



FRESH BLOOD SELECT

THE 49TH DAY

by

Craig Peters

craigpeters@roadrunner.com
2434 Langdale Ave.
Eagle Rock, CA 90041
(323)258-1044

FADE IN:

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

DIANA (9) chases a flying ladybug across the lawn. A spirited Japanese-American girl, she has olive skin, long black hair, a radiant smile, and sparkling, almond eyes.

DIANA
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
What's your name?

SWIMMING POOL

NOBU (12), Diana's brother, hops onto the diving board. He's grinning from ear to ear and wears a whistle around his neck.

NOBU
Ready?

The children's great-grandmother, BA-CHAN (90s) 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.

BA-CHAN
Good!

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 higher next time!

FLOWER GARDEN

The ladybug crawls up Diana's arm.

DIANA

You tickle.

It takes to the air.

DIANA

Bye.

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 (40s), the children's father, shows up at pool side, briefcase in hand. A fair-skinned Caucasian, he's got a sturdy build and a confident, athletic stride.

Nobu's eyes light up.

NOBU

Dad!

Nobu whips him the whistle.

NATHAN
Let's see it.

Nathan BLOWS THE WHISTLE, throws it into the water.

Nobu launches himself down the diving board, dives in.

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.

SWIMMING POOL

Nobu surfaces with the whistle. Nathan applauds.

NATHAN
Nailed it! Yeah!

He turns to Ba-chan.

NATHAN
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 and across the grass 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 move on, without a word.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

The children's mother, TOMOKO (40s), a stunning, graceful Japanese woman, works on a stained glass portrait of a meditating Buddha. She carefully fits a piece of glass in place.

Nathan RAPS on the outside of the window, startles her.

NATHAN
I've got that meeting, then I'll be
back about nine, OK? Maybe we 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 and black with white spots!

TOMOKO

Just a moment, sweetie.

DIANA

I think it was a Painted Lady. Want to see if it comes back?

TOMOKO

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 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.

A child's face appears in the glass. It's SHYLA (12). She has blonde hair and a mischievous glint in her striking blue eyes.

Diana checks to see if her mother is watching, then whispers to the image.

DIANA

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 cuts 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
It's a beautiful day. Why don't
you go swimming with Nobu?

DIANA
Maybe later.

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

DIANA
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)
Which one should I work on?

TOMOKO
I need to finish this last little
bit, OK?

DIANA
I know. I'll work on my portrait.

Diana stands before an easel, makes a selection from a stack of half-finished paintings. It's a stunning watercolor of Nobu -- richly colored, vibrantly alive.

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.

Nobu 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 studies the portrait, selects a brush. She closes her eyes, concentrating.

DIANA
Momma? I can't see him.

Tomoko fits another piece of glass in place.

DIANA
How come I can't see his face
anymore?

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

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

BA-CHAN

Nobu!

She totters over and picks up the skimming net. Reaches for Nobu. Slaps at the water.

BA-CHAN

You take pole! You take pole!

The net slips from her grasp, floats away.

BA-CHAN

Tomoko!

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana stands frozen before the easel, eyes shut tight.

DIANA

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

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Ba-chan struggles down the ladder into the water. Holding on with one hand, she reaches for Nobu.

BA-CHAN

Hi-mago! You swim! You swim to me!

She screams again toward the art studio.

BA-CHAN

Tomoko!

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

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

TOMOKO

There.

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, grabs 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

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

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

Nobu, listen to me! You've got to breathe! Breathe!

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

TOMOKO
Come on, Nobu!

As Tomoko pumps his chest, Nobu's head flops over to the side. Ba-chan stares into his dull, lifeless 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 (70s) strikes the GONG and solemnly 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 CHIEKO (60s), a timid, gentle Japanese woman, the children'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.

Tomoko places her hands together, bows her head in prayer.

Diana glances up at the altar. A shimmering apparition of Nobu appears. Her eyes grow wide.

DIANA
I see him!

She points toward the polished wooden urn.

DIANA
Standing right there by his box!

NATHAN
(hushing her)
Diana, sit still.

DIANA
Hi, Nobu!

Nathan silences her with a look. She zips her lips and nestles against her mother.

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

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

CHIEKO
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 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)
For Nobu, because he left us.
Right, Momma?

Sobs wrack Tomoko's body. Nathan wraps an arm around her, holds her tight.

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

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

BA-CHAN
(to Chieko)
Now Nobu play at Buddha's feet,
wait for us to join him.

Tomoko pulls Diana close.

TOMOKO
And 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 (2), a buoyant, giggling child, is just learning to walk.

NATHAN
Come on, Nobu! You can do it!

Nathan claps his hands, urges Little Nobu on.

NATHAN
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
Yes! Yes! That's it! You're
walking!

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

NATHAN
Look at you! Look at you walking!
Let's go show Momma!

Beaming, he lifts his son onto his shoulders.

NATHAN
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 beds of flowers and shrubs.

He hugs Nobu's urn to his chest, blinks back his tears.

NATHAN
Let's go home.

Ba-chan pulls Diana aside.

BA-CHAN
Come, walk with me.

They linger behind the others.

DIANA
I saw him! He looked right at me!

BA-CHAN
Shhh... 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
I no think so. How Nobu look?

DIANA
Surprised.

BA-CHAN
He no understand he really gone. Now Nobu watch over family. He stay here 49 days, then move to Pure Land. Maybe I see once more before he go. But eyes getting old.

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
Fish, they sad too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nobu's urn rests on a table. It's surrounded by candles, incense, flowers, his soccer ball, pictures of the family, and his portrait, the one Diana had been painting.

Four generations pray before Nobu's makeshift altar, ancient Ba-chan, Chieko, 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

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

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

CHIEKO

Mata aimasho, Nobu.

Ba-chan whispers to Tomoko.

BA-CHAN

Where is husband?

TOMOKO

He needs to be alone.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

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

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

TOMOKO

Mata aimasho, my kind soul.

She offers the match to her daughter.

TOMOKO

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?

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
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. DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

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.

Diana combs her hair. Shyla appears in the mirror before her, holding Nobu's whistle.

SHYLA
I got this for you. I thought you might want it.

Diana shakes her head.

SHYLA
OK. I'll put it back in the pool. I know you're sad now, but maybe we can hang out again sometime.

KITCHEN

Nathan wolfs down his scrambled eggs and toast. Diana watches her mother. Tomoko's breakfast is untouched, her tearful gaze fixed on the empty chair across the table.

DIANA

Momma?

TOMOKO

He should be here now.

NATHAN

(gently)

I know. Try to eat something, OK?

Diana sees Shyla's face shining on her spoon, whispers to her.

DIANA

Hi. No, I can't play now. We're having breakfast.

NATHAN

(to Tomoko)

I'll be back from work as soon as I can. We're going to just keep putting one foot in front of the other, OK?

DIANA

(whispering to Shyla)

Maybe later.

Shyla's face fades from the spoon.

NATHAN

What, sweetie?

DIANA

I was talking to Shyla. She 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.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana sits on the bed. Ba-chan sits behind her, combing her long, black hair.

BA-CHAN

You have prettiest hair. So shiny.
Your father and mother very busy
tonight. Be back late.

DIANA

You haven't told me a story in
forever.

BA-CHAN

I too tired.

DIANA

Ba-chan!

BA-CHAN

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

DIANA

A new one?

Ba-chan yanks the comb through her hair.

DIANA

Ow!

BA-CHAN

You listen. There was giant, very
hungry, come down from mountain,
always come to village. Take
people away and eat!

DIANA

(shocked)

Like for dinner?

BA-CHAN

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

DIANA

How old was she?

BA-CHAN

Young girl like you. Black hair
like silk. Bird talk to her.

BA-CHAN (cont'd)
 Tell her that giant no like bamboo.
 Make him sick. So, girl very
 clever. Decide to make presents.

DIANA
 Presents?

BA-CHAN
 She braid bamboo necklaces
 for herself, Momma, Poppa,
 grandparents, all brothers and
 sisters. Next day giant come down
 from mountain, feet pounding on
 earth -- boom, boom, boom, boom!
 Very hungry.

DIANA
 Did she get away?

BA-CHAN
 No! He catch her and ready
 to eat! But when he see bamboo
 necklace she wearing, and
 everybody else wearing too, he
 leave village and never come
 back! You understand?

DIANA
 She saved her family.

BA-CHAN
 And nobody know but her.

Ba-CHAN hands her back her comb. Kisses the top of her head.

BA-CHAN
 Now finished. You go to bed.

Sunshine, Diana's orange tabby kitten, comes in through the
 cat door in the window screen.

DIANA
 Sunshine!

Diana slips into bed, and Sunshine curls up beside her. Ba-
 chan flips off the light, sings a Japanese lullaby.

BA-CHAN
Nen nen kororiyo okororiyo...

Diana drifts off to sleep.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tomoko's deep in slumber. Nathan sits beside her, correcting test papers. He hears FOOTSTEPS, slides out of bed.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Nathan peeks in, finds 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 rage. She speaks to thin air.

DIANA

Where are you? I know you're here!

Nathan appears from the hallway. Astonished, he stops in his tracks.

NATHAN

Diana? Diana?

She turns to face him.

DIANA

Go away!

NATHAN

Honey?

She rushes at him, screaming like a banshee. Batters him with clenched fists.

DIANA

You stay away from here!

NATHAN

It's Daddy!

DIANA

Go back to the mountain where you belong!

NATHAN

Can you hear me? You're dreaming.

She pummels his chest, screeches in his face.

DIANA

Go away!

Tomoko rushes in from the hallway, shocked at the fury before her. She grapples with Diana, pulls her away.

TOMOKO

No! No, sweetie, no!

Diana rages on.

DIANA

Go away and never come back!

Tomoko wraps her in her arms.

TOMOKO

Momma's got you. You're OK.
Daddy's here too. Wake up,
sweetie. You're having a bad
dream. Time to wake up now.

Diana's eyes flutter open.

DIANA

Momma? I saw him!

TOMOKO

Who?

Diana spins around, searches the room.

DIANA

Where did he go?

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

Nathan blows out the candle by Nobu's urn.

NATHAN

Good night.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana lies in bed in the darkness, her eyes wide open. Shyla's face appears in the mirror.

SHYLA

You OK?

DIANA
I've been waiting for you! I just
saw the giant!

SHYLA
I know.

DIANA
He took Nobu, but he's not going to
take anybody else!

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

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

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - WALK-IN CLOSET - DAY

Diana, standing on a chair, lowers a wooden box from the top shelf. Opens it. Inside is a .32 caliber revolver. Shyla watches, her visage shining from the overhead light.

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

SHYLA
Go ahead.

Diana picks it up, looks it over.

DIANA
It's heavy. And really smooth.

Holding it with both hands, she sights down the barrel.

DIANA
I'm going to hide it in my room.
If the giant comes back, he'll be
dead.

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 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

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. The first time we met.

DIANA

We did? What are the rules?

SHYLA

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

DIANA

That's it?

SHYLA

But if you catch me, I have to hide again and start all over.

TOMOKO (O.S.)

Diana!

DIANA

(to Shyla)

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
Be right there, Momma!

Diana puts away her brushes.

DIANA
I'll work on this 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 and Diana scoop steamed rice from a bowl, press it into molds.

DIANA
Let's make extra so Grandma can
take some home. And some for
snacks for school, OK?

TOMOKO
Better make a lot then.

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

DIANA
(whispering)
I see you, Shyla.

SHYLA
You're good at this.

DIANA
I'm helping Momma now.

SHYLA
(fading from sight)
That's OK. Maybe I'll find someone
else who wants to play.

TOMOKO
Who are you talking to?

DIANA
Just Shyla, Momma.

TOMOKO
Aren't you a little old to have
imaginary friends?

DIANA
She's here, Momma. You just can't
see her.

EXT. CHIEKO'S HOUSE - VERANDA - DAY

Yellow daisies and pink azaleas bloom in pots along the railing. Chieko trims a daisy with pruning shears, humming happily.

She trips over the hose, tumbles down the stairs, crashes to the bottom.

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

She yanks them out. Blood seeps down her chest, staining 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 a 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 shuts her eyes, concentrating.

DIANA
I thought I heard Grandma.

TOMOKO
What, sweetie?

Diana covers her ears.

DIANA
She was calling me.

A GONG SOUNDS.

INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

Family and friends fill the room, quietly taking their seats, conversing in hushed tones. Incense swirls around Chieko'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

Momma, she's flying up to the sky.

TOMOKO

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

Tomoko places her hands together, bows her head in prayer.

A glowing image of Chieko appears on the altar.

DIANA

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

NATHAN

Shhh! Keep your voice down.

DIANA

(whispering)
Can't you see her, Momma?

Tomoko shakes her head.

DIANA

She's looking right at me and talking.

TOMOKO

What's she saying?

Reverend Morita strikes the GONG. 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 Chieko's urn. His other arm is wrapped around his wife.

NATHAN
I've got you.

Ba-chan pulls Diana aside.

BA-CHAN
Walk with me. You see Grandma on altar?

Diana nods.

BA-CHAN
I no see nothing. Eyes all done.

DIANA
She looked scared.

BA-CHAN
I scared too. Giant still here in village.

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

BA-CHAN
Water is quiet. Nothing to say.

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

BA-CHAN
See? Fish all hiding.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chieko's urn rests beside Nobu's urn and his painting on the makeshift altar on the table.

Ba-chan, Tomoko, and Diana place pictures and a few of Chieko'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 grieving. Shyla's face glistens in the bubbles. She offers a yellow daisy.

SHYLA

You want this? Grandma cut it before she died. She was going to give it to you.

Diana shakes her head.

DIANA

What am I going to do, Shyla? The giant took her away and I never even saw him!

SHYLA

Maybe he's gone back up the mountain.

DIANA

But what if he comes back and I don't have time to get Daddy's gun? He could take someone else!

SHYLA

Have you told your parents?

Diana whispers to Shyla's image in the bubbles.

DIANA

They won't believe me. They don't even know he's here.

SHYLA

I know what we can do. I'll help you. And if we're both watching --

DIANA

One of us will spot him for sure!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

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

DIANA

Daddy never tucks me in anymore.

Tomoko settles beside her.

TOMOKO

Oh, sweetie... You know how he lost his parents when he was just a boy?

DIANA

Uh-huh.

TOMOKO

After that, he had no one. He grew up fighting for everything he got, and now he can't stop. 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.

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. It's just like a book. When you turn that last page, the story is over.

DIANA

You mean Nobu's not here with us? Grandma's not either?

Nathan shakes his head. Diana turns her face into her pillow.

Tomoko hisses 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 they're still here, what's wrong with that?

HALLWAY

Diana listens outside their door as the quarrel heats up.

NATHAN (O.S.)
You're filling her head with
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.)
I'm just trying to help her get
through this! OK?

Diana tiptoes back 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 with her kitten, Sunshine, pulls the comforter
over their heads.

DIANA
Cover your ears.

INT. DIANA'S THIRD GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY

Tomoko and MRS. LEACH (50s), Diana's spry, gray-haired teacher, observe in silence as Diana and her classmates, TERESA (9) and MATT (9), 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 place in a few moments.

MRS. LEACH

Very good. Again.

Diana mixes them up, 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 up again.

MRS. LEACH

Once more, please.

Diana jumbles her pieces up. Starts over.

TERESA

(frustrated)

The last three never fit right,
Mrs. Leach!

MATT

Me neither!

MRS. LEACH

It's OK. Keep trying.

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

DIANA

Can I go now?

MRS. LEACH

Very good! Thank you. Yes, you may all go back to your reading.

She pulls Tomoko aside.

MRS. LEACH

As you know, your daughter's mind is... simply astounding. Her test scores are off the charts, and her artwork shows a level of depth and complexity that's way beyond her years. But since her brother and grandmother passed away, she's been having problems in class, and I wanted to chat with you about it.

TOMOKO

Problems?

MRS. LEACH

Yes. This imaginary friend...

TOMOKO

Shyla.

MRS. LEACH

Yes. She's been spending more and more time interacting with Shyla rather than playing with her friends or doing her class work -- retreating into her own world and shutting others out.

Diana points to the window, speaks to thin air.

DIANA

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

MRS. LEACH

(whispering, to Tomoko)

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 (50s) 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 watercolors, pastels, and sketches of Shyla.

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

Diana lies on the floor, looking up. Shyla's face shines from the light on the ceiling.

SHYLA

I love all my pictures... They're really good.

DIANA

Thanks.

SHYLA

Hey, I know a fun thing to do. I'll tell you a secret, then you tell me one.

DIANA

OK.

SHYLA

Then we can be best friends.

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

TOMOKO

Hi, what are you doing?

DIANA

Talking to Shyla. Can we be alone now, please?

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

DIANA
Where did you go?

Shyla's shimmering face appears in the mirror.

SHYLA
Right 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
(whispering)
I'm always near, and I've got lots
of different faces.

DIANA
What do you mean?

SHYLA
I can look like anybody!

DIANA
But how?

SHYLA
Maybe I'll show you some time.
OK, your turn!

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

DIANA
(whispering)
Every night, 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 fill her eyes.

SHYLA

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

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. SUSAN MAZMANIAN (30s), Diana's genial pediatrician, sits
at her cluttered desk, conferring with Tomoko and Nathan.

DR. MAZMANIAN

Considering all she's been through,
it's natural she might want to
spend some time alone to try to
find her bearings.

TOMOKO

But she's never locked the door on
me like that before.

NATHAN

She also claims to see visions of
her brother and grandmother at the
temple.

DR. MAZMANIAN

I wouldn't be overly concerned
about that. Children her age have
extremely active imaginations, and
when you add the trauma she's
experienced from the recent deaths,
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 pretending to
see loved ones -- and that comforts
her. Drop it, OK?

NATHAN

(bristling)
Drop it?

DR. MAZMANIAN

What we really need to address here
is the sleepwalking. Has she ever
done that before?

Tomoko shakes her head.

DR. MAZMANIAN

It could be nothing at all, but let's keep an eye on this, OK? When a child suddenly starts sleepwalking, it can often be indicative of problems buried deep in the subconscious. If this type of behavior continues, you should consult a specialist.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Diana closes her door, locks it. Shyla's face shimmers in the mirror.

SHYLA

You've got to try it sometime, right?

Diana nods. She reaches under her bed, pushes aside a couple plastic storage bins, and pulls out the wooden box with her father's revolver.

She opens the box, holds the pistol in her hands.

SHYLA

You know how to put the bullets in?

DIANA

I've seen Daddy do it.

Diana pops the cylinder open, takes a cartridge from the box, inserts it into a chamber, then SNAPS it shut.

SHYLA

That was easy.

Diana points the gun at her reflection in the mirror.

DIANA

Pow!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tomoko and Ba-chan prepare tempura. Tomoko stirs the wok, unnerved, on edge. Oil splatters on her hand.

TOMOKO

Shimatta!

Diana wanders in.

BA-CHAN
Good to see you out of room.

TOMOKO
How are you feeling?

Diana shrugs.

DIANA
Just thinking about stuff.

Tomoko gives her a hug, searches her eyes.

TOMOKO
Daddy and I just got back from our visit with Dr. Mazmanian. She says you're going to be just fine. Right, Ba-chan? Right?

BA-CHAN
You finish cooking. 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
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
It climb. It get tighter. Maybe it kill this one. It not stop. You see, *hi-mago*?

Diana nods.

BA-CHAN
Giant not stop either. The more he eat, the hungrier he get! Eyes like fire! Quiet now. Listen.

Ba-chan takes a few steps.

BA-CHAN
You hear me walking? So quiet.

There's the rumble of DISTANT THUNDER.

BA-CHAN
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
Giant's footsteps shake earth!

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

DIANA
You saw him? You did?

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 wanted to
watch him grow and be there every
step of the way. I wanted to be
the father I never had. How can
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? Diana!

TOMOKO
Diana!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Eyes half-closed, Diana 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! Diana!

A car rounds the corner, heading right toward her.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The DRIVER (20s) 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!

There's a flash of lightning. Diana sees Shyla floating in the air right above her, reaching out to tap her.

Her eyes fly open.

DIANA

Shyla, is that you?

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The driver spots Diana in the middle of the road. 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

You sleep here for the rest of the night, OK? 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's waiting in the mirror.

SHYLA

I saw him!

DIANA

Shhh. Don't wake my parents up.

SHYLA
(whispering)
I talked to him!

DIANA
You did?

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

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

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's 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 neck and shoulders.

NATHAN
Maybe the worst is over. We're
getting back on track.

TOMOKO
So happy. That's the girl I used
to know.

NATHAN
We'll get through this, baby.

They share a kiss.

TOMOKO
What would I do without you?

He takes her hand, presses it against his heart.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Diana picks up the skimming net.

FLOWER GARDEN

Diana chases the butterfly again, captures it in the net, pinning it to the ground. She 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
That wasn't so hard, was it?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tomoko and Nathan can't believe their eyes.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

She watches the butterfly burn, chokes back sobs.

DIANA
You were so pretty!

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

TOMOKO
Why? Why?

DIANA
You won't believe me!

TOMOKO
Tell me! I want to know!

DIANA
Shyla told me --

NATHAN

Stop it! We're talking about you,
Diana, not Shyla! Why did you do
this?

DIANA

She's really here, Daddy! You
don't understand anything!

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 visage in a
crystal. Shyla's cross.

SHYLA

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

DIANA

I have to go. Mom said.

SHYLA

But you've only done one of the
favours. What if the giant gets mad
at you?

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

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 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

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

So you can look like anybody?

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 Chieko's face.

DIANA

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?

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

SHYLA
I like Speed. Maybe I'll come too.

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

The tree house rests in the arms of a sprawling oak. Teresa and Diana play a quick card game on the floor. Diana slaps down the winner.

DIANA
Speed!

TERESA
You win every time!

DIANA
No, you won one!

TERESA
But you let me!

Diana shuffles the deck.

TERESA'S MOTHER (O.S.)
How about some ice cream, you guys?

TERESA
Coming, Momma!
(to Diana)
We've got fudge swirl with whipped cream and cherries!

Teresa scrambles down the rope ladder. Her foot slips off a rung. She nearly falls, but holds on tight, struggles to find her footing.

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

The rope get tangled around her neck. She fights to free herself. Claws at the rope with both hands.

Diana flattens herself on the tree house floor, reaches down.

DIANA
Teresa! Here! Here!

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 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.

Teresa's body goes limp.

Diana gets to her feet, in a daze. 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.

TOMOKO

Sweetie, let us in. We know how bad you must feel, how terribly hurt and confused you must be.

NATHAN

Please open the door.

TOMOKO

Want to talk about it? We just want to make sure you're OK.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana's face is buried in her pillow.

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

Diana sits up in bed, sees Shyla watching her from the mirror. Shyla offers her a deck of playing cards.

SHYLA

I saved Teresa's cards for you.

DIANA

I don't want them.

SHYLA

The giant must be angry.

DIANA

Tell him I'm sorry.

SHYLA

You shouldn't have left before you finished the favors.

DIANA
 Just ask him what I have to do.
 I'll finish them right away.

Diana wipes her eyes, pulls Teresa's picture from the wall.

LIVING ROOM

Ba-chan and Tomoko stand before the altar, their hands clasped in prayer. Diana places Teresa's painting beside the urns and her portrait of Nobu, lights a candle.

DIANA
Mata aimasho.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Ba-chan and Diana slowly traverse the lawn, 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 lights in my head 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
 No good. Giant still near, still hungry. Could be anywhere.

DIANA
 Daddy says there's no such thing.

BA-CHAN
 He no understand. Come, pick flowers.

FLOWER GARDEN

Ba-chan plucks a yellow daisy and a small sunflower blossom and shows them to Diana.

BA-CHAN

See? Both pretty flowers, but not the same. Like death. It not the same when it visit you and me.

DIANA

What do you mean?

BA-CHAN

For me, death is hungry giant. For you, maybe it look like something else. Keep eyes open.

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

Ba-chan and Diana pick more flowers.

BA-CHAN

(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! You fight! Giant try to eat, but all you get is bump on head!

Diana nods.

BA-CHAN

Good girl. We give flowers to your mother for dinner table.

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

NATHAN

What's up?

DIANA

Nothing, Daddy.

Nathan drops the bark onto the ground.

NATHAN

Ba-chan, please stop telling her scary stories about this hungry giant. 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 just don't need to hear that stuff, that's all.

Diana looks away, arranges her flowers. Nathan lowers his voice.

NATHAN

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's sits on her bed, holding the revolver.

Shyla's face shimmers in the mirror.

SHYLA

Ready?

DIANA

Yeah.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Diana aims at piece of paper taped to the back fence. Shyla looks on, her face shining in the water in the birdbath.

SHYLA

Hurry up. Your parents will be back any time now.

Diana pulls the hammer back.

SHYLA

Stand a little closer.

Diana fires. BLAM! The bullet ricochets off the metal fence pole, then off a rock, and grazes the inside of her wrist.

She drops the gun, cries out in pain. She covers the wound with her hand. Blood seeps through her fingers.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Diana's on her bed, sketching a picture of Shyla. Tomoko walks in, sees that Diana has a large bandage on her wrist.

TOMOKO

Sweetie, what happened? Did you cut yourself?

DIANA

It's nothing.

TOMOKO

Want me to take a look at it?

Diana shakes her head.

DIANA

I'm trying to draw.

TOMOKO

You sure?

DIANA

I said its nothing! Why can't you
just leave me alone?

INT. DIANA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Mrs. Leach confers with Tomoko. Diana's classmates, all in clusters, talk and laugh, share snacks, and play board games.

Diana sits alone at her desk, absorbed in her drawing.

Matt wanders by. She covers her paper, gives him an icy stare.

MRS. LEACH

She used to be such a sunny child.
Now she's so furtive and solitary.
It's like night and day.

TOMOKO

I miss my little girl.

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 mother 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!

MRS. LEACH

The district psychologist is on
campus today for a few hours. I
took the liberty of making an
appointment.

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

MR. ADAMS (60s), a bleary-eyed, abrasive fellow, sits at his desk behind mounds of files.

MR. ADAMS
So, Jessica.

DIANA
That's not my name.

Mr. Adams checks his paperwork.

MR. ADAMS
Diana, sorry. Mrs. Leach gave me a heads up about some challenges you've been facing. But I want to hear it from you personally, from your perspective. So let's jump right in, shall we? You've obviously got problems. Tell me what's wrong.

He leans toward her, locks his eyes on hers. Diana stares back and zips her lip.

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!
Run! Run! 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.

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...
Maybe we should go out for ice
cream. We haven't done that in
a long time.

DIANA

It's OK.

Tomoko cleans up her work table, arranges her tools, puts pieces of stained glass in drawers. She's tense, agitated. She SLAMS a drawer shut, tries to compose herself.

TOMOKO

Sweetie, there's something I wanted
to say... There's nothing wrong
with having imaginary friends. But
how about if you say goodbye to her
for a while?

DIANA

You still don't get it. She's
real, Momma!

TOMOKO

I want it to be just the three of
us, just our family, for a change.

DIANA

No!

TOMOKO

Diana, I need you to stop seeing
her and talking to her and painting
her picture! Do you hear me?

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

DIANA

No.

NATHAN'S DREAM - EXT. BACK YARD - POOL - DAY

Nobu sits on the diving board, knocks twice. Nathan stands poolside, too stunned to speak. Nobu KNOCKS again.

NOBU
Knock, knock. Knock, knock, Dad.

NATHAN
But... you're dead.

NOBU
No. You're supposed to say, "Who's there?" But it's not a joke this time. I'm here in your dream.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY (BACK TO REALITY)

Two more KNOCKS. Nathan sits at his desk, eyes closed, head flopped over onto his chest.

RICK (50s), a fellow professor, stands at the door, KNOCKS again.

RICK
Nathan?

NATHAN
(startled)
Yeah. Hi, Rick.

RICK
We're late for the meeting.
You OK?

NATHAN
Must have nodded off.

Rick wanders in.

RICK
What's going on, man? You look like death warmed over. Want to shoot some hoop or go out for a beer or something? Talk to me.

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

NATHAN
I haven't been sleeping much, and since Nobu passed away, I've been plagued by the strangest dreams. Then there's Diana who's out there in the ether somewhere playing with this imaginary friend!

RICK
Call Jenny. She'll fit you in
anytime.

Nathan nods.

RICK
How's Tomoko holding up?

NATHAN
Better than me, I hope.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

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

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Nobu stands by the pool, whistle in hand. Diana hops onto the diving board.

Tomoko performs sun salutations, a yoga exercise, at pool side, watching them.

NOBU
You can do it!

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

UNDERWATER

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

It drifts toward the bottom, but Diana can't go any further.

Nobu swims by her, snatches it.

ON THE SURFACE

Their heads pop up. Diana gasps for breath. They swim to the ladder, climb out.

DIANA
I almost got it!

TOMOKO
Good try, sweetie.

NOBU
One more time. Dive in straighter.
You'll go way deeper that way.

Diana hops back onto the diving board.

Nobu BLOWS THE WHISTLE, tosses it into the water. Diana takes a big breath and dives in after it.

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 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
Yeah!

TOMOKO
Good job!

DIANA
But you helped!

NOBU
That's what big brothers are for!

Nobu's joyous 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 pealing overhead.

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.

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
Lights?

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

BA-CHAN
Maybe we stop for now.

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

BA-CHAN
Naku na. Tomorrow is 49th Day.
We give cranes to Nobu to take on
journey. Maybe before he go, he
help us fight giant.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

TOMOKO
You OK?

NATHAN
How are we going to turn this thing
around?

Tomoko sits up, faces him.

TOMOKO
What thing?

NATHAN
This problem we're facing with
Diana! How she's living in this
fantasy world!

TOMOKO
You don't have to shout!

NATHAN
I'm not shouting! I'm asking!

Sliding out of bed, Tomoko pulls on her robe.

NATHAN
Where are you going? Tomoko...

She won't meet his eyes.

NATHAN
(gently)
Wait, please. 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? You're the Buddhist. The 49th Day is a chance to say goodbye to our son one last time -- and leave all this grief behind. Then maybe Diana will come back to us. Right?

She turns to face him, her eyes burning.

TOMOKO
I don't know what to believe anymore!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana sits in bed, pistol in hand. She flips the cylinder open, fills it with bullets, SNAPS it shut.

Shyla's gleaming face appears in the mirror across the room.

SHYLA
You're getting good at this.

DIANA
(startled)
There you are! I haven't seen you in a while.

SHYLA
(whispering)
I snuck up on the hungry giant when
he was sleeping.

DIANA
You did?

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

DIANA
What did he say?

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

DIANA
You mean he's coming back?

SHYLA
Uh-huh.

DIANA
When?

SHYLA
Tomorrow night.

DIANA
For me? Is he coming for me?

Shyla nods. Terrified, Diana can't catch her breath.

DIANA
What should I do?

SHYLA
I don't know... Maybe practice
aiming.

Shyla fades from the mirror, appears in the light overhead.

SHYLA
Up here.

Diana holds the pistol with both hands, aims at the light.
Shyla smiles, then she's gone.

Her image shows up in the window.

SHYLA

Over here.

Diana sights down the barrel at her. Shyla vanishes, appears on the computer screen.

SHYLA

Now here.

Diana locks in on her target. Pulls the hammer back.

DIANA

Right in the head!

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. Smoke from burning incense swirls in 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.

Diana searches the altar. The shimmering specter of Nobu appears. A smile lights Diana's face.

DIANA

Hi, Nobu!

She cups her ear, listens, then turns toward her father.

DIANA

Daddy, Nobu says, "Knock, knock."

NATHAN

What?

DIANA

He says you look really surprised right now. Just like when you saw him last night in your dream.

NATHAN
 (shocked)
 What? No, that can't be!

Ba-chan puts her arm around Diana, 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!

She leans forward toward the altar.

DIANA
 She has blonde hair and blue eyes?

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

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

REVEREND MORITA
 Today Nobu moves on 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 echoing tones fill the room.

DIANA
 Nobu! Don't go yet!

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. There's 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?

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

Shyla, are you following me?

NATHAN

That game's over, Diana! I don't want to hear one more word about her! Is that clear?

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

How does that sound? And *mochi* for dessert.

NATHAN

Answer your mother.

Diana turns her head away.

NATHAN
Diana, I told you --

TOMOKO
It's OK, it's OK!

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

BA-CHAN
Nobu tell you secret?

Diana stares out the window.

BA-CHAN
You no want 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.

Nathan POUNDS the steering wheel. He takes a deep breath, pulls back onto the road.

Ba-chan strokes Diana's hair, singing a Japanese lullaby.

BA-CHAN
Nen nen kororiyo okororiyo...

INT. BA-CHAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Ba-chan pours a cup of tea. There's the staccato POUNDING of a JACK HAMMER down the street. She stops, listens.

BA-CHAN
I hear you. Gnashing teeth. You go to other house, but not come here. You scare young girl, but I no afraid.

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

BA-CHAN
Giant, I waiting for you!

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
Where?

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

DIANA
Stop it! I want to see you!

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
Ever seen Sunshine with a mouse or a little bird in her mouth?

SHYLA (cont'd)

The way she bites it and lets it go, and it tries to get away, and she catches it and bites it again, then lets it go -- and plays with it like that till it can't play any more?

DIANA

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

SHYLA

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

DIANA

I'm going to tell Mom and Dad!

SHYLA

OK, but want to see something cool first? Pick up the stained glass of the rainbow your Mom's been working on. That one, on the table.

DIANA

Why?

SHYLA

It will only take a second.

Diana grasps the stained glass hanging. The moment she lifts it off the table, it falls and SHATTERS on the floor.

SHYLA

Now you broke it. She's going to be really mad.

DIANA

You did that!

SHYLA

You can tell your parents anything you want, but they'll say it's all in your head.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Diana yells at her parents.

DIANA

It all started that first day Shyla showed up! Remember? Why don't you believe me?

TOMOKO

Sweetie!

Tomoko kneels to hug her. Diana breaks away.

DIANA

Let me go!

NATHAN

(to Tomoko)

This has been building for weeks.

DIANA

She drowned Nobu in the pool, then shoved Grandma down the steps!

NATHAN

No, Nobu slipped and struck his head on the diving board, and Grandma tumbled down the stairs. Shyla had nothing to do with it.

DIANA

Then she got jealous of Teresa and killed her too!

TOMOKO

No, Diana, this is just your imagination running away with you.

DIANA

That's what she said you'd say!

TOMOKO

Please, sweetie, listen to me.

NATHAN

(bellowing)

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

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana sits on her bed, stroking Sunshine.

DIANA

You're the only one who believes
me, Sunshine. Momma and Daddy
think I'm telling stories.

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

DIANA

I know you can hear me! 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 tattered pieces of paper and
shreds of tape.

Shyla appears in the mirror. She licks her fingertip,
touches her nose, blinks her eyes.

SHYLA

Your parents think you're going
crazy. Know that?

Diana grimaces, covers her eyes with her hands.

SHYLA

The lights again? I bet they hurt
a lot.

KITCHEN

Tomoko fries tempura while Nathan slices up vegetables on a
cutting board. He's stressed out and ranting.

NATHAN

Since she hit her head, things have
been getting progressively worse!

TOMOKO

But what makes you think Diana will
even talk to her? She didn't talk
to the shrink at school!

NATHAN

Our daughter is drifting farther
and farther away -- and I'm not
just going to stand around and
watch it happen!

TOMOKO

There's no need to yell!

He slices his finger, cries out in pain.

NATHAN
Damn it to hell!

He grabs a paper towel, stanches the flow of blood.

TOMOKO
You OK?

NATHAN
Son of a bitch!

TOMOKO
Want me to finish that?

NATHAN
No, I got it!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Shyla smiles at Diana from the mirror, then disappears and pops up in a window across the room.

SHYLA
Over here!

DIANA
I don't want to play hide-and-seek!

SHYLA
OK... You may not believe me, but I get so lonely sometimes. 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
Liar!

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

DIANA
Promise?

SHYLA

Cross my heart. You don't want anyone else to die, right? A couple more favors, that's all I need.

KITCHEN

Tomoko throws battered vegetables in the wok. Nathan wraps his bleeding finger in the paper towel and goes back to his slicing.

TOMOKO

I'm sure Jenny's a wonderful psychiatrist, but can we please just talk about it tomorrow? Let's just get through today, OK? Maybe things will turn around for her. For all of us.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana stands before the mirror, scissors in hand. Shyla grins at her, side by side with Diana's reflection in the glass.

SHYLA

You heard me.

Diana's eyes brim with tears. She raises the scissors and hacks off handful after handful of her long, black hair. It falls to the floor at her feet.

KITCHEN

Diana wipes away her tears, walks toward her parents. They can't believe their eyes. Diana's once-beautiful mane is now all chopped off, a ragged mess.

TOMOKO

Why? Why?

DIANA

I didn't like it anymore.

NATHAN

Diana, get in the car. We're going for a ride.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

DR. JENNY (50s), Rick's soft-spoken wife, sits beside Diana on the couch. She offers a smile.

DR. JENNY

I just want to chat with you a for a few minutes, if that's OK. But you don't have to say a single word until you're ready. All right, sweetheart?

Diana nods.

DR. JENNY

I was wondering why you decided to cut your hair.

Diana turns away, tight-lipped.

DR. JENNY

All right, 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

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. I figured that one out back in kindergarten.

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
 Would you like a cup of hot
 chocolate?

Diana still won't meet her eyes.

DR. JENNY
 Sweetheart, your parents are very
 concerned. Please tell me about
 Shyla.
 (looking around)
 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
 Leave me alone!

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 a few observations, if I
 may. Tearing a butterfly apart
 and burning it -- that's very
 distressing behavior. So is the
 fact that she cut off all her hair.
 And as for the large bandage on her
 wrist, do you know how she hurt
 herself?

TOMOKO
 She wouldn't tell me.

DR. JENNY
 I assume you've heard of cutting.
 It's a self-harming behavior.
 Children hurt themselves physically
 as a way to ease emotional pain.
 Often they cut themselves on the
 wrist.

TOMOKO
 She'd never do that.

NATHAN

Please, Tomoko.

DR. JENNY

You also mentioned you found her sleepwalking, shining a flashlight up and down the road during a thunderstorm. She was almost killed that night.

TOMOKO

No! That was just a nightmare --

NATHAN

Let her speak!

DR. JENNY

Thank you. Then there's the matter of her fall from the tree house. Did she sustain a concussion when she banged her head? We should schedule an MRI to rule out any possibility of damage to the soft tissue. And finally, if she were my child, I'd have her start therapy immediately and consider putting her on medication -- just to even her out a bit.

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, stops. His face is flushed, his eyes bloodshot and weary.

NATHAN

Hell with it.

He slumps to the floor.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

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

DIANA

Come out! I had to go to another doctor 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
(with a mischievous grin)
Just point the gun at Sunshine's
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 never want to see you again!

Tomoko breaks into a run.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Diana screams at the face in the crystal.

DIANA
I hate you!

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

Shyla waves goodbye. She fades from sight.

DIANA
Wait! No, come back! Shyla!

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

DIANA
 Shyla, please? Please? Shyla,
 come back!

Tomoko bursts in.

TOMOKO
 What is it? What happened?

DIANA
 Shyla left and I can't find her!

TOMOKO
 Oh, sweetie. Come here.

Tomoko reaches for her. She pulls away.

DIANA
 Don't touch me!

Tomoko's feet CRUNCH over broken glass. She looks down, sees a pile of shattered stained glass on the floor.

TOMOKO
 What happened? My beautiful
 rainbow piece...

DIANA
 Shyla did it.

TOMOKO
 Stop lying! We both know that's
 not true!

DIANA
 You don't know anything! You're
 just like Daddy!

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Diana sits on her bed in the dark, strokes Sunshine. She grimaces and covers her eyes. SLAPS herself hard across the face. Then again.

DIANA
 Sunshine, how come these lights
 won't leave me alone?

She takes the revolver from under her pillow.

MASTER BEDROOM

Nathan flops down on the bed beside his wife.

NATHAN

I'm down for the count.

TOMOKO

I knocked on her door to say good night, and she didn't answer. She's probably already asleep.

NATHAN

We'll get through this.

He kisses her hand, holds it against his heart.

HALLWAY

Diana steps out her bedroom door, revolver in hand.

DIANA

Shyla, you here?

She turns back to her room, whispers.

DIANA

Come on. Good kitty.

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.

DIANA

(to Sunshine)

Daddy forgot to lock it. Here, kitty.

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, takes a toy mouse out of her pocket, motions to Sunshine.

DIANA

Look what I have. Come on.

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

She places Sunshine on a blanket in the corner, gives her the mouse, mews to her.

DIANA

You're the prettiest kitty in the world. You just play with your mouse. You love your mouse.

Hands trembling, she raises the pistol, stops to wipe away her tears.

DIANA

I can't see... I'm so sorry, Sunshine. I have to.

Shyla's smiling face appears in a cracked mirror.

SHYLA

Hi.

DIANA

(startled)

What are you doing here?

SHYLA

Got to make sure you do the last favor.

DIANA

Leave me alone!

SHYLA

As soon as you're done.

Diana cocks the pistol, points it at Sunshine's head.

DIANA

Good kitty, Sunshine. I'm so sorry...

She lets out a cry. Turns. Aims the pistol at Shyla.

DIANA
Go away! Right now! I'm warning
you!

SHYLA
How can I? 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 is blown to bits.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

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

SHYLA
Missed me, missed me!

Diana spins, aims the pistol.

SHYLA
Think you can kill me? Here's
another secret.

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

SHYLA
I'm the only one in the world who
can never die!

Diana shoots. BLAM! The window shatters -- and Shyla's nowhere to be seen.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Nathan and Tomoko race toward the basement door.

TOMOKO
Diana!

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

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

DIANA
Watch out!

TOMOKO
Put that down!

DIANA
It's Shyla!

NATHAN
Put the gun down!

Shyla appears, floating in the air right behind them.

DIANA
There she is! Behind you! Run!

Diana points the pistol toward her parents.

DIANA
Run! She wants to tap you!

Shyla reaches out, pondering.

SHYLA
Which one? It's so hard to choose!

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 the air.

Diana drops the gun, 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 watches in silence from the doorway.

DIANA
No, no, no!

DR. JENNY

This is just a little medication to help you sleep, that's all.

DIANA

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

DR. JENNY

(tenderly)

No, you need to rest, my little one. There, all done. Close your eyes.

HALLWAY

Dr. Jenny whispers to Tomoko and Nathan.

DR. JENNY

I gave her a very minimal dose, just to relax her. I'm sure she'll be fine for the rest of the evening... I won't mince words. Hallucinations this vivid and disturbing are extremely rare in children her age. Tomorrow morning, I'd like to have her admitted for observation. We might be dealing with early-onset schizophrenia.

MASTER BEDROOM

Nathan and Tomoko slide into bed.

NATHAN

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

TOMOKO

Don't start with me!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Diana tosses and turns in the throes of a dream. Suddenly her eyes fly open wide.

DIANA

I know you're here!

Shyla appears in her mirror.

DIANA

I see you! They gave me a shot,
but it only worked for a little
while!

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

SHYLA

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

Diana won't look her way.

SHYLA

(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.

SHYLA

Yeah?

DIANA

Make these necklaces magic!

After a moment's hesitation.

SHYLA

Deal.

MASTER BEDROOM

Diana enters, carrying three glass bead necklaces.

TOMOKO

(surprised)
Sweetie? You're awake.

DIANA

I've got presents for you.

NATHAN

It's late. You should be in bed.

Diana slips a necklace over her mother's head.

DIANA
These will keep you safe.

She places one over her father's head.

DIANA
I don't need one for myself,
because I can see Shyla coming, and
you can't.

TOMOKO
But we're not in any danger.
Please believe me, we're all going
to be fine.

Shyla's face appears in the beads of her 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 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.

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

TOMOKO
 Please stop this, Diana. Please,
 please. You're scaring me.

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

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

Tomoko grabs her by the shoulders, shakes her.

TOMOKO
 Come back! Come back to me!

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

Diana places the last 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
Hi-mago, listen for Nobu. Tonight
 is last night he be here with
 family. Maybe he come 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

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

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

NATHAN

Leave her alone!

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Tomoko pulls up her comforter.

DIANA

Momma, 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 when Shyla broke your stained
glass.

TOMOKO

Always talk to me. No matter how
many times I don't get it.

DIANA

Is something wrong inside my brain?

TOMOKO

No, you've had a concussion, that's
all. You'll be fine.

Diana curls up against her mother.

TOMOKO

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

Tomoko wraps her in her arms, runs her fingers through
Diana's ragged hair.

TOMOKO

It will grow back, and before you
know it, it will be just as long
and beautiful as it was before.
We're all going to be fine.

She kisses Diana's cheek.

MASTER BEDROOM

Fists clenched, Nathan rages 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 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 lies in bed, her eyes wide open. Sunshine purrs contentedly at her side.

Shyla's sparkling image appears in the mirror.

SHYLA
 (whispering)
 Your Mom went to bed?

Diana pulls her kitten close.

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

DIANA
 You're lying again!

SHYLA
 (imploring)
 I am not. I play a tapping game,
 that's all. Sunshine purrs. You
 like to 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
 You can't make me.

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. It's really easy, and 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

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 (20s), 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 seeing this.

NOBU

You've got to wake up! 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

Nobu won't let me sleep.

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 slides out of bed.

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 again!

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

But I can see you because 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 us best friends.

Shyla puts out her hand.

SHYLA
The whistle.

DIANA
Then you'll leave for good?

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

There's a full moon. Shyla shimmers in the mist drifting over the water.

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

NOBU (V.O.)
Dive in really straight, remember?
Just like I told you!

DIANA
Nobu? You're still here.

SHYLA
(laughing)
Now you're hearing voices? I guess you really are crazy.

Diana runs down the diving board, launches herself into the water.

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. Her brother's 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 next time! You just
watch! Then you're going away!
Why did you come here in the first
place?

SHYLA

Everybody has to die, and it's your
turn, that's all. Just like when
you get to be line leader in class.
It's your turn.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nathan slides out of bed.

NATHAN

Maybe a warm shower.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Diana stands on the diving board. Shyla hovers above her.

SHYLA

But you see, I get so lonely, and 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, you're right, I got jealous
of your friend and tapped her too.

Diana draws a deep breath, her eyes fixed on the whistle.
She hears Nobu's voice.

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

She nods, plunges in.

DIANA'S BEDROOM

Nathan checks for her, finds an empty bed.

NATHAN
Diana?

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
She's not in her room! Her
window's open!

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

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

NOBU (V.0.)
It's stuck, but it got looser. Big
breath! Kick really hard!

Diana nods.

SHYLA
Don't you get it? You're the one I
came for.

Diana, focused on the whistle, draws a deep breath. Shyla swirls around her.

DIANA

After my next dive, you're gone for good!

NOBU (V.O.)

Just a few more tugs!

SHYLA

Then I guess it's time to finish what I started.

Diana plunges in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

NATHAN

Come on, damn you! Come on!

TOMOKO

The art studio!

He finally yanks it open.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

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 foot gets caught in the cord. She kicks, but the cord wraps around her ankle.

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 above her.

NOBU (V.O.)

No! No! 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. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Nathan and Tomoko sweep the yard with their flashlights.

TOMOKO

Diana?

NATHAN

You out here?

TOMOKO

Diana!

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

TOMOKO

Diana!

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

SWIMMING POOL

Diana floats face down. Shyla shimmers above her.

SHYLA

I'll miss you. That was the best tapping game ever!

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

SHYLA

Guess what? It's almost time to say good-bye.

BACK YARD

Nathan stops cold, his eyes focused on the pool.

NATHAN
The lights are on!

SWIMMING POOL

Nathan and Tomoko race to the edge of the pool. Spot Diana's limp body.

TOMOKO
No! No! No! No!

Nathan plunges in. Pulls her to the shallow end.

He scoops her up in his arms. Carries her up the stairs, places her on the grass.

TOMOKO
Daijobu? Daijobu?

Tomoko falls to the ground beside her. Starts CPR.

TOMOKO
She's not breathing!

NATHAN
Diana! Diana!

TOMOKO
Come on!

Tomoko blows into her mouth.

NATHAN
Come on, Diana!

Water trickles from the side of Diana's mouth. Tomoko pumps her chest.

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

NATHAN
Flip her on her side! We've got to get the water out of her lungs!

INT. BA-CHAN'S 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
 Hungry giant, I know you here! Why
 you take little girl?

She sits up in bed, searches the room.

BA-CHAN
 You hear me? I stand in front!

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

An ambulance races in, SIREN SCREAMING. Two PARAMEDICS (20s) throw the back doors open, pull out a backboard, an Ambu bag, and a C collar.

A Fire Department sedan screeches to a stop behind the ambulance. SUPERVISOR FOSTER (40s) jumps out.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

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

TOMOKO
 Come on, Diana!

NATHAN
 Breathe! You've got to breathe!

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

FOSTER
 How long was she in the water?

NATHAN
 I 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, Momma's here! Momma's here!

NATHAN
Give them room!

TOMOKO
Let me hold her!

She lunges forward. Nathan restrains her. Paramedic #1 peels Diana's eyelids back, shines a flashlight in her eyes.

They 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 still.

PARAMEDIC #1
Let's go!

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 in Nathan's arms.

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

TOMOKO
I'm coming too!

FOSTER
No, Ma'am. I'm sorry, but in your current state, you'd only interfere.

TOMOKO
I need to be with her!

FOSTER
No, Ma'am.

NATHAN
Tomoko, we've got to do what he
says!

FOSTER
Sir, I'll stay here with 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
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 blocks Tomoko's path.

FOSTER
We need to do what's best for your
daughter.

TOMOKO
Diana!

FOSTER
You're hyperventilating, Ma'am.
Slow, deep breaths.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The Paramedics load Diana into the ambulance.

A fire engine pulls in, lights blazing. A FIREMAN (30s) rushes over.

PARAMEDIC #1
Adventist!

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

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

INT. BACK OF THE AMBULANCE - NIGHT

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

PARAMEDIC #2
Rescue 42! We've got a child who
was just pulled from a swimming
pool! 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
more composed, we'll follow them.

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

FOSTER
Slow, deep breaths. That's better.

Tomoko listens as the SIREN fades into the night. There's 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
Shyla!

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

TOMOKO
I want to see your face! This was my sanctuary, but you turned it into a place of death!

Foster POUNDS on the outside of the 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
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 RAMS his shoulder against the door.

FOSTER
Open up! Now!

TOMOKO
Shyla! Where are you hiding?

Foster KICKS the door down. Charges in. Dodges flying glass.

FOSTER
Put that down!

TOMOKO
No! Stay away from me!

Tomoko takes a wild swing at him. Drives him back.

She rages on. 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
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
Hungry giant, I no afraid. You the
one who afraid! Look how scared!
You hiding! I stand in front!

Ba-chan lies back, settles herself under her quilt.

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, girl!

They check the EKG monitor. Diana's flat-lining.

Paramedic #2 barks into the radio.

PARAMEDIC #2
We're losing her!

His partner does chest compressions.

PARAMEDIC #1
Stay with me! Come on!

The Paramedics work feverishly over Diana. Her eyes are closed, her body limp.

Shyla's glimmering form appears in the air above her. She gazes down on Diana.

There's a burst of light. Diana's eyes blink open, marveling at her strange surroundings.

DIANA
Did you just tap me? Am I dead?

Shyla smiles and fades from sight.

A glowing presence appears at Diana's side. She stares into the light, her eyes wide with wonder.

DIANA
Is that you, 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 the burnished wooden urn.

Tomoko and Nathan sit in the first pew -- and there's Diana snuggled between them.

Reverend Morita chants the familiar tones of the *Nembetsu*.

REVEREND MORITA
Namu amida butsu...

Diana leaps to her feet, waves at the altar. There stands a glimmering apparition. It's Ba-chan, folding cranes, with a serene smile on her face.

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 she real, or just pretend?

TOMOKO

She was there. I'm sure she was.

DIANA

She made a deal with Shyla.

Nathan places his hands together, bows his head in prayer.

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)

Ba-chan says my necklaces saved us, just like Shyla promised!

TOMOKO

My brave girl.

Tomoko holds her close, whispering secrets 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!

Diana hurries on, checks the GURGLING fountain, sees only her own reflection.

She checks the koi pond.

DIANA

I don't see Shyla anywhere!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tomoko and Diana stand before the altar. Ba-chan's urn, adorned with family photos and flowers, rests alongside Nobu's urn, Chieko's urn, and the paintings of Nobu and Teresa.

Diana places the bead necklaces on the table beside Ba-chan's origami cranes.

Tomoko lights a candle.

TOMOKO
Mata aimasho, Ba-chan.

Diana takes the match, lights a candle.

DIANA
Mata aimasho.

Nathan emerges from the hallway, joins them before the altar. 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
No?

DIANA
Killing people is her job. Like teaching college or making stained glass. She's always near and she never stops.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Nathan gives Diana a piggy back ride through the garden.
Tomoko spots a butterfly.

TOMOKO
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 in pursuit.

NATHAN
Hang on!

DIANA
Faster, Daddy! Faster!

TOMOKO
It's getting away!

DIANA
Faster!

Diana shrieks with delight. They chase the butterfly around
the garden.

All around them, flowers burst with blooms.

FADE OUT.