

La Maladie du Sommeil

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INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is lined with large tiles and marble counter tops. Awkward looking chairs surround a mid-sized dining table.

AYATO, 17 with a slightly younger face, sits at the table with his hands over his mouth and nose. He stares at the wall across the room as the phone begins to RING.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, PARENTS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ayato's parents, DUNOIR and CAMILLA are asleep in their bed. They look nothing like their son. Dunoir is a man in his fifties, foreign, and gruff. Camilla is at least five years younger, soft, not too thin, and fairly kind.

The phone is RINGING.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, GIRLS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

SOLE (9) and MARTELLA (13), Ayato's two sisters of very different racial backgrounds, are fast asleep in their individual beds, separated by a glass night table held up by a porcelain statue of a dolphin. It is evident from the array of skin colors in Ayato's family that all the children are adopted.

The phone is RINGING.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ayato watches the phone ring for the fourth time before the answering machine picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(computer voice:)

We are not available right now. Please leave a message.

BEEP.

ORIN (THROUGH MACHINE)

Hi Ayato. Am I calling too late? I figured it was just a little after 1:00am so it was okay. Anyway, I just wanted to see how you were doing, and if you got your homework done alright since we didn't talk tonight like I thought we would.

(pause)

(MORE)

ORIN (THROUGH MACHINE)
 Anyway, maybe we could do something after
 school tomorrow?
 (pause)
 Anyway, I should go. I hope I didn't
 wake you. Um...I'll see you tomorrow.
 Bye.

CLICK. BEEP.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato stands in front of the bathroom mirror in a t-shirt and boxer shorts. The shirt pictures a cartoon super model vomiting in a McDonald's parking lot.

Ayato pulls at a slight wave in his hair, straightening it as far down as it will go and let's it flop back up. It's slightly damp from sweat.

He stumbles out of the room into:

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ayato sets up a blank canvas on an easel to the right side of his bed and pulls out a paint brush.

He sits the bristles on his lips, in thought.

He begins to paint on the canvas, with no paint.

Bored, he wipes his forehead with his shirt.

WOMAN'S VOICE
 Hm, just take it off...

Ayato lowers his shirt to uncover his eyes as they search the immediate area for the disembodied voice.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato lies on his bed in his boxer shorts. His shirt is next to him and he's holding a container of paint.

On his finger is a glob of blue. He swirls it around his belly button and out over his stomach.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BATHROOM - LATER

Ayato looks in the mirror as he blow dries his stomach.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - LATER

Ayato lies in bed, rubbing his hand over the paint. He closes his eyes and falls asleep.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - MORNING

Loud and exciting pop music plays from another room.

Ayato, heavy as a rock, forces his eyes wide open. He is in bed. The room is still, and the lights are low. Sunlight falls through the "blackout" shades in banners.

Ayato pulls his left hand out from under himself and looks at it. After a few seconds he shakes it, violently.

Unsatisfied, Ayato rises from bed, still marked in paint from the night before, and begins to bang his hand against a dresser. Multiple times yield no expected results and Ayato slowly melts onto the floor, breathless.

He carefully puts his hand under himself and sits on it.

AYATO

Come on, wake up...

Ayato turns his head towards the door, from where the music is blasting through.

Ayato (CONT'D)

Grrr...

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ayato stumbles into the living room, shaking his hand all the while.

Camilla is vacuuming with the stereo playing loudly.

AYATO

Mom...

Camilla can't hear him.

Ayato (CONT'D)

Mom.

Still nothing.

Ayato (CONT'D)
(yelling)

MOM!

Camilla notices Ayato.

CAMILLA
Ayato, you're awake!

AYATO
Most of me.

CAMILLA
Why aren't you dressed? You have to leave
in twenty minutes.

AYATO
Is it Monday?

CAMILLA
(playfully)
Oh jeez, yes, it's Monday. Go take a
quick shower. You have paint on you.

AYATO
I spilled so I made a pattern.

CAMILLA
Oh, of course.

Camilla smiles and ruffles her son's hair. He doesn't
object.

Ayato turns to leave.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
We're having a family get-together this
weekend, so don't make plans.

He stops.

AYATO
The adoptive families...or yours?

CAMILLA
Both.

Ayato frowns.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ayato is wearing pants and putting on a shirt. There's a knock on his door.

CAMILLA (O.S.)
Can I come in?

AYATO
Can you?

Camilla rattles the door. It's locked.

CAMILLA (O.S.)
No.

AYATO
What do you want?

CAMILLA (O.S.)
Whatever you need is on the kitchen
counter.

AYATO
Okay, thanks.

Ayato finishes putting on his shirt and starts with the socks and shoes.

DUNOIR, his father, knocks at the door. He still retains a mild accent.

DUNOIR (O.S.)
Hey, Ayato?

AYATO
(rude, snappy)
What?

DUNOIR
(mocking)
What?

AYATO
(annoyed)
WHAT?!

DUNOIR
(discouraged)
Whatever your mother said.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato enters the kitchen and sits down. Some strewn dollar bills and papers sit beside him, as he eats a torn block of smoked mozzarella cheese and a marshmallow cereal in a plastic cup.

Among the papers are car keys.

The money looks to be somewhere around one hundred dollars in small bills.

As Ayato's about to scoop up the goodies, the voice returns.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Have you put any thought into skipping school today?

I/E. CAR - LATER

Ayato pulls up in front of a house.

WOMAN'S VOICE

It's rather unkind to ignore a lady, Ayato. I'm not unpleasant. I'm not hard to look at and certainly bathe more often than you do.

Ayato tightly grips the wheel.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL (17), skinny and decidedly feminine, walks towards the car. Her skin is a sweet ash accompanied by a large head of long red hair that bounces and swishes in awful ways you'd never see on television.

AYATO (THROUGH WINDOW)

Rachel, you're late!

RACHEL

I was not! You were late, so--

Rachel's hair gets in her mouth.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

--ugh, whatever.

EXT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The car drives off.

INT. CAR - LATER

Ayato drives while Rachel fiddles with her fingers.

RACHEL

You smell like peanut butter again.

AYATO

It's cereal and cheese, actually.

RACHEL

Oh, well I was just guessing anyway, heh heh heh. I didn't actually know, heh heh heh. I'm kind of tired, right?

Ayato smiles very warmly.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Are you doing anything after school today? I got a fondue pot and some movies.

AYATO

I can do that.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Don't break your plans.

AYATO

Stop it!

Rachel looks over at Ayato, awkwardly. Her mind is tied in knots.

AYATO (CONT'D)

(false)

What?

INT. SCHOOL, HOMEROOM - DAY

The school is old, yet well-maintained.

THERESA MULKE, dean and homeroom advisor, reads announcements to Ayato's homeroom. She's slightly overweight but wears it well.

Ayato sits through the talk next to his friend ORIN, a young looking kid about his age (17). Orin swims in his sweatshirt and his eyes are as empty as a ghost. It always seems as if he just got out of the shower.

ORIN
(quietly)
Did you get the homework last night?

AYATO
Um, yeah?

ORIN
(meek)
Sorry.

AYATO
What, you didn't?

ORIN
No, nevermind.
(pause)
I was just wondering if you needed help.
Sorry I called so late.

AYATO
Forget about it.

INT. SCHOOL, LOCKERS - LATER

Orin tugs on Ayato's shirt as Ayato pulls out a bag of drawing pencils, leaving his books behind in his locker.

ORIN
I'll see you at lunch, right?

Ayato nods and Orin smiles, turning away.

MR. LUKE PUNDIKE approaches. His lengthy, dirty blonde hair is pulled back in a ponytail while his eyes are covered in bold eyeglasses.

LUKE
Ayato!

Ayato turns to see his teacher.

AYATO
Hi, Luke.

They walk towards the classroom together.

LUKE

I'm pairing you guys up for blind drawing today. I want you to go with Joshua Seidler. You're both talented--

AYATO

(interrupting)

Thanks, but I don't think I should.

LUKE

He's a bright kid.

AYATO

Luke, I don't want to be a jerk, but he's a little nuts.

LUKE

He's an artist. Just try it out for me? He could use the guidance.

AYATO

Okay.

INT. SCHOOL, DRAWING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Messy and underdeveloped--the opposite of the science lab. Ayato sits with JOSHUA SEIDLER, who is blindfolded with a pencil in his left hand.

AYATO

Okay, move it left a little bit.

Josh moves the pencil to the right

JOSH

Bah, restrictions.

AYATO

Seriously, move it to the left. It's going to look bad.

Josh lowers the pencil.

JOSH

What are we supposed to be drawing anyway?

AYATO

A well-defined vegetable.

JOSH

So...not a cucumber.

AYATO

I think like a pumpkin or a star fruit or something...

JOSH

Well, I'm not drawing a star fruit. It looks like an ass hole.

Josh starts drawing a pumpkin. He doesn't lift the pencil and the end result is mostly accurate.

AYATO

(sincere)

Wow, look at that.

Josh removes the blindfold and smiles.

JOSH

How about that. I'm actually not a great drawer but I can do that spatial thing. They thought I was retarded when I was a kid but I guess I'm just kind of fucked up in general.

Josh rips the paper off the easel.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You try it.

Ayato looks to Josh, somewhat apprehensive, before putting the blindfold on.

Josh hands Ayato the pencil.

Ayato places the pencil almost at the left edge of the paper and Josh grabs his wrist.

Ayato yanks it away.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Sorry, I didn't...

Ayato tries to look at Josh through the blindfold but ends up facing the space just to the left of him.

AYATO

No, sorry, I'm just finicky today.

JOSH

You feel kind of stiff.

AYATO

What do you mean?

JOSH

You should let your wrist go a little bit. They say that to piano players but it's mostly guys with the problem. Probably from jacking off. You should try it with a fluid wrist--jacking off, I mean. It's much better. Everything is. You don't strain yourself and the lines look better--in the drawing, I mean, not...you know.

Ayato stares into the blindfold, thinking he's facing Josh.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Sorry, I get kind of nervous around new people.

Josh puts Ayato's pencil in the middle of the paper. This time, Ayato doesn't flinch.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Okay, try to do it kind of fast, and remember how much you move when you go up so you go down the same amount.

Ayato mostly fails.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Okay, that sucked.

Ayato removes the blindfold, frustrated.

AYATO

I think I need a break.

JOSH

Oh, I've got an idea.

EXT. SCHOOL, ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato chews on a pen while he and Josh overlook the schoolyard.

Behind them is a classroom full of windows. The interior is blocked out by reflections of the sun.

AYATO

It's nice up here.

Josh turns to Ayato and smiles.

JOSH

Yeah.

AYATO

I've never been up here before. I always thought they locked the roof door.

JOSH

Maybe they used to, I don't know.

AYATO

Hey Josh?

JOSH

Yeah?

AYATO

Can I ask you something personal?

JOSH

I guess so.

AYATO

People say you're crazy.

JOSH

That's not really a question.

AYATO

Yeah, I guess not, but you know what I mean.

JOSH

I take pills and talk to the counselor. Well, I don't take my pills when I need to paint, but for school I do, so I can see concretely.

AYATO

Oh. What's wrong with you?

JOSH

What's wrong with you?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Don't even think about it.

Ayato stammers.

AYATO

Nothing, I don't think.

JOSH

Yeah? I bet you have problems, too.
Everyone has problems. People are just
jealous of mine, so they make me take
pills so I can't have any fun.

AYATO

You don't really believe that, do you?

JOSH

No, but it sure feels that way sometimes.

Ayato takes the pen out of his mouth and holds it like a
cigarette. He tapes it on the top of the wall.

There's a knock behind them.

The boys turn around and see nobody.

AYATO

What was that?

JOSH

There's a classroom in there.

AYATO

Oh.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You should leave.

AYATO

Maybe we should head back?

JOSH

Okay.

As they exit, a door from the classroom opens behind them
and MR. WALTERS enters.

MR. WALTERS

What are you doing out here with a
cigarette?!

Ayato turns around, frantic.

AYATO

It's not a cigarette! It's a pen...

Ayato holds it up.

AYATO (CONT'D)

See? It's a Bic, Mr. Walters.

Mr. Walters settles down.

MR. WALTERS
That's a good pen.

AYATO
Thanks.

MR. WALTERS
You shouldn't chew on it, Ayato, it's bad
for your teeth. Now get back to class.

INT. SCHOOL, DRAWING STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato and Josh quickly find their seats and get back to
work.

Luke winks at Ayato.

Ayato feigns a smile.

JOSH
What is that all about?

AYATO
He wanted me to work with you. I think
he's happy we're getting along.

JOSH
Oh, great, so I'm a project.

AYATO
No, it's not like that.

JOSH
It's not your fault or anything.

AYATO
Thanks.

JOSH
So...you actually like me?

AYATO
Yes.

JOSH
Do you want to hang out after school?

WOMAN'S VOICE
I wouldn't, if I were you.

AYATO

Well, I kind of have plans with--

Josh looks at Ayato disapprovingly.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Well...

INT. SCHOOL, CAFETERIA - DAY

Ayato sits with Rachel, Orin, Iams, Lena, and DEBBIE while eating lunch.

AYATO

(with a full mouth)

Rachel, do you mind if we do movies tomorrow?

RACHEL

Yeah, that's fine. I got a project already. Can you believe that? We've been in school for two weeks and I've already got a big project.

AYATO

Do you need help?

RACHEL

No, it's just a physics thing.

Ayato swirls a fork full of mashed potatoes.

AYATO

Hey Rachel?

RACHEL

Yeah?

Ayato tries to look cute.

AYATO

Are you busy this Saturday?

RACHEL

I know that face. I am not coming to your family shit.

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

School kids rush to their buses around the corner or their cars in the distant parking lot.

Ayato waits outside in front of a short line of cars for Josh. He's startled when Josh grabs his shoulder.

AYATO

Hi.

JOSH

Hi! Can you give me a ride home?

AYATO

Um, yeah, we have plans.

JOSH

Oh shit! I forgot!

Josh begins pacing like a sugar ant.

AYATO

It's okay, don't worry about it.

JOSH

No, no, I'll take care of it. I gotta give Maya a call, though.

INT. CAR - LATER

Ayato's alone in his car, parked in the school parking lot. Josh is outside his window, speaking with Maya on the (cellular) telephone.

Ayato examines Josh's backpack while he's outside. It's dark blue, rugged, and has a few stains.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I think we should leave. Now.

AYATO

What do you mean, "we"?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Oh, a response, finally!

Suddenly, Josh is in the passenger's seat.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Our time alone is so scarce.

Ayato looks rigid.

JOSH

Is there a problem?

AYATO

Uh, no, I was just worried it might be dirty.

JOSH

Oh, okay. Hey, you should totally talk to Maya. I bet you guys would hit it off.

AYATO

Okay.

JOSH

Or not...sorry, I can be a little intrusive sometimes.

WOMAN'S VOICE

That's not an exaggeration.

AYATO

No, it's okay.

Ayato starts the car and begins to back out of his parking space.

JOSH

And sorry about earlier today. I get kind of jumpy around new people.

Ayato successfully backs out of his parking space and heads toward the highway.

AYATO

It's fine--just be quiet for one second, while I get on the highway.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You're making a mistake.

AYATO

Okay.

JOSH

Yeah, but you should totally talk to Maya. She's cute--some blue hair, but I think that's cool.

AYATO

That's fine.
(sarcastic)
My Dad would love it.

Ayato smiles.

JOSH
Are you being sarcastic?

AYATO
Yes.

JOSH
Oh, okay, I thought so. I can never
tell.

Josh opens his bag and tears off a piece of a syllabus
and writes something on it.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Fine, you're on your own. You can fix
this mess yourself.

AYATO
Thank you, finally!

Ayato looks behind him many times while merging, holding
a lack of trust in his mirrors.

JOSH
What?

AYATO
I was talking to the cars. I talk to
cars.

JOSH
And I commune with the toaster.

AYATO
I don't get it.

Josh hands the torn piece of paper to Ayato.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Jeez, not now.

JOSH
I'll put it in your pocket.

Josh reaches into Ayato's pocket, sliding the paper
inside.

Ayato laughs.

AYATO
Hey, careful, that tickles!

Josh sits back in his seat, with his arms crossed.

JOSH
That's Maya's screen name.

AYATO
Thanks.

INT. JOSH'S HOUSE, JOSH'S ROOM - LATER

The walls are poster'd and the carpeted floors have a couple of hard spots. Josh's desk is littered with art supplies. A can of adhesive is uncovered. One side of bed, cut clearly down the middle, is full of books, magazines, and schoolwork.

The boys are in the hallway.

JOSH (O.S.)
So, you've really never dated anybody?

AYATO (O.S.)
I did. In middle school. She broke up with me on Valentine's Day.

They enter Josh's room.

JOSH
Shit, really?

Ayato nods.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

Ayato noticed a stack of papers on the "available" chair.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Just push them off.

Ayato does just that and has a seat. Josh reclines on the bed.

AYATO
I thought her best friend made her do it and I kind of freaked out on her.

JOSH
(joking)
Uh huh...uh, maybe I shouldn't be setting you up with Maya.

AYATO

Yeah, thanks. I've got such great prospects now. I'm pansexual as far as Rachel's concerned--not that we'd ever, but really it's just Orin, and I'm not a fag, so that's kind of a problem.

JOSH

Dude, don't say fag. My kid brother's gay.

AYATO

Oh, sorry.

Josh rubs his own knee a few times, roughly.

JOSH

No, sorry, I was lying. I have an older brother and he's kind of a dick. But really, where would we be if it weren't for the cock suckers?

Ayato holds his stomach to keep in a nervous laugh, but finds himself mostly unsuccessful.

AYATO

I have no idea what you're talking about.

JOSH

Everybody needs a blow job. Your friends need a blow job, your Dad needs a blow job, and you, obviously, *really* need a blow job.

Ayato crosses his legs in an acceptable, masculine way, and puts his hands in his lap.

AYATO

Are you suggesting I let Orin?

JOSH

No! Not unless you want to, anyway.

AYATO

I definitely do not.

JOSH

Well, there are a limited number of people in the world who are ready and willing to put a penis in their mouth so you ought to be accepting, or at least tolerant.

AYATO

Do you give this speech to everyone who says "fag"?

JOSH

I usually don't have to.

Ayato, uncomfortable, is unsure of how to respond. He defaults to an apology.

AYATO

Sorry.

JOSH

Live and learn.

A door shuts loudly beneath them.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Oh, Dad's home.

Josh looks around the room.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Can you hide in the closet, for a little bit?

AYATO

(confused)

What?

JOSH

Sometimes he doesn't like when I bring new people home without telling him and he gets kind of angry, so just in case, can you go hide while I make sure?

AYATO

Uh, okay?

JOSH

Thanks!

Josh escorts Ayato into the closet and shuts the door.

INT. JOSH'S HOUSE, JOSH'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Ayato looks through the cracks in the door as Josh hurries out of the room.

A few moments pass before he hears yelling from below.

Ayato, meanwhile, looks around the closet. It's mostly full of shirts and shoeboxes. He opens one of them and finds a pair of shoes.

Ayato sits and waits a little longer before deciding to open another shoebox. Inside the next one is an array of letters. He closes the box and puts it back, waiting for Josh to return. After sitting uncomfortable for a few moments longer, Josh opens the closet door.

JOSH
You have to leave.

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE - EVENING

Ayato brushes off his pants. There's a twig in his hair and various greenery clings to his clothing.

He begins to unlock the front door when his father (DUNOIR) approaches from the other side and prompts him to wait.

DUNOIR (THROUGH DOOR)
I thought you weren't home for dinner tonight.

Ayato enters.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ayato and Dunoir walk into the kitchen.

DUNOIR
I thought you weren't home for dinner tonight.

AYATO
Change of plans.

Dunoir flicks his finger at Ayato's head.

DUNOIR
You've got a twig.

Ayato steps back to evade the flicking and swipes the twig away.

AYATO
(bothered)
Thanks.

DUNOIR

Call your sisters to come and eat.

AYATO

Okay.

Ayato heads towards the other room to get his sisters when Dunoir interrupts.

DUNOIR

Oh, that kid called for you three times.

Ayato turns around.

AYATO

Who?

DUNOIR

I think his name is Orin?

AYATO

Yeah, great, thanks.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The family is sitting at the dinner table to eat. Sole has engaged everyone but her brother, Ayato.

SOLE

And then Ms. Dorsett pulled the turtle out and it was dead.

CAMILLA

Did you have a funeral?

SOLE

No, we just threw it over the fence.

CAMILLA

Your teacher let you do that?

SOLE

No, some boys got to it while it was in a shoe box on her desk. It was okay 'cause it smelled bad.

CAMILLA

Oh, that's lovely, honey.

Camilla turns to Ayato.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)

So, Ayato, how was your day?

Ayato is busy picking at his food and ignoring his family.

AYATO

Fine.

CAMILLA

Fine like you're annoyed that I'm asking or fine like some girl in your class?

AYATO

Nobody says that anymore.

CAMILLA

How is your painting coming along? The one for the contest?

Dunoir lifts his fork.

DUNOIR

Yes! While I was snooping today I saw a painting in your room. Looks good.

AYATO

Dad, the canvas is practically blank.

DUNOIR

So? You're the artist. What do I know?

AYATO

I don't think I'm going to submit anything this year.

CAMILLA

Why not? You're so talented.

Ayato continues to pick at his food, looking away from his family.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Ayato, you're being rude!

Ayato looks up.

AYATO

Excuse me?

His family looks at him strangely, as they cannot hear the voice.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Go to your room. I want to speak with you in private.

AYATO

Whatever.

Ayato clears his plate and heads into his room.

DUNOIR

He has been strange lately, no?

Camilla shakes her head.

CAMILLA

Perhaps he's upset with me, again.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ayato sits on his bed and crosses his arms like a frustrated child.

AYATO

I don't know why I'm hearing things, but this has to stop.

The room is silent.

AYATO (CONT'D)

I-I am perfectly normal. I am *perfectly* normal.

Ayato gets up and paces.

As he speaks, his nerves create a mumble.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Okay, I have control over this.

WOMAN'S VOICE

No, you don't.

Ayato trips over his feet and falls backward. He catches himself half way.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Listen to me. I am not in your head.

Ayato shakes his head violently from side to side.

AYATO

She's not real. She's not real.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You have to trust me, Ayato, you have to listen.

Ayato shakes in his fallen position, scared and silent.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Forget I said anything at all.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - MORNING

Ayato wakes up to his alarm and flies out of bed.

EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - LATER

Rachel walks over to the car, annoyed.

RACHEL

You're late again! You're always late!

She takes her backpack off, quickly throws it in the back seat, and gets in the car.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato is driving to school. He's put no thought into his appearance and still hasn't showered. A shave wouldn't hurt either.

Rachel is checking her hair and possibly make up in the mirror.

AYATO

So...are we still on for fondue and movies tonight?

Rachel turns to him.

RACHEL

Yeah, for sure.

AYATO

Did you get your homework done okay?

RACHEL

Yeah. I'm gonna kill Mr. Brader, but yeah, it's done.

Rachel yawns.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 (while yawning)
 I'm...a little tired.

AYATO
 I hear ya.

INT. SCHOOL, HOMEROOM - LATER

The homeroom congregates and Theresa (the Dean) reads the bulletin.

THERESA
 Mr. Bukowsky has installed video cameras in the administration hallway, so whoever is leaving half eaten sandwiches under his door is likely to be caught.

Orin is sitting next to Ayato and does little more than stare.

THERESA (CONT'D)
 (lethargic)
 Also, Tuesday is spirit day, so show your school spirit by wearing school colors. Bear-related apparel is also acceptable, and feel free to be creative.

INT. SCHOOL, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Orin walks with Ayato closely. Ayato is too aware of his proximity and attempts to move over, but Orin continues to stay near. Once Ayato begins to brush up against a wall, Orin speaks.

ORIN
 Can I talk to you about something?

Ayato looks down at Orin into his hopeful eyes.

AYATO
 (definitive)
 No.

INT. SCHOOL, DRAWING STUDIO - DAY

The class draws an assortment of still life from easels.

Ayato, on the other hand, has positioned himself on the floor, very close to the objects.

He is interrupted when he hears the movement of easels behind him. Before he can look to see what the commotion is, Josh plops down beside him.

JOSH
Hi.

AYATO
Hi.

Ayato doesn't look away from the still life.

JOSH
I hope you weren't freaked out about yesterday.

AYATO
No, it's fine.

JOSH
Yeah, I'm sorry about that.

AYATO
It's okay.

JOSH
Can I make it up to you this weekend? Sunday won't work but I've got Saturday free.

AYATO
Yeah, sure.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Wait, shoot.

JOSH
What?

AYATO
I've got this sort-of family thing...

JOSH
What do you mean?

AYATO
You know I'm adopted, right?

JOSH
No.

AYATO

Yeah, well everyone in my family is, and we get together with a bunch of other families with adopted kids, and we sit around and pretend we're not bored.

Luke walks by and stops behind Josh.

LUKE

Josh, don't bug Ayato. Start drawing.

JOSH

Sorry.

Josh scribbles on the page while talking in a whisper.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Can I come?

AYATO

You don't want to come.

JOSH

Everyone likes to come.

Ayato laughs.

AYATO

There is something seriously wrong with you.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Ayato and Rachel toss their bags into the backseat of Ayato's car.

AYATO

You know, now that I think about it, you've never come to a "family" get-together.

RACHEL

Yeah, that's 'cause they're fucking boring.

AYATO

If he keeps this up, Rachel, he'll be encroaching on best-friend territory.

Rachel rolls her eyes.

RACHEL

Please. He doesn't love you like I do.

Ayato smiles.

AYATO

Shut up.

In the distance, Orin is running over to catch them.

ORIN

Wait!

Ayato turns to Rachel.

AYATO

You've got to be kidding me.

RACHEL

How would I be kidding you?

AYATO

Not you.

Ayato points at Orin with his elbow.

Orin slows his pace as he reaches Ayato and Rachel. He's breathing short and fast.

ORIN

Ayato, I have to talk to you right now.
It can't wait.

AYATO

Yes it can. It can definitely wait.

ORIN

I love you, Ayato.

Rachel giggles and quickly covers her mouth to hide it.

Ayato shoots her a nasty glance.

ORIN (CONT'D)

I love you. I've always loved you, and I
want to be with you forever.

Rachel grabs her stomach and slaps the car, unable to keep herself from laughing.

AYATO

Rachel, stop it. You're going to scratch
the paint.

Rachel tries to contain herself, but she's unsuccessful.
Orin is on the verge of tears.

ORIN
I...I should go.

Ayato reaches out his hand, but it quickly drops back to his side.

AYATO
That's probably a good idea.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato's already on the highway and Rachel is staring at him.

AYATO
Don't tell me you've turned into him too.

Rachel looks away.

RACHEL
Please. I just think you should talk about it.

AYATO
I don't want to talk about it!

RACHEL
Come on! It's not a big deal. Very little in life is a big deal.

AYATO
I just need a minute.

RACHEL
You said that five minutes ago.

AYATO
Well, I need a long minute!

RACHEL
Yeah, yeah, okay.

AYATO
He's not even a good friend. How can he be in love with me? Why isn't a girl in love with me? If there was a girl in love with me, she'd probably have a penis! This is what my luck is, Rachel.

Rachel bursts into laughter.

RACHEL
(jovial)
I thought you didn't want to talk.

Ayato laughs.

AYATO
Yeah, right, forget it.

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Fondue is cooking in a double boiler on the stove.

Rachel is slicing up French bread into cubes.

RACHEL
Well, he didn't really present the idea to you in the best environment. I mean, what kind of kid confesses his love in front of someone else? Hasn't it been, and won't it always be, a private endeavor?

AYATO
That's what I thought. Maybe I should give him a call and apologize. He's not a bad kid and I should have said something and maybe he'll lay off if I just talk to him about it.

RACHEL
Well, you can give it a try.

Rachel scoops the bread cubes into a bowl and puts the bowl on a tray.

Ayato walks over to the phone on the wall and dials Orin's number.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You memorized his number? No wonder he's in love with you.

AYATO
I memorized yours too. It's not that hard to remember a phone num--

Ayato is cut off when someone picks up on the other end. He hear's Josh's voice through the telephone.

JOSH
 Kanefsky residence, Josh speaking, how
 may I direct your call?

AYATO
 Josh?

JOSH
 Yeah?

AYATO
 It's Ayato.

JOSH
 Oh, hey! What's up?

AYATO
 I called for Orin. Since when did you
 know him?

JOSH
 I don't know, like, since sometime last
 year, I think.

Rachel walks over to Ayato.

RACHEL
 (whispering)
 What is Josh doing at Orin's?

AYATO
 (mouthing)
 I don't know.

JOSH (THROUGH PHONE)
 (whispering)
 Can I whisper too?

AYATO
 (whispering)
 Sorry.
 (stops whispering)
 I mean, sorry.

JOSH
 Okay.

AYATO
 Okay. Well, I'll see you Saturday.

Ayato hangs up the phone.

AYATO (CONT'D)

That was weird.

RACHEL

I didn't know they were friends.

AYATO

I didn't know Josh had a lot of friends.

RACHEL

Well, Orin's an easy target.

AYATO

Lay off him. I think you've caused that kid enough trauma for one day.

Rachel fetches the tray of fondue and bread.

RACHEL

Please.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

It's Saturday morning and Ayato is ready to head out. He looks better than usual. It appears he's showered and dressed in nicer, clean clothing.

Camilla enters and halts him in his tracks.

CAMILLA

Ayato, I need you to run an errand for me. I'm in such a rush today getting things ready.

AYATO

What is it? I have to go get Josh.

CAMILLA

I just need you to run by the Farmer's Market.

AYATO

Aw, Mom...

Camilla slides over some money.

CAMILLA

There will be a little left over.

Ayato takes the money and Camilla hands him a list.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)

I owe you one! Thanks!

I/E. CAR / MODERATELY POPULATED STREET - LATER

Ayato pulls up to the street corner and rolls down the window while Josh is swinging himself around a lamppost.

AYATO

Hey! Josh!

Josh notices him and runs over to the car.

Before Ayato notices, Josh is sitting beside him.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato pulls up under a highway bridge and turns to Josh.

AYATO

Sorry, I forgot to tell you--we need to make a stop here. Mother's orders.

JOSH

Is this the Farmer's Market?

AYATO

Yeah.

JOSH

Neat.

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Ayato and Josh enter the market, which flourishes beneath a highway bridge. Most people sell edible goods, but a few have an inventory of hand-made jewelry.

Ayato searches his pocket.

JOSH

So...what are we here for?

AYATO

That's a good question. I can't seem to find the list.

Ayato pulls a piece of paper from his pocket.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Never mind.

Josh leans over Ayato to see what the list has to say.
Ayato almost falls as a result.

JOSH

Sorry.

AYATO

It's a bunch of flowers. Really morbid
colors, too.

Ayato points to the right and the boys change course.

JOSH

Can I get sunflower?

AYATO

You can do whatever you want.

JOSH

No, you don't get it. I don't have any
money.

AYATO

You want me to buy you a sunflower?

Josh is as responsive as a little puppy dog.

JOSH

Yeah!

AYATO

Well, my mom gave me some extra money...

JOSH

No problem, then.

INT. CAR - LATER

The back seat of the car is filled with a funereal
assortment of flowers.

Josh is happily occupied with his very own, extra large
sunflower.

Ayato is busy finding his way back home.

AYATO

Just don't get it on the car.

JOSH
I'll do my best.

AYATO
I'm really sorry about dragging you
along.

JOSH
I got my prize.

Ayato raises an eyebrow.

AYATO
Okay?

JOSH
So you've been talking to Maya a lot, I
hear.

AYATO
Did she talk about me?

JOSH
Yeah. She said you talked almost every
day this week.

Ayato is abashed. He nods.

AYATO
Should I ask her out?

JOSH
She's not very social.

AYATO
Oh, okay.

JOSH
Well, I'll talk to her for you, okay?

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Ayato and Josh struggle to carry the remainder of the
flowers inside.

They put them on the kitchen table with the rest.

Camilla smiles.

CAMILLA
Oh, that's nice. I really appreciate
your help, Ayato...and the new one.

JOSH

I'm Josh.

CAMILLA

It's good to meet you, Josh. Are you staying for the fun today?

JOSH (TO AYATO)

Am I?

CAMILLA

Don't ask him. He doesn't know.

JOSH

Well, I sort of invited myself, so yeah.

CAMILLA

Good, I made too much food.

Ayato leads Josh towards his room.

JOSH

Nice to meet you...Ayato's mom!

CAMILLA

Camilla, honey.

JOSH

Okay, cool.

CAMILLA

Yes, *cool*.

The boys disappear into Ayato's room. As Camilla begins to organize the flowers, Ayato peaks his head out.

AYATO

Mom?

CAMILLA

Yeah?

AYATO

What are all the flowers for?

CAMILLA

Uncle Carlos is out of jail.

Ayato feels a quick rush of air and closes his mouth to catch it. He finds himself completely off-guard.

AYATO

Oh...

Ayato recedes into his room and Camilla goes back to work.

A few seconds later, she's interrupted again when Ayato pokes his head out.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Mom?

Camilla is fairly peeved.

CAMILLA

Yes?

AYATO

The chi--

CAMILLA

(firm)

Yes, Ayato.

Ayato is about to slip back into his room when another question enters his mind.

AYATO

Mo--

CAMILLA

(angry)

Yes, you do. And you'll be polite, too.
I don't want to hear another word about it!

Ayato slips back into his room.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

JOSH

What's wrong?

AYATO

It's nothing.

Ayato turns around to see Josh staring at his painting.

AYATO (CONT'D)

How'd you find that?

JOSH

I pulled the sheet off.

Josh lifts up the purple cloth formerly draped over the painting.

AYATO

Oh.

JOSH

Is this Maya? It looks like her, from behind anyway.

The painting is of a young girl in a dress, standing on a hill. It is half finished.

AYATO

Maybe. I was thinking about her when I started it, so it may as well be.

JOSH

Well, it's really good! I didn't know you were this good. We should do something together sometime. We could make a really cool painting.

AYATO

Together? I don't know if I could work with someone else...it's very private for me.

The doorbell RINGS.

AYATO (CONT'D)

They're here already? What time is it?

JOSH

Okay, promise me you won't get mad...

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

POV: Ayato, as he opens the door where Orin stands on the other side.

Josh bites his lip and smiles, holding his hands behind his back.

ORIN

Uh, hi.

AYATO

Hi.

JOSH

Hey Orin, what's up?

Orin looks at his feet.

ORIN

Not much.

JOSH

You know, I've found that you don't really need to answer "what's up" because most people don't expect a response. You just say "hey", or "what's up" again, but you don't really have to answer.

Ayato looks at Josh and shakes his head.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Sorry. This is awkward, isn't it?

ORIN

No, it's okay. I, well...

AYATO

I'm going to go see if my dad needs help on the grill. Why don't you two talk for a little bit or something...

Ayato shuffles past Josh and heads out of the kitchen.

Josh shrugs.

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Ayato's yard is large. To the left is a swimming pool, to the right is a grill, and smack in the middle are a few out door tables, complete with umbrellas.

Dunoir is busy preparing the meat.

AYATO

Hi Dad.

DUNOIR

It's not time to eat yet.

AYATO

I know. I thought I'd see if you needed any help.

DUNOIR

What about your friends?

AYATO

They're fine.

DUNOIR
Don't worry about the food. Am I good
cook, yeah?

AYATO
Yeah.

DUNOIR
You have a problem?

And all of the sudden, the voice returns.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Who can you talk to?

AYATO
(definitive)
Rachel.

DUNOIR
What did she do?

Ayato shakes his head.

AYATO
Nothing, I'll be right back.

Dunoir returns to his meat and Ayato runs back into the house.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, CEDAR CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato is cramped beneath rows of coats in a closet. He holds a cordless phone to his ear, tapping his fingers against it.

He can hear the DIAL TONE.

He speaks softly.

AYATO
Pick up, pick up...

RACHEL (THROUGH PHONE)
Hello?

AYATO
You need to come over *right now*.

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - LATER

The front yard is enormous. The edges are lined with apple trees.

Ayato is playing a board game with Josh and Orin, sitting up tight and very rigid.

ORIN

Ooh, I got a green one!

Josh raises his hand.

JOSH

High five!

Ayato looks across the yard to the street as a figure bikes alongside it.

Ayato stands up.

AYATO

Rachel's here!

JOSH

For the third time?

Ayato runs down the path to greet her.

AYATO

Hey, Rachel! You made it!

Ayato reaches the end of the path and nearly yanks Rachel off her bike.

She seems sleepy.

RACHEL

Yeah, this better be good.

AYATO

Did I...?

RACHEL

Yes, yes you did wake me up.

AYATO

It's one in the afternoon.

RACHEL

That's right.

Rachel and Ayato walk back towards the house. In the distance, Josh and Orin are standing up, waiting for them.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Who's that?

AYATO
Josh and Orin.

Rachel grabs Ayato's wrist.

AYATO (CONT'D)
(nervous)
And guess who else is coming.

RACHEL
Who?

AYATO
Uncle Carlos.

RACHEL
The child m--

AYATO
Yep.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Camilla is rushing all over the kitchen as a conglomeration of races cycle through. Everyone's heading toward the back yard, except one young man.

His hair is cut short and he's well dressed in pair of slacks and a white button-down shirt. He might pass for a younger, male Camilla. This is UNCLE CARLOS, all of twenty-four years old.

UNCLE CARLOS
Camilla!

Camilla smiles, giving the boy a good look.

CAMILLA
Carlos!

She runs to him with open arms, and they embrace.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
I am so glad you're back. Oh, I've missed you.

Carlos steps back and looks Camilla up and down.

UNCLE CARLOS
Sis, you look great.

CAMILLA
You are still young as ever. So thin,
like a twig.

UNCLE CARLOS
You flatter me.

As Camilla turns to grab a platter of fruit, she notices Ayato hiding in the doorway.

CAMILLA
Ayato, come here and say hello to your
uncle.

Ayato runs off.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

Camilla chases after her son.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ayato walks into the next room as Camilla follows him through yet another open doorway.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, PIANO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ayato walks towards the piano and begins to turn into the hallway as Camilla catches up.

CAMILLA
Ayato, stop it right now! You are acting
like a child.

Ayato is silent.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
Go and apologize to your Uncle Carlos, or
Rachel is leaving.

Dunoir enters with an empty tray filled with the remnants of meat.

DUNOIR
What's going on?

CAMILLA

Nothing.

DUNOIR

Is your brother here?

CAMILLA

I forgot to take out the fruit.

Camilla recedes into the living room, leaving Dunoir and Ayato to themselves.

Dunoir looks at his son.

DUNOIR

You let me know if there is a problem.

Ayato nods, silently.

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - LATER

Orin is enjoying a big, juicy hot dog. So is Josh.

Ayato is eating chicken, and Rachel, a hamburger.

AYATO

Hey...um...

The group looks up towards him.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Sorry if I'm being weird today.

Josh smiles.

Rachel seems concerned.

Orin makes his best effort to ignore the situation.

JOSH

You're weird every day.

AYATO

Yeah...I guess...

RACHEL

Are you okay?

AYATO

I'm fine. I need to talk to you guys about something.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Ayato, you're running out of time.

Ayato puts his plate to his side and stands up.

AYATO

We should go inside.

As he stands up and turns, he finds himself facing Uncle Carlos.

UNCLE CARLOS

(friendly)

Hey, Ayato. Sorry we didn't get to talk earlier.

Ayato's friends watch the show.

AYATO

T-that's fine. Um...

UNCLE CARLOS

Are these your friends?

AYATO

Yeah. This is Rachel, Orin, and Josh.

While Rachel and Orin get it, Josh appears oblivious to the tension.

JOSH

Why am I last?

AYATO

I was just going to--

UNCLE CARLOS

Get some more food? Would you grab me another hot dog?

Uncle Carlos hands Ayato his plate.

AYATO

No. I'm not going to get food.

Ayato heads toward the house.

His friends, feeling uncomfortable, get up and follow.

Uncle Carlos takes Orin's seat.

Orin looks back at Uncle Carlos and stops as Rachel and Josh head into the house.

RACHEL
Orin, come on.

Orin turns to Rachel.

ORIN
I'll be there in a minute.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato is sitting on the carpet as Josh and Rachel take a seat.

AYATO
Where's Orin?

Rachel bites her lip.

RACHEL
He said he'd just be a minute.

AYATO
Did he say why? You can't just leave him out there with that pervert.

JOSH
What pervert?

AYATO
My Uncle Carlos.

RACHEL
Do you want me to go get him?

JOSH
Why's he a pervert?

Ayato crawls over to a large window, covered in shades. He pokes his head underneath and looks into the backyard.

RACHEL
What's going on?

Ayato pulls his head out.

AYATO
Damn it.

RACHEL
What?

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato opens the door to the backyard and looks around.

Orin and Uncle Carlos are talking near the food.

Ayato yells to Orin

AYATO

Orin, what are you doing?

Orin yells back.

ORIN

Nothing, I'll be there in a minute!

AYATO

I need to talk to you *now*.

Orin turns to Uncle Carlos and speaks inaudibly. Carlos shakes his head and smiles. Orin sets down his food and runs over to Ayato.

ORIN

You know, you have an awful lot of time to talk when you have something to say, Ayato. I'll be in when I'm ready.

Orin runs off, back to his food.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato walks down the hall, toward his room, when he's stopped by his father.

DUNOIR

Where are you friends?

AYATO

Dad, will you keep an eye on Orin?

DUNOIR

Sure. He is the skinny one?

AYATO

In the red shirt.

DUNOIR

You have a problem?

AYATO
He's talking to Uncle Carlos.

DUNOIR
I see.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS
Josh and Rachel are sitting on the carpet, talking.

RACHEL
What does she do?

JOSH
She's a construction worker, actually.

RACHEL
Right, so she must be busy a lot. Does she work weekends?

JOSH
Sometimes.

Ayato enters.

AYATO
My dad's keeping an eye on him.

RACHEL
Good. So Josh was just telling me about Maya. You're going on a date and you didn't even tell me?

AYATO
I am?

Josh nods.

JOSH
I talked to her and she said you can come shopping with us tomorrow.

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - EVENING

As the get-together draws to a close, guests head out to their cars. Rachel and Ayato sit on the steps, watching the sun set.

RACHEL
Ayato, I don't know exactly how to make sense of this.

AYATO
What do you mean?

RACHEL
That girl Josh set you up with.

AYATO
Maya?

RACHEL
Yeah.

AYATO
Yeah, I think I know what you're talking about.

RACHEL
Does she seem...
(laughs nervously)
...real, to you?

AYATO
I guess I'll find out tomorrow.

Josh is suddenly behind them.

JOSH
I'm all ready to go!

Rachel stands up.

RACHEL
All right, Ayato, I'll see you Monday.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Josh is up front with Ayato as they pull into his driveway.

Josh unbuckles his seat belt.

JOSH
I'll meet you at the mall tomorrow. Maya says to get there around noon.

Ayato nods and Josh jumps out of the car.

JOSH (CONT'D)
See ya!

Josh runs up to his house, forgetting to close the car door. Ayato shuts it for him and sighs.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm going to be very specific with you.

AYATO

Please leave me alone.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I just want you to listen. If you listen to me, I'll go away.

AYATO

No, just leave me alone!

WOMAN'S VOICE

I promise you, you're not ill. I can prove it.

Ayato is silent. He pulls out of Josh's drive way.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

My name is Teena Oparistaya. Instead of going to your home, come to mine.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LATER

Ayato pulls up in front of a small home and exits the car.

TEENA

Go to the door and ask for me. Don't let her shut you out.

AYATO

You said you lived here.

TEENA

She'll take care of things for you.

Ayato walks up to the door and knocks.

TEENA (CONT'D)

She's not going to hear you if you knock like that.

Ayato knocks louder.

TEENA (CONT'D)

I have to go. You're on your own. Don't leave!

From behind the door, there are footsteps.

AYATO

What?

The door opens, and an old woman stands on the other side in a flowery dress. She's in good health for her age and speaks with a mild Japanese accent. This is KAEDE.

KAEDE

Hello? Do I know you?

AYATO

I'm looking for, uh, Teena Oparistaya.

KAEDE

Hold on a moment.

Kaede tries to shut the door but Ayato puts his foot inside.

AYATO

May I come in?

INT. KAEDE'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The home is floral-patterned and cozy. Two large chairs face a sofa, with a coffee table between them. The kitchen is up and to the left, and an unlit fireplace to the right.

Kaede walks Ayato into the living room and heads towards the kitchen.

AYATO

Should I sit down?

Kaede turns to him and nods.

From the doorway, Ayato can see her using the phone on the wall in the kitchen.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Who are you calling?

Kaede turns to Ayato and shushes him.

KAEDE

Moshimoshi?

Ayato stretches his legs out and watches Kaede.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Teena.

Pause.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
Netteimasuka?

Kaede scrunches her face.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
(angry)
Kuso!

Kaede spits.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
Ima koko ni ano onnanohito o
tsuretekimashou.
(pause)
Hai, ima!
(pause)
Arigatou.

Kaede hangs up the phone.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
Bakayarou...

Kaede leaves the kitchen and heads towards Ayato, making herself pleasant.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, your name.

AYATO
Watashi wa Ayato.

KAEDE
I am Kaede.

Ayato bows his head in a nod.

AYATO
Yoroshiku onegaishimasu.

KAEDE
Nihongo wo hanasu ka?

AYATO
Not well enough to communicate.

KAEDE
Too bad. English is a dead fish.

Kaede has a seat on the couch.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
What do you want with Teena?

AYATO
She asked me to come here.

KAEDE
That girl is trouble.

AYATO
You're telling me...

Kaede laughs.

KAEDE
Ayato, tell me what you do.

AYATO
I go to high school.

KAEDE
No, what do you like?

AYATO
Art. I'm an artist. I like to paint.

Kaede nods.

KAEDE
Yes, that is why she likes you.

AYATO
What do you mean?

KAEDE
You are not the first boy she has spoken to. I apologize on her behalf. She does not listen to my advice.

Ayato sits up straight and leans forward.

AYATO
Really? She gets mad at me when I don't listen to her.

KAEDE
That girl, she thinks she is always right, but this time she is wrong again.

Kaede sighs.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
Why did you come here, Ayato?

AYATO
Because Teena told me to.

KAEDE
No...that is not true.

AYATO
I want to be normal.

KAEDE
And how does this make you normal?

AYATO
If she's real, then I'm not crazy.

Ayato's head begins to sink as he breathes.

KAEDE
Let me ask you one question.

Ayato looks up.

AYATO
Okay.

KAEDE
Two questions, maybe.

Ayato nods.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
If you believe in something, like a voice
in your mind, and you hurt someone
because of it, are you...you say,
"crazy"?

AYATO
Yes.

KAEDE
Why?

AYATO
Because you hurt someone.

KAEDE
Now question two. If you believe in
something, like a voice in your mind, are
you crazy?

Ayato hesitates.

AYATO
Y...yes.

KAEDE
Why?

AYATO
Because it isn't real.

KAEDE
How do you know it is not real?

AYATO
I'm not sure how to answer that.

KAEDE
Is it only real if you can prove it is
real?

AYATO
I-I don't know.

Kaede smiles.

KAEDE
There. You have, now, something to think
about.

She stands.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
Would you like some tea?

INT. KAEDE'S HOME, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The kitchen is yellow. Storage is everywhere and seating
isn't, besides a wooden chair near the phone.

Ayato leans against the wall while Kaede is busy
rummaging through drawers near the stove.

KAEDE
It wasn't Japanese, your upbringing?

AYATO
No, not really.

KAEDE
Your father, he married an American?

AYATO
I was adopted when I was six.

Kaede lights the stove and, very nearly, her hand. She laughs.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Kaede smiles and bobs her head left and right, never looking at Ayato.

She places a pot over the fire.

KAEDE

I'm just dandy.

Kaede laughs at her dialect's turn to the American South.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

You have Sencha before?

AYATO

I don't know.

KAEDE

Roast tea.

Kaede begins pouring water into the pot.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

It's bad for the pot, to not have water in it, when the flame is lit.

Ayato bites the left side of his lip.

Kaede turns to Ayato.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Do not tell anyone I did this.

Kaede chuckles to herself.

Ayato smiles and nods.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

So you are estranged.

AYATO

What?

KAEDE

From your family, you are estranged.

AYATO

I get along with my dad all right, but my mom, yeah.

KAEDE

No, you do not understand.

AYATO

Sorry.

KAEDE

Do not apologize for this.

AYATO

Okay.

KAEDE

Okay is better, but not great. I was asking if you know your family...your original family.

AYATO

My birth parents?

KAEDE

Yes, your birth parents.

AYATO

Not really. My birth mother died a few years after I was adopted and I don't ever remember seeing my father.

Kaede stops for a moment.

KAEDE

Why don't you like your mother?

AYATO

My birth mother?

KAEDE

No, your real mother.

AYATO

I don't not like her.

KAEDE

Double negative.

AYATO

Sorry.

KAEDE
Stop apologizing.

AYATO
Okay.

KAEDE
This "okay"...I think you are weak.

AYATO
My mother says that.

The doorbell rings. Kaede throws her arms up.

KAEDE
Watch the pot!

She runs into the other room to answer the door. It's
TEENA.

TEENA (O.S.)
Kusobaba!

KAEDE (O.S.)
(jovial)
Bukkoroshite yaru zo, Teena!

TEENA (O.S.)
Is he here?

KAEDE (O.S.)
Anohito o deitoshinai-yo.

Teena hurries into the kitchen. As she enters, Ayato
looks only at the pot.

From the back of her, she resembles nearly every detail
in Ayato's painting.

TEENA
You are Ayato, huh?

Ayato looks up, somewhat surprised to see a familiar
image. She is beautiful young woman at 17.

AYATO
You really are in my head, I think.

TEENA
I can't believe you actually came.

Kaede pushes her way past Teena and over to the pot.

KAEDE

Go talk! I am making tea!

INT. KAEDE'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato's back on the chair while Teena sits on the couch.

Teena rubs her legs.

TEENA

I'm not exactly sure where to start.

AYATO

Really? Kaede says you've done this before.

TEENA

I've made mistakes before. I'm sure you're the right one, this time.

Ayato sits up and looks straight at her.

AYATO

Teena, I am not sure whether or not to feel renewed and amazed or just really scared right now. I need you to talk. Tonight I am going to listen, because honestly, I don't really know what else to do at this point.

Teena fidgets.

TEENA

You're right. I need to start somewhere so I should probably tell you why you're at my grandmother's house. My mother died when I was born and I was adopted by a family about half a mile down the road from here. Grandma didn't live here then, but she moved to the states when she heard what happened.

AYATO

Where is this going?

TEENA

I thought you were going to listen.

AYATO

You're right, go ahead.

Teena nods.

TEENA

I guess you can put the pieces together yourself, but I think you're my brother.

Ayato puts his hands in his face.

AYATO

This isn't good...

TEENA

It's okay. A lot of people find me attractive.

AYATO

That's not what I'm talking about.

TEENA

Don't be stupid. I know what you're thinking, remember?

AYATO

No, you don't. I do think you're cute, but I can't be your brother.

TEENA

Why?

AYATO

You've got to be about my age. My mother died when I was six and yours died when you were born.

TEENA

I see. When I saw your face, I was sure it was you.

Teena stands up and heads toward the kitchen.

AYATO

Where are you going?

TEENA

To help Grandma with the tea. You should go.

Ayato stands up and grabs her arm.

AYATO

Wait a minute! I'm not going anywhere until you explain what's going on!

Teena looks down at Ayato's hand, holding her arm. She turns to him and smiles.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - MORNING

Ayato slowly opens his eyes. The phone is RINGING.