement door.

TOMOKO

Diana!

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nathan and Tomoko burst through the door to find their wild-eyed daughter waving the gun, screaming at shadows.

DIANA

Mommy, Daddy, watch out!

TOMOKO

Put that down!

DIANA

Shyla's here!

NATHAN

Oh God! Put the pistol down!

Shyla appears, flickering in the light right behind them.

DIANA

There she is! Behind you! Run!  
Run!

Diana points the pistol toward her parents.

DIANA (cont'd)

She wants to tap you!

Shyla reaches out, pondering.

SHYLA

Which one? It's so hard to  
decide...

DIANA

Run!

Diana rushes toward them, fires. BLAM! BLAM! Nathan and Tomoko dive for cover.

She squeezes the trigger over and over -- but the chambers are all empty.

Shyla laughs, vanishes into thin air.

DIANA (cont'd)

I missed her, Momma! Now she's  
going to kill someone else! What  
am I going to do?

She drops the gun to the floor, falls sobbing into her  
mother's arms.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana lies rigidly in bed. Dr. Jenny gives her a shot while  
Tomoko holds her still. Nathan and Rick watch in silence  
from the doorway.

DIANA

No, no, no!

DR. JENNY

This will help you get a good  
night's sleep.

DIANA

I've got to stay awake in case  
Shyla comes back!

DR. JENNY

(tenderly)

No, you need to rest, little one.  
Close your eyes.

Dr. Jenny packs up her belongings. Tomoko follows her to the  
door.

DR. JENNY (cont'd)

(whispering)

She'll be fine for the rest of the  
evening. I won't mince words.  
Hallucinations that are this vivid  
and disturbing are extremely rare  
in children her age. I'd like to  
run some tests and see about  
admitting her. We might be dealing  
with early-onset schizophrenia.

Diana's eyes flutter, and her head falls back on the pillow.



## MASTER BEDROOM

Tomoko slides into bed with Nathan. He's flushed and sweating. He checks his temperature, hurls the thermometer against the wall.

NATHAN

You still think it's OK that she's been living in this fantasy world?

TOMOKO

Don't start with me!

NATHAN

And you've encouraged it.

## DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana lies deep in slumber. Suddenly her eyes fly open wide.

DIANA

I know you're here. They gave me medicine to make me sleep all night, but it didn't work.

She flips on her bedside light and goes to her crafts box. She pulls out a bag filled with colored glass beads and pieces of plastic string. She sits at her desk and gets to work.

Shyla appears in her mirror, watches.

SHYLA

What are you doing? Oh, I get it. Making necklaces, right?

Diana won't look her way.

SHYLA (cont'd)

(laughing)

Ba-chan's folk tales about giants and bamboo necklaces are just stupid stories, like your Dad said. No one believes them. They're just stories.

Diana continues stringing beads.

DIANA

I did two favors for you. Now you do one for me. You're magic...

SHYLA

Yeah?

DIANA

So make these necklaces work!

After a moment's hesitation.

SHYLA

Deal.

MASTER BEDROOM

Tomoko places a damp washcloth on Nathan's forehead. Diana enters, carrying three glass bead necklaces.

NATHAN

What the hell?

DIANA

I figured it out.

Diana slips a necklace over her mother's head.

DIANA (cont'd)

It's a present. I already gave one to Sunshine.

She places one over her father's head.

DIANA (cont'd)

These will keep you safe.

TOMOKO

We're not in any danger, sweetie.  
Please believe me.

Shyla's face appears in the beads of the necklace. There she is, smiling back at Diana from each and every colored sphere around her mother's neck.

SHYLA

(whispering)

There is no Shyla!

DIANA

(to the necklace)

Leave me alone!

SHYLA

There is no Shyla!

DIANA  
I don't care what you say!

NATHAN  
Who on earth are you talking to?

Diana holds up the last necklace.

DIANA  
This one is for Ba-chan. We have  
to take it to her right now.

NATHAN  
It's midnight!

TOMOKO  
Diana, listen to me.

DIANA  
Now! Now! Now!

There's Shyla in Ba-chan's necklace, laughing.

SHYLA  
I'm inside your head, and no one  
knows but you and me.

DIANA  
(to the necklace)  
Don't laugh at me!

TOMOKO  
Sometimes when you pretend too  
much, you forget it was all a game,  
and you actually start to believe  
it's real!

SHYLA  
(to Diana)  
Told you so. They think you're  
going crazy!

DIANA  
I'm not crazy! You're the one  
who's crazy!

Tomoko grabs her by the shoulders, shakes her.

TOMOKO  
I want my little girl back!

Nathan crawls out of bed, bellowing.

NATHAN

That's it! You hear me? We'll bring Ba-chan the god damn necklace, then tomorrow we're going back to Dr. Jenny first thing in the morning!

INT. BA-CHAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana places the bead necklace over Ba-chan's head as her parents look on.

BA-CHAN

Little girl very clever.

Ba-chan kisses Diana's cheek.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

*Hi-mago*, listen for Nobu. Tonight is last time he be here with family. Maybe he talk to you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nathan SLAMS the dead bolt shut on the front door.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tomoko tucks Diana in, sings a Japanese lullaby.

TOMOKO

*Nen nen kororiyo okororiyo...*

DIANA

What's a brain scan?

Tomoko's taken aback.

DIANA (cont'd)

I heard you and Daddy talking. Momma, is something wrong with me?

Tomoko pulls up the comforter, gives her a big smile.

TOMOKO

No, of course not. Sometimes your imagination just plays tricks on you, that's all.

DIANA

But in school Mrs. Leach said, if  
I see blue, and you see blue, how  
do we know it's the same blue?

TOMOKO

I guess we don't.

Diana sits up, pushes back the covers, her face set in  
concentration.

DIANA

So we might see different colors  
and call them both blue.

TOMOKO

Right.

DIANA

So how can you tell if what's in  
your head is really true or if it's  
just a trick? You don't believe me  
when I say I see Shyla, but I do!  
So how can I tell?

TOMOKO

Tell what?

DIANA

What's real and what's not!

MASTER BEDROOM

Nathan kicks off his covers, in the throes of a nightmare.

NATHAN

Leave her alone!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Tomoko strokes her daughter's hair.

DIANA

Sometimes I see lights behind my  
eyes. They hurt a lot.

TOMOKO

Why haven't you said anything?

DIANA

I didn't think you'd believe me,  
like that time Shyla broke your  
stained glass.

Tomoko pulls up her covers.

TOMOKO

Always talk to me.

DIANA

Is something wrong inside my brain?

TOMOKO

No, when you hit your head when you  
fell, you got a bad concussion,  
that's all. You'll be fine.

Diana curls up against her mother. Tomoko brushes her hand  
across her cheek.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

Daddy and I love you so much, and  
we're going to find out about those  
tricky lights of yours and get you  
some help.

DIANA

I'm scared, Momma. I want to be  
so close, like I'm ice cream, and  
you're the cone.

Tomoko wraps her daughter in her arms.

MASTER BEDROOM

Nathan's fever is raging. Fists clenched, he cries out in  
his sleep.

NATHAN

Leave her alone! You touch her and  
I'll kill you!

INT. BA-CHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ba-chan lights a candle in front of a photo of Diana that  
rests on her night stand. She bows her head in prayer.

BA-CHAN

Giant on his way. But you strong  
like tiger. Fight. Fight! Drive  
him back to mountain!

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

All is quiet and still. Diana's fast asleep, her head buried beneath her pillow. Sunshine, wearing a bead necklace, PURRS contentedly at her side.

Shyla's sparkling image appears in the mirror.

SHYLA  
(whispering)  
It's me.

Diana wakes, pulls her kitten close.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
I knew you couldn't hurt Sunshine.  
It's OK. I didn't really want you  
to anyway.

DIANA  
Liar!

SHYLA  
(imploring)  
I am not. I play a tapping game,  
that's all. Sunshine purrs. You  
paint. I tap people and take them  
up to the sky. What's so bad about  
that?

DIANA  
I'm not talking to you anymore.

SHYLA  
We had a deal. You still owe me  
one favor.

DIANA  
I never want to see you again.

SHYLA  
I wasn't kidding when I said you're  
the best friend I've had in a long  
time, so I'm going to give you one  
more chance.

DIANA  
I won't hurt Sunshine!

SHYLA  
No, a different favor. No one's  
going to get hurt this time. Don't  
you even want to hear what it is?

Diana turns away. Sunshine HISSES at the mirror.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
Just get me Nobu's whistle. It's  
still at the bottom of the pool.

NATHAN'S DREAM - INT. BOXING RING - NIGHT

Nathan, bloody and battered, goes toe to toe with a towering HEAVYWEIGHT, a giant of a man. Pinned against the ropes, he takes a vicious beating.

He fights his way off the ropes. The CROWD ROARS its approval. The BELL SOUNDS.

Nathan collapses on his stool in the corner. Spits blood into the bucket. Looks up, sees Nobu before him.

NOBU  
Wake up, Dad!

NATHAN  
What are you doing here, son? You  
shouldn't be here now.

NOBU  
You've got to wake up, Dad! Wake  
up!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO REALITY)

Nathan's jarred awake. He sits bolt upright, his eyes wild and glazed. Tomoko stirs.

TOMOKO  
You OK?

NATHAN  
It was Nobu again!

Tomoko feels his forehead.

TOMOKO  
Oh, honey, you're burning up.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana glowers at Shyla in the mirror.

DIANA  
What do you want it for?



SHYLA

I just want it, that's all. It's time for me to go, and it'll be a fun way to end the tapping game. Bring me Nobu's whistle, and I'll go away and leave you, your family, and all your friends alone.

DIANA

You're making up stories! I thought you were my best friend, and look what you did!

SHYLA

I made the necklaces work, didn't I? Just like I promised.

Diana slides out of bed and approaches the mirror. Smoldering, she gives Shyla a hard stare.

DIANA

Who are you? You're not a person.

SHYLA

No, I'm different from anyone you've ever met, and you're different too. That's why I like you so much. Every time I tried to sneak up on you and tap your shoulder, you saw me first!

(offering a smile)

All I need is the whistle and I'll go.

DIANA

You're trying to trick me!

SHYLA

No. Most people don't know I'm here till it's too late. I sneak up to tap them, and the game is over before it even gets started.

DIANA

They can't see you, like me... I get it! You're like the flashing lights. You're behind my eyes!

SHYLA

(nodding)

You're the only one who knows I'm really here. That's what makes you so much fun to play with.

Shyla puts out her hand.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
The whistle.

DIANA  
Then you'll go for good? Promise!

SHYLA  
Cross my heart and hope to die!

After a moment, Diana nods.

DIANA  
Deal. But Daddy put locks on the doors after I went sleepwalking on the street that time.

SHYLA  
You can go right out the window. Just push the screen open at the bottom. It's got a little hook.

Diana unhooks the latch, pushes the screen open, peers out.

DIANA  
It's so bright.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

The full moon illuminates the yard, casting deep shadows. Shyla shimmers in the mist drifting over the water.

Diana switches on the underwater pool lights, climbs onto the diving board. Eyes Nobu's whistle at the bottom of the pool. Hears his voice in her head.

NOBU (V.O.)  
Don't do a flip. Dive in head first, remember? Just like I told you!

Diana nods. Runs down the diving board, launches herself into the air.

UNDERWATER

She splashes in, swims down, deeper and deeper. Reaches for the whistle, but can't quite get it.

Shyla's face gleams from the tiles on the bottom of the pool.

## ON THE SURFACE

Diana, gasping for breath, swims to the side. Shyla drifts in the mist above her. Nobu voice rings in her head.

NOBU (V.O.)  
You didn't take a big enough  
breath!

She climbs the ladder, eyes Shyla.

DIANA  
I'll get it! I will! Then you're  
going away! Why did you come here  
in the first place?

SHYLA  
It was your turn, that's all.

## INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nathan staggers to his feet, haggard and exhausted. His face is flushed with fever.

NATHAN  
Maybe a cold shower.

## DIANA'S BEDROOM

Nathan peeks in.

NATHAN  
Diana?

## EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Diana stands on the diving board. Shyla hovers over the water.

SHYLA  
But I was having so much fun  
playing with you that I decided to  
stay. That's why I tapped Nobu and  
Grandma -- just to make the game  
last longer. Then I got jealous of  
your friend and tapped her too.

Diana draws a deep breath, her eyes fixed on the whistle.

SHYLA (cont'd)  
And later when I found out you  
couldn't kill Sunshine, I knew you  
couldn't be my helper.

Diana hears Nobu's voice.

NOBU (V.0.)  
Kick really hard this time.

She nods, plunges in.

UNDERWATER

Diana swims down and down. Reaches the whistle. Yanks on it. The cord is caught in the drain. Wrapped around itself in a knot.

She gives it a few more tugs, then heads toward the surface.

Shyla's brilliant visage glitters from the pool lights and tiles all around her.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nathan rushes in.

NATHAN  
Wake up! She's gone!

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Diana stands at the end of the diving board. Chest heaving, she gathers her strength for another dive. Shyla's drifts above her in the mist.

NOBU (V.0.)  
It's stuck, but it got looser.  
You'll get it this time. Big  
breath! Kick really hard! Just a  
few more tugs!

SHYLA  
You're my prize, the one I came  
for.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tomoko grabs a pair of flashlights from the closet. Nathan struggles with the dead bolt on the front door.

NATHAN  
Come on, damn you! Come on!

He finally yanks it open.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Diana, focused on the whistle, draws a deep breath. Shyla twirls around her in the mist.

DIANA  
A few more tugs then you're gone  
for good!

SHYLA  
Now all that's left is to finish  
what I started.

Diana plunges in.

UNDERWATER

Diana swims down, down, reaches the bottom. Grabs the whistle. It won't come free.

She wraps the cord around her wrist and pulls, but it's still stuck.

She places her feet on either side of the drain, grabs the cord with both hands. Tugs and tugs. Still can't tear it loose.

Out of breath, she releases the cord, heads for the surface.

Her ankle gets caught in the cord.

She lets out a scream. Bubbles rise from her mouth, each one an image of Shyla.

She kicks furiously. Can't get untangled. She grabs the whistle with both hands, tugs with all her might. Finally it breaks free.

Diana looks up at the surface.

There waits Shyla, smiling, in the moonlit ripples directly above her. Shyla reaches out, waiting to tap her.

NOBU (V.0.)  
No!

Diana cries out. Chokes. The last of the air escapes her body. She sucks in water. Convulses. Goes limp.

Her body slowly rises. Her hand releases the whistle. It sinks to the bottom.

EXT. VERANDA - NIGHT

Nathan and Tomoko sweep the front yard and the street with their flashlights.

TOMOKO  
Diana?

NATHAN  
You out here?

TOMOKO  
Diana!

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Diana floats face down. Shyla shimmers above her.

SHYLA  
Nobody lives forever. And when  
their time is up, I'm the one to  
say goodbye.

She reaches down, gently taps Diana's shoulder.

BACK YARD

Nathan and Tomoko check the art studio. The door is closed, the lights off.

TOMOKO  
Diana!

NATHAN  
Where are you?

Their twin beams sweep the flower garden and lawn. Nothing.

SWIMMING POOL

Shyla licks her fingertip, touches her nose, blinks her eyes.

SHYLA

I'll miss you. That was the best  
tapping game I've played in a long,  
long time!

Shyla dissolves into the mist.

BACK YARD

Nathan stops cold, his eyes focused on the pool.

NATHAN

The lights are on!

TOMOKO

What?

NATHAN

I didn't turn them on. You didn't.  
Oh Christ!

SWIMMING POOL

Nathan and Tomoko race to the edge of the water and discover  
Diana's lifeless body.

TOMOKO

No! No!

Nathan plunges in. Pulls her to the shallow end of the pool.

He scoops her up in his arms. Carries her up the stairs, out  
of the water. Places her on the grass.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

*Dai jobu? Dai jobu?*

Diana goes into convulsions. Tomoko falls to the ground.  
Starts CPR.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

She's not breathing!

NATHAN

Breathe! Diana, breathe!

TOMOKO

Come on!

Tomoko blows into her mouth.

NATHAN

Breathe!

Water trickles from the side of Diana's mouth.

TOMOKO

Diana!

Tomoko pumps her chest.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

Call 911!

Diana's head flops over. Her eyes wide open, she stares at nothing.

TOMOKO (cont'd)

Nate!

Tomoko blows into her mouth.

NATHAN

(to Diana)

Oh God! You tried to tell us!

TOMOKO

Call 911!

INT. BA-CHAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ba-chan tosses and turns in her sleep. The POUNDING of her HEART jolts her awake. She cries out to the darkness.

BA-CHAN

*Hi-mago*, you no go! You listen to  
Ba-chan!

She probes the shadows.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

Hungry giant, I know you here! Why  
you take little girl?

She sits up in bed, searches the room.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

You hear me? I stand in front!



EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

An ambulance races in, SIREN SCREAMING. PARAMEDIC #1 and PARAMEDIC #2 hop out, open the back doors, pull out a backboard, an Ambu bag, and a C collar.

A sedan SCREECHES to a stop behind the ambulance. SUPERVISOR FOSTER jumps out.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Foster and the paramedics sprint toward the back yard.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Tomoko and Nathan huddle over their daughter. Tomoko continues the CPR.

TOMOKO  
Come on, Diana!

NATHAN  
We're here! Momma and Daddy are  
here with you!

The paramedics and Foster burst into the back yard. Race across the lawn to the pool.

FOSTER  
How long was she in the water?

NATHAN  
We don't know!

FOSTER  
Move back, please! Back!

The paramedics check Diana's pulse and respiration. They place the mask of an Ambu bag over her mouth and nose. Force air into her lungs.

Tomoko's wild with grief.

TOMOKO  
Diana!

NATHAN  
Give them room!

TOMOKO  
Let me hold her!

Nathan restrains her. Paramedic #2 peels Diana's eyelids back, shines a flashlight into her eyes.

PARAMEDIC #1  
She's not responding!

PARAMEDIC #2  
Let's go!

The paramedics place Diana onto a backboard. Strap her down. Fit her with a C collar. Squeeze the Ambu bag over and over. Diana's body lies limp and still.

Tomoko lets out a shriek of pain, tries to reach Diana. Nathan pulls her away.

TOMOKO  
No, let go of me!

INT. BA-CHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The pulsing of Ba-CHAN'S HEARTBEAT blends into the pounding of TAIKO DRUMS.

She slowly, deliberately removes the bead necklace that Diana had given her. She waves it at the darkness, taunting.

BA-CHAN  
You see what I do?

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Tomoko sobs, hysterical with grief, in Nathan's arms. Supervisor Foster turns to them.

FOSTER  
We're taking her to Adventist Hospital! Sir, you need to ride along in the ambulance.

TOMOKO  
I'm coming too!

FOSTER  
No, I'm sorry, Ma'am. That's not possible. You'd only interfere.

TOMOKO  
I need to be with her!

Nathan grapples with his wife.

NATHAN

Please, Tomoko! They've got a job to do!

FOSTER

Sir, I'll stay here and take care of your wife. We'll join you at the hospital as soon as she's calmed down.

INT. BA-CHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The TAIKO DRUMS grow louder and louder. Ba-chan places her necklace over the photo of Diana on her night table.

BA-CHAN

(into the darkness)

I no afraid of you, giant!

Ba-chan kisses her fingertips, touches Diana's photo.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)

You make necklaces for everyone but you, sweet girl.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

The paramedics rush Diana, secured to the backboard, across the lawn. Nathan's right behind.

Supervisor Foster restrains Tomoko.

FOSTER

Ma'am, I'm here to help you.

TOMOKO

I should be with her!

FOSTER

Please understand. They need to get her to the hospital as quickly as possible. Right now, we've got to do what's best for your daughter.

TOMOKO

Diana!

FOSTER

You're hyperventilating. Take a few slow, deep breaths.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The paramedics load Diana into the ambulance.

A fire engine pulls in, lights blazing. A FIREMAN rushes over.

PARAMEDIC #1  
Adventist!

The Fireman hops into the driver's seat of the ambulance.

PARAMEDIC #1 (cont'd)  
(to Nathan)  
Get in front, sir!

INT. BACK OF THE AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Paramedic #1 hooks Diana to an EKG monitor. Paramedic #2 shouts into the radio.

PARAMEDIC #2  
Rescue 42! We've got a child who  
was just pulled out of a swimming  
pool! She's unconscious and not  
responding! Code three! Code  
three!

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Supervisor Foster calmly keeps Tomoko in check.

FOSTER  
Please, Ma'am. As soon as you're a  
little more composed, we can follow  
them to the hospital.

The sound of ambulance doors SLAMMING shut. The SIREN wails as it departs.

Tomoko pulls free from Foster, listens as the SIREN fades into the night.

TOMOKO  
There you go.

FOSTER  
Slow, deep breaths. That's better.

An eerie silence.

TOMOKO  
It's so quiet. Give me a minute,  
will you?

Foster nods. She heads toward the art studio.

INT. ART STUDIO - NIGHT

Tomoko enters. Flips on the light. Locks the door behind her. Picks up a thick dowel rod, three feet long.

TOMOKO  
Where are you?

She flies into a rage.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
Shyla!

She swings the dowel rod like a bat. SMASHES a piece of stained glass to bits. Shards fly everywhere.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
I want to see your face! This used  
to be my sanctuary, but you turned  
it into a place of death!

Foster, watching through the window, POUNDS on the outside of the locked door.

FOSTER  
Ma'am! Open up!

Tomoko SMASHES another piece of stained glass. And another.

TOMOKO  
Show yourself!

A flying piece of glass slashes her cheek. She swipes at the blood with the back of her hand.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
How can there be crystals and  
paintings and rainbows when my  
children are gone?

Tomoko lets out an anguished cry. SMASHES crystals. Beveled glass. The windows.

Foster POUNDS on the door.

FOSTER  
Open up! Now!

TOMOKO  
Shyla! Where are you hiding?

Foster rams his shoulder against the door, BREAKS it down.  
He charges in. Dodges flying glass.

FOSTER  
Put that down!

TOMOKO  
No!

FOSTER  
Ma'am!

TOMOKO  
Stay away from me!

Tomoko takes a wild swing at Foster's head. He ducks, backs away.

FOSTER  
Put that down!

Tomoko rages on. She eyes the stained glass portrait of Buddha hanging in a window.

TOMOKO  
How could you let this happen?

She SMASHES Buddha's portrait to bits.

Foster swoops behind her. Pins her arms to her sides. Takes the dowel rod from her grasp.

She crumbles in his arms, weeping.

TOMOKO (cont'd)  
It's all a lie! How can there be a  
Buddha? How can there be a Pure  
Land when both my babies are dead?

INT. BA-CHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The driving rhythm of the TAIKO DRUMS fills the room. Ba-  
chan lies back, settles herself under her quilt.

BA-CHAN  
Hungry giant, I no afraid. You the  
one who afraid. I stand in front!

As she closes her eyes, a smile graces her lips. The DRUMS  
are deafening.

INT. BACK OF THE AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The SIREN WAILS. Paramedic #1 pumps the Ambu bag, forces air into Diana's lungs.

PARAMEDIC #1  
Stay with me! Come on, Diana!

Paramedic #2 barks into the radio.

PARAMEDIC #2  
We're losing her!

They check the EKG monitor. Diana's flat-lining.

Paramedic #1 does chest compressions.

PARAMEDIC #1  
Stay with me! Come on! Come on!

Diana's eyes blink open. She sees a burst of light, marvels at her strange surroundings.

A glowing presence appears at her side. She stares into the light, her eyes wide with wonder.

DIANA  
Ba-chan, I'm flying way up to the sky.

A mournful GONG SOUNDS, vibrant, echoing.

INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

The room is filled with family and friends, the altar covered with flowers. Incense swirls over a burnished wooden urn.

Tomoko and Nathan sit in the first pew with Diana snuggled between them. A line of stitches runs down Tomoko's cheek. Nathan kisses her wound tenderly.

Reverend Morita chants the familiar tones of the Nembetsu.

REVEREND MORITA  
*Namu amida butsu...*

Diana leaps to her feet.

DIANA  
Hi, Ba-chan!

TOMOKO  
How does she look?

DIANA  
Happier than a rainbow! Momma, in the ambulance they didn't think I'd wake up, but I did! And Ba-chan was holding my hand. Was I dreaming?

TOMOKO  
No, she was there. I'm sure she was.

DIANA  
She made a deal with Shyla.

NATHAN  
(bowing his head)  
Thank you, Ba-chan.

The GONG SOUNDS, and the chant comes to an end.

REVEREND MORITA  
We will now have the incense offering.

DIANA  
(to Tomoko)  
Now she's talking...  
(cupping her ear)  
She says my necklaces saved us, just like Shyla promised!

TOMOKO  
My brave girl.

DIANA  
I was so scared, Momma!

Tomoko holds her close, whispering promises of the heart.

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - JAPANESE GARDEN - DAY

Nathan carries Ba-chan's urn in one arm. His other arm is wrapped around his wife.

Diana skips along the path through the garden. She stops, blinks.

DIANA  
My flashing lights. They're gone.  
Shyla took them with her!



Diana hurries on, checks the GURGLING fountain, sees only her own reflection.

DIANA (cont'd)  
She's not there.

She checks the ripples in the koi pond.

DIANA (cont'd)  
She's not in the pond either.

She looks all around.

DIANA (cont'd)  
I don't see her anywhere!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ba-chan's urn, adorned with family photos and flowers, rests on the altar along with Nobu's urn, Grandma's urn, and the painting of Teresa.

Diana places Nobu's whistle on the table beside Ba-chan's origami cranes and the bead necklaces.

Tomoko lights a candle.

TOMOKO  
*Mata aimasho, Ba-chan.*

Diana takes the match, lights a candle.

DIANA  
*Mata aimasho.*

Nathan emerges from the hallway. He sets the black and white photograph of his parents on the altar beside the others.

NATHAN  
(to the photo)  
Enough now.

TOMOKO  
Yes.

Diana hands him the match.

DIANA  
This is how we say goodbye.

Nathan lights the last candle.

NATHAN  
*Mata aimasho.*

DIANA  
 Right, Daddy.

Tomoko takes the match, blows it out, places it on the altar.

TOMOKO  
 (to Diana)  
 So what happens to Shyla now?

DIANA  
 She'll go somewhere else for a while. But she'll never leave for good.

TOMOKO  
 She won't?

DIANA  
 Tapping people is her job. Like teaching at college or making stained glass. Only she never stops.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Nathan gives Diana a piggy back ride through the garden. Tomoko spots a butterfly.

TOMOKO  
 (pointing)  
 Look!

DIANA  
 Follow it, Daddy!

TOMOKO  
 There it goes!

NATHAN  
 Where?

DIANA  
 Right there! Right there!

Nathan hefts her higher on his back, takes off.

NATHAN  
 Hang on!

DIANA  
Faster, Daddy! Faster!

TOMOKO  
It's getting away!

Diana shrieks with delight. All around them, flowers burst with blooms.

DIANA  
Come back here!

FADE OUT.