

La Maladie du Sommeil

by
Adam Dachis

198 Tremont Street, #321
Boston, MA 02116
(612) 730-5003

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

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 - SISTERS' BEDROOM

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

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 couldn't reach you earlier. 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 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 BEDROOM

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 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 BATHROOM - LATER

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

INT. AYATO'S BEDROOM - LATER

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

INT. AYATO'S 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

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 BEDROOM

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

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 - LATER

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 - 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 - 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 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 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 approaches from the other side, waving his hands. Ayato stops.

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

Ayato enters and Dunoir walks him into the kitchen.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The table is set with crooked forks and knives. Plates and napkins are colorful and food is in the background, ready to be served.

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

AYATO
Change of plans.

Dunior 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.

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 - 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.

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?

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 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 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...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)

I'm...a little tired.

AYATO

I hear ya.

INT. SCHOOL, HOMEROOM - LATER

The homeroom congregates as Theresa reads the bulletin.

THERESA

Mr. Bukowsky has installed video cameras in the administration hallway, so whoever is leaving half eaten sandwiches under his door will have to deal with me.

(sighs)

Honestly, you kids are Juniors. Don't do it. Don't make my job any harder.

Anyway...

Theresa lets out a breath.

Orin is busy staring at Ayato.

THERESA (CONT'D)

(lethargic)

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 - LATER

Orin walks with Ayato too closely. Ayato moves himself farther and farther to the left, but eventually hits a wall.

ORIN

Can I talk to you about something?

Ayato looks down into Orin's 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, sits on the floor, very close to the objects.

He is interrupted when he hears the movement of easels behind him. Before he can look and survey the commotion, 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 thinks.

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

Can we talk over there?

Orin points to a row of bushes.

AYATO

I'd rather not.

ORIN

Fine, then.

Orin hesitates and Ayato braces himself, emotionally.

ORIN (CONT'D)

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.

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? Isn't it generally 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

(whispering)

Can I whisper too?

AYATO

(whispering)

Sorry.

(MORE)

AYATO (CONT'D)
(stops whispering)
I mean, sorry.

JOSH
Okay.

AYATO
Okay. Well, I'll see you Saturday. So
can I talk to--

Josh hangs up the phone.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Okay. That was weird.

RACHEL
I didn't know they were friends.

AYATO
I didn't know Josh had friends.

RACHEL
Well, they're both nuts.

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 / 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 is a monotone rainbow that 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 ugly
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
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 driving.

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

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 BEDROOM

JOSH

What's wrong?

AYATO

It's nothing.

Ayato turns around to see Josh staring at his painting.

AYATO (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

JOSH

The sheet fell off.

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

AYATO

Sure it did.

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

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 - 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)
Josh thought Orin and I would make up if he just surprised me. Wasn't that nice? 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

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

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE - PIANO ROOM

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.

DUNOIR

Does the parole officer know?

Camilla begins to recede into the living room.

Dunoir becomes mired in a stiff, yet calm, anger.

DUNOIR (CONT'D)

Camilla! I do not want social services at our doorstep again!

But she is gone.

Dunoir looks at his son, settled.

DUNOIR (CONT'D)

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. Yes. 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 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 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.

From here on, the voice is referred to as TEENA.

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

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, but 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 BEDROOM - DAY

Ayato slowly opens his eyes. The phone is RINGING.

Someone is KNOCKING on the door.

DUNOIR (O.S.)

Ayato! Are you awake?

Ayato peels the covers away and slinks his feet to the
ground.

DUNOIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ayato! The phone is for you.

Dunoir hasn't answered the phone. It continues to RING.

Ayato puts on a shirt and heads to the door. Dunoir is no longer knocking.

DUNOIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Fantastic. Now we have voice mail.

Ayato can hear the muffled answering machine from the other room.

He finds a cordless telephone on the floor and picks it up. He presses talk and hears Josh rambling on the machine.

JOSH
Ayato, where are you? It's almost noon and I'm here early.

Ayato moans.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Hello?

AYATO
(raspy and tired)
Hi Josh.

JOSH
Hi Ayato.

AYATO
I'm going to be a little late. I just woke up.

JOSH
Jeez, when did you go to bed?

AYATO
That's a good question.

JOSH
Okay, well hurry up. I'll be in the food court.

Ayato disconnects the call and stiffly forces himself into the bathroom.

INT. CAR - LATER

Ayato is driving on the highway.

AYATO
I know you can hear me.

The car is silent.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Teena, I know you're there.

Still nothing.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Oh, come on!

Ayato hits the steering wheel.

AYATO (CONT'D)
This is why I'm crazy, Kaede. I am
hurting myself.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - FOOD COURT - LATER

Ayato enters, looking around.

Josh is waving in the distance, by himself, but Ayato
doesn't notice.

JOSH
Ayato, Ayato! Over here!

Ayato still doesn't notice. Josh gets up and runs after
him with a hamburger in his hand.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Ayato, are you deaf?

Ayato turns to see him.

AYATO
Sorry, I'm a little out of it.

JOSH
I'll say.

AYATO
Can I ask you a question?

Josh starts walking back to the table. A latent Ayato
follows.

JOSH
Yeah.

AYATO
Maya isn't coming, is she?

JOSH
She's just late, why?

AYATO
There's something weird about her I can't
put my finger on.

Josh rolls his eyes.

JOSH
You don't think she's real, do you? I
get that a lot.

AYATO
That's not it, exactly.

JOSH
What are you getting at?

Josh sits down at the table. Ayato nearly walks past it,
but Josh grabs his arm and stops him.

They look at each other as if energy is flowing between
them.

AYATO
I don't know how to put it. You're going
to think I'm nuts.

JOSH
I already think you're nuts.

Ayato sits.

AYATO
That doesn't help.

Josh smiles, almost viciously.

JOSH
What are you thinking? I know you have
something solid twirling around in your
head with those speculations.

AYATO
Have you met her before?

JOSH
Of course I've met her!

AYATO
I want you to tell me how you know her.
How did you meet?

JOSH
I don't think she'd want me to say.

AYATO
Josh, you need to tell me what's going on.

Josh looks away, scratching his neck a little too hard.
His eyes are shy but cold.

JOSH
It's a long story, but it ends with a bizarre pattern of communication...

Josh shifts in his seat and peers up at Ayato.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I want to show you something.

EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Ayato's car pulls up. He and Josh rush out and hurry into the house. It's damp outside.

INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - ENTRY WAY

Josh and Ayato run up the stairs and head into:

INT. JOSH'S ROOM

Ayato slows and sits on the floor while Josh hurries over to his closet.

JOSH
Come here!

Ayato, frustrated, gets up and ambles over to the closet.

Josh pulls out a number of shoeboxes and rifles through them.

When he finds the one he's looking for, he dumps the contents on the floor.

Opened letters fall everywhere.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Here, this is it.

Josh examines each letter carefully, but quickly, and ends up choosing one with a green stamp.

Josh is about to take the paper out, but stops.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Have you read these?

Ayato hesitates.

AYATO

N-no. Why?

JOSH

Are you sure?

AYATO

I saw them in the shoebox when I was in the closet but I didn't read them.

Josh sighs, relieved.

JOSH

Okay, good, because I noticed the box moved.

Josh removes the letter from the torn envelope.

JOSH (CONT'D)

This is a letter from the doctor.

AYATO

What doctor?

Josh is decidedly serious. He unwraps the letter and scans it as he talks.

JOSH

Maya and I share the same soul. She has no birth certificate because this doctor in hiding created her with biogenetic engineering. This is the first letter from the doctor that talks about it.

Josh shoves the letter in Ayato's face.

After pulling back and focusing, Ayato looks at the letter and makes a face. He takes the letter from Josh and gives it another look.

AYATO

Josh, did you write this, or...?

Josh curls around the letters and springs up behind Ayato.

He examines the writing.

JOSH
No, this one's the doctor's.

AYATO
Okay.

Ayato wets his lips with his tongue and bites down on the bottom.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Josh...how did this happen?

JOSH
Well, you can read the letter, but the doctor took my DNA when I was born and I don't understand the whole thing too well after that.

Ayato, again, hesitates.

AYATO
Um, would it be okay if I took it home with me?

Josh shakes his head.

JOSH
I'd rather you didn't. I don't want to lose it.

A cell phone is RINGING, playing Chopin's Marche Funèbre.

Ayato groans and reaches into his pocket.

AYATO
It's Orin.

Ayato opens the phone and puts it to his ear.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Hello?

Ayato sinks.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

INTERCUT: AYATO AND ORIN ON THE TELEPHONE

Orin is on his cell phone, leaning on his car, parked outside a donut shop.

His face is red and wet.

ORIN

No.

AYATO

What's wrong?

ORIN

My parents...

AYATO

Hold on, what are you talking about?

JOSH

What's he saying?

Ayato shushes Josh.

ORIN

Can I come over?

AYATO

I'm not home right now.

ORIN

When are you going to be home?

AYATO

If it's important, I can leave now.

ORIN

Yeah...

JOSH

Let me talk to him.

AYATO

Josh wants to talk to you.

ORIN

I don't want to talk right now...

Ayato covers the phone.

END INTERCUT.

AYATO

He says he doesn't want to talk.

JOSH
Just give me the phone.

Josh grabs the phone from Ayato, who struggles out of instinct but gives up very quickly.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Orin, what's wrong?

Josh gets up and starts to pace, frustrated.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Orin, you have to talk about stuff.

While Josh is distracted, Ayato notices the letter sitting out in the open and stuffs it in his pants.

Josh hears the rustling and turns around.

Ayato begins putting the letters back in the shoebox, as a distraction.

Josh quickly loses interest.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I'm going to be busy later. We talk about everything so just tell me.

Ayato motions for Josh to hang up.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Oh whatever.

Josh hangs up the phone without saying goodbye.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Here.

Josh extends his arm, offering up Ayato's phone.

They stare at each other.

Ayato grabs the phone.

AYATO
You never answered my question.

Josh shifts his weight.

AYATO (CONT'D)
How did you meet?

JOSH

She came to me in my head, saying she was my sister. She was sure of it.

INT. CAR - LATER

Now, it's raining outside. The air is filled with fog and Ayato drives with indiscretion.

He is proud.

AYATO

Teena! I know what's going on.

The car is silent.

AYATO (CONT'D)

You were trying to keep me away from him, weren't you? He knows...it's because he knows.

Ayato still receives no response.

AYATO (CONT'D)

You can ignore me all you want, but I get it now. Josh may be off his rocker, but I know what's going on.

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE - LATER

Ayato approaches the front door, shielding himself from the rain with his coat.

Orin is waiting outside.

ORIN

Hey.

Ayato looks up from his coat. He realizes he's underneath a sheltered area and removes it from his head.

AYATO

Hey.

INT. AYATO'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato is washing up in the bathroom. Orin sits on his bed, watching.

ORIN
This is...kind of an awkward thing to
bring up.

AYATO (O.S.)
What?

Ayato turns off the faucet.

ORIN
(louder)
I said this is awkward!

Ayato walks to the doorway and leans against it. He
scratches his stomach and remembers the letter.

ORIN (CONT'D)
What's that?

Ayato pulls the paper from his pants.

AYATO
It's nothing.

Orin falls back on the bed.

ORIN
Sure it's nothing.

Ayato walks himself over to his desk and picks up a
crumpled piece of paper.

INSERT: THE PAPER

"maya's screen name is drops8457 - don't
lose it, josh"

Ayato holds up the letter next to it.

INSERT: THE LETTER

"when you were just a baby. We named her
Maya as your mother said she wanted that
name. I know it wasn't your first
choice, but I'm sure you'll grow to love
her and"

The handwriting on both papers is identical--and quite
nice.

AYATO
Shit.

ORIN

Hello?

Ayato lowers the papers to his desk and turns to Orin.

AYATO

Sorry, I'm a little distracted.

Orin sighs.

ORIN

Don't apologize.

AYATO

Oka--

Ayato stops himself.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Tell me what's going on.

Orin sits up.

ORIN

Can you sit by me?

AYATO

I'd rather just stay here.

ORIN

Are you afraid I'm going to try something?

AYATO

I just don't want to give you the wrong idea.

Orin smiles.

ORIN

I know better.

AYATO

If it's all the same, I'm going to stand.

ORIN

So, can I see your painting? Is it finished?

Ayato stares at the ceiling and exhales.

AYATO
(impatient)
What did you want to talk about, Orin?

ORIN
My parents are being assholes.

Ayato bites his bottom lip and widens his eyes.

AYATO
(terse)
Okay.

ORIN
They won't let me hang out with Carlos
because he's older.

Ayato stares blankly.

Orin stares back, mildly offended.

ORIN (CONT'D)
Hello?

AYATO
What do you mean they won't let you hang
out with *Carlos*?

ORIN
What do *you* mean?

AYATO
Are you talking about my uncle?

ORIN
Yes.

AYATO
My uncle, the fucking pederast?

ORIN
What? No!

AYATO
Yeah. Are you that starved for
attention, Orin?

Orin stands, stiff and lost in himself.

ORIN
What are you talking about?

AYATO
I didn't want you, so you figured you'd
fuck my uncle?

ORIN
Ayato...what the hell?!

Orin looks away.

AYATO
I think you should go.

ORIN
(definitive)
Yeah.

Orin looks straight through Ayato, expressionless. He
heads for the door as Ayato watches.

ORIN (CONT'D)
Good luck with yourself.

The door slams shut. Papers fall off Ayato's desk from
the wind.

Ayato grunts.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato enters, strong-fisted.

On the couch, Camilla is wrapped in a blanket, staring at
a book. The lamps are far too dim for a comfortable
reading light.

AYATO
Why did you bring him here?

Camilla looks up at her angry, adopted son.

CAMILLA
Who?

AYATO
Your brother, the pederast!

CAMILLA
Don't call him that name.

AYATO
Well he is, *Mom!*

Camilla closes her book and sets it on the coffee table.

CAMILLA
He is family.

AYATO
No, Mom.

Ayato pushes air through his teeth.

AYATO (CONT'D)
I am family.

Ayato storms out of the room and into:

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

He walks over to the phone on the counter and picks up the receiver. He dials and lets his head fall against a cabinet.

A DIAL TONE can be heard.

Ayato grunts, impatient.

AYATO
Come on...

Someone answers.

RACHEL (THROUGH PHONE)
Hello?

AYATO
Rachel, I need you to meet me somewhere.

INTERCUT: AYATO AND RACHEL ON THE PHONE

Rachel sits on a stool in the kitchen, eating a sliced apple.

RACHEL
Sorry sir, but you've used up your emergency visit for this week.

AYATO
Rachel, really, it's important.

RACHEL
Why don't you come over here? I'm baby-sitting my sister.

Ayato puts a hand on his chest. Raspy and immediate, he continues.

AYATO

No, I can't. You have to come with me.

RACHEL

Are you okay?

AYATO

No, no, I'm not okay! That's the problem. I need to see you right now.

RACHEL

Ayato, I can't leave my sister alone. You have to compromise.

Ayato slams the phone down.

END INTERCUT.

He runs into:

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HIS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He grabs his car keys off his desk and quickly exits.

INT. AYATO'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ayato hurries down the hallway between his room and the kitchen, heading for the door.

He mutters under his breath.

EXT. AYATO'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Ayato runs down the path and curves around to-

THE DRIVEWAY

He quickly slides into his car, starts the ignition, and rockets out of the driveway.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato is driving on the highway, tense.

AYATO

Fine, if this is how it's gonna be...

The car is silent.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Don't forget I can come to you, Teena.

Then, suddenly-

CUT TO:

BLACK.

Teena is singing, delighted.

TEENA

Kuru kuru pa, kuru kuru pa, kuru kuru pa!
Ra ra ra ra...

AYATO

Uzattai.

She stops. The smile fades from her face and she turns to look directly at Ayato.

TEENA

Hmph. Since when did you speak the language?

AYATO

I don't.

Teena giggles, but it quickly fades. She becomes stern, stone, and unyielding.

TEENA

I'm sorry, Ayato, but you cannot do as you please.

AYATO

Teena...

TEENA

Open your eyes, already.

I/E. CAR / BUSY STREET

Ayato takes a left heading the wrong way on a one way. He turns into an empty left turn lane and a large SUV is heading towards him.

Ayato SCREAMS, frightened.

Many horns are HONKING, mostly at him.

He quickly catches himself and swerves into a large parking lot to his right.

He parks the car and exits.

EXT. FAST FOOD PARKING LOT

Ayato expels himself from the vehicle and falls to the ground, breathing heavily. Nobody seems to notice.

After a few seconds, he picks himself up and runs aimlessly.

EXT. CITY STREET

Ayato runs down the heavily populated street, feeding himself through the crowd. He maneuvers his path quickly, never pushing.

Soon, Ayato reaches an open space and he stops.

To his right is a cafe. He enters with heavy breathing.

INT. CAFE

Ayato approaches the counter. A young woman is wiping a glass with a white rag. She's in her twenties, she's vintage-styled, and her tag reads MISCHA.

AYATO

Can I use your bathroom?

She looks up at him.

MISCHA

Sorry, you gotta be a customer.

Ayato sinks.

MISCHA (CONT'D)

But you can buy a cookie or something for, like, a dollar.

INT. CAFE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The bathroom is surprisingly clean, although a pair of pants have been abandoned atop the toilet tank.

Ayato looks at himself in the mirror while eating a chocolate-chip scone. His face is red. Sweat has dried in streaks. He takes another bite when there's a voice speaking behind him.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Aren't those things stale?

Ayato jerks himself around.

The toilet smiles and continues to speak:

NORMAN (CONT'D)

I'm Norman. Who are you?

Ayato is mildly disappointed. He leans against the sink.

WENDY, the sink, objects--with a proper English accent.

WENDY

Excuse me!

Ayato jumps into the middle of the room and looks downward, nervously. His arms are partially outstretched and his legs somewhat apart, fearful of touching himself.

AYATO

The tile can't talk, can it?

Norman and Wendy laugh.

WENDY

No, dear, of course not.

NORMAN

How would you get a larynx into a piece of tile?

Wendy and Norman laugh again.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

But seriously, kid, if you're not going to show us your junk, get out.

WENDY

Norman! Don't be rude to the boy.

NORMAN

I'm sorry, but it's goddamn girls night
and I want some dick.

WENDY

I'm sorry, dear. Norman hasn't had
any...release in quite a while and he
becomes rather...*moody*.

AYATO

I'm used to it.

WENDY

Well, my name is Wendy. You already know
Norman.

NORMAN

Hi.

AYATO

I'm Ayato.

WENDY

It's a pleasure to meet you. What brings
you to our neck of the woods?

AYATO

I wanted to be alone.

Wendy chuckles.

WENDY

Then why, dear, would you visit a rest
room?

Ayato rubs his arm.

AYATO

Actually, this is my first time speaking
with a sink.

WENDY

I see. I prefer, "basin", actually.

AYATO

(sarcastic)

My apologies.

NORMAN

This is boring.

WENDY

Norman, do be quiet.

Ayato begins to back out of the bathroom.

NORMAN

You know, I'm getting really tired of taking your shit, Wendy.

WENDY

Well, you should be accustomed to it by now.

Ayato opens the door and slips out.

NORMAN

Hey!

WENDY

Come back!

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Ayato hurries over to Mischa, at the counter. As he walks, a candle yells to him.

CANDLE

Hey, take me with you!

Mischa looks up at the distraught Ayato.

AYATO

There is something wrong with your bathroom.

Ayato turns to the door, leaving a puzzled Mischa.

CANDLE

Wait! Wait! I can burn down your house!

Ayato exits to:

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ayato rips his phone out of his pocket.

INSERT: THE PHONE

"12 Missed Calls"

Ayato walks, dialing his voice mail. He puts the phone to his ear.

PHONE

First new message, from:

JOSH (THROUGH PHONE)

Joshua Seidler!

(giggles)

Whoos--

The recording is cut off.

PHONE

Received on Sunday, October 11th at 6:46
PM.

JOSH (THROUGH PHONE)

Ayato, what the fuck did you do with my
letter?! Did you take my letter? Why
would you take my--

Ayato deletes the message.

PHONE

Next message, from:

JOSH (THROUGH PHONE)

Joshua Seidler!

Ayato deletes the message.

PHONE

Next message, from:

JOSH (THROUGH PHONE)

Joshu--

Ayato disconnects the call and stares at the phone.

Holding it open in one hand, he walks down the street
towards a park.

INT. TRIANGLE PARK - LATER

Ayato swings himself back and forth. He's the only one
under the dark sky and blue moon.

He kicks a foot-full of sand, staring at his cell phone.
The swing stops.

Ayato looks at the slide.

AYATO

Can I have my privacy?

The slide doesn't answer.

AYATO (CONT'D)

Thanks.

He dials a number on his phone. It rings.

Ayato counts the stars with his eyes while he waits.

INTERCUT: RACHEL AND AYATO ON THE PHONE.

Rachel is in Ayato's living room with his family.

RACHEL

Ayato?

AYATO

Hi.

RACHEL

Where the hell are you?

AYATO

I need you to come pick me up.

RACHEL

Where are you?

Dunoir leans over to Rachel.

DUNOIR

Ask him if he's been drinking.

RACHEL

I'm not asking him that.

AYATO

Tell my Dad I'm not drinking.

RACHEL (TO DUNOIR)

He's not drinking.

DUNOIR

That's right.

Rachel stands up and steps away from the family.

RACHEL

Just tell me where you are.

AYATO
I'm in Triangle Park, but if--

RACHEL
You're where?!

DUNOIR
Where is he?

AYATO
If my parents are in the car, I'm not getting in.

RACHEL
What are you doing in Triangle Park, Ayato? Are you out of your mind?!

AYATO
I think so, but the slide isn't talking, so I'm not sure.

Rachel is still and confused. She opens her mouth to speak, but nothing's there.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Never mind.

RACHEL
I'm coming to get you. Don't go anywhere and don't talk to anybody.

AYATO
I'm the only one here.

Ayato turns to his right and notices a tall, feminine figure.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Scratch that.

RACHEL
Okay, I'm coming right now.

END INTERCUT.

Ayato stares at the shadow of a woman.

AYATO
Hi, Trudi.

The shadow moves forward. It appears to be a male prostitute, bedazzled from head to toe.

PROSTITUTE

Bitch, my name ain't Trudi.

AYATO

Are you real or imaginary, Trudi?

PROSTITUTE

I's *all* woman. What da fuck'ch'you talkin' about?

AYATO

I was talking to a toilet earlier tonight, so I had to ask.

PROSTITUTE

Honey, I talk to da toilet ev'ry night. It da only way to look dis good.

AYATO

What about diet and exercise?

PROSTITUTE

Aw, hell! I's got a bad knee.

AYATO

How come?

The prostitute rolls her/his eyes. S/he stares at Ayato with a meaty grin.

PROSTITUTE

(facetious)

A knife fel' on it.

Ayato laughs.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

Yeah? You t'ink dat's funny?

AYATO

I think you're funny.

PROSTITUTE

You a nice kid. You shou'n't be hangin' 'round here.

AYATO

That's the second time tonight I've heard that.

PROSTITUTE

You have a fight wit' yo' mama?

AYATO

Well, yeah.

The prostitute takes a seat next to Ayato, perhaps a little too close.

PROSTITUTE

Nev'a fight wit' yo' mama. She always right.

AYATO

She's not my real mom.

PROSTITUTE

You adopted?

AYATO

Yeah.

PROSTITUTE

I heard somewheres dat adoption parents are, like, betta parents. Dat ain't true?

AYATO

My mom can't have kids so she had to adopt. It was my dad's idea. He decided to have a multi-cultural family, so my sisters are both different than me. We have skittles at all our family gatherings because my dad likes to think we're a rainbow family. I don't think he knows that's a gay thing--no offense.

PROSTITUTE

Hey, I ain't gay. I got mo' pussy dan yo' mama.

AYATO

Really?

PROSTITUTE

No' yet. Dats why I's out here--to get da money for da operation. I's still got cock. You wanna see?

The prostitute readies her/his hands at the base of her/his skirt

AYATO

No, thanks.

PROSTITUTE

I won't charge.

AYATO

It's not really my thing. People seem to think it is, though, so I understand where you're coming from.

The prostitute slaps her/his legs in disappointment

PROSTITUTE

Yeah, yeah, I hear ya. So what'ch'you fight wit' yo mama for?

AYATO

My uncle's a pedophile and she invited him to a barbecue.

PROSTITUTE

Hey, my uncle too!

AYATO

Every family's got one.

PROSTITUTE

Dats a shame.

AYATO

Yeah, it's been a stressful week. I'm hearing voices and stuff. That's why I asked if you were real.

The prostitute turns a butt cheek towards Ayato.

PROSTITUTE

Wanna pinch my ass an' find out?

Ayato pats it a few times.

AYATO

It doesn't really matter if you're real or not. I think this is just the way things are for me.

The prostitute smiles. His/her gold tooth glimmers.

AYATO (CONT'D)

But my mom and my friends...there are still things that need to change.

In the distance, Rachel is calling out to Ayato.

RACHEL (O.S.)

Ayato! Ayato! Can you here me?

As the darkness falls off her and she steps under the lights, she swings a large object.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Damn it! I can't see anything!

Rachel is carrying a large baseball bat.

Ayato stands up, smiling, happy to see Rachel.

AYATO

Hi.

Rachel points the baseball bat at Ayato.

RACHEL

Ayato, is that you? I think I lost a contact.

AYATO

Yeah, it's me.

RACHEL

Well let's go.

Ayato looks beside him, to say goodbye to the prostitute, but the prostitute isn't there.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Come on, this place creeps me out.

Ayato walks towards Rachel, looking back at the empty park bench. After a moment of thought, he looks forward and walks back to the car with his friend.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel is driving. Ayato is dazed. He stares calmly through the front of the car.

RACHEL

This is weird.

AYATO

What is?

RACHEL

Me driving. I don't like being the chauffeur.

Ayato fails to react.

AYATO

Can we make a stop, first?

RACHEL

I don't kn--

AYATO

It's important.

Rachel eyes shift ever so slightly with concern. She lets out a sigh.

RACHEL

Sure.

EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - LATER

The car is parked on the street outside Josh's house. Ayato approaches the front door and knocks.

He realizes his knock is too soft and stops momentarily before pounding heavily on the door.

Soon, it opens. Well lit in the vestibule are Josh's parents: NOAM (46) and ISOBEL (52). Noam is properly clothed in a blue vest with a red tie and a white shirt with navy stripes. Below, on the legs, are a pair of black slacks, penny loafers, and a simple belt. Only the pipe is missing. Isobel, however, is dressed entirely in black. She is clearly an older and beautiful Russian woman with long, flowing curls of hair as dark as soot.

NOAM

Hello son. What are you peddling at this hour?

Isobel scratches her head, uninvolved.

AYATO

I have something that belongs to Josh.

NOAM

I'd be happy to give it to him.

Noam reaches out to Ayato, who recoils.

AYATO

I'd prefer to give it to him myself, if that's no trouble.

Noam nods.

NOAM
No, none at all.

Isobel reaches out her hand.

Ayato looks at it, hesitant.

NOAM (CONT'D)
Please come in.

Ayato takes Isobel's hand and she smirks, pulling him in.

Meanwhile, Rachel is pressed against the glass, watching Ayato fall into the light from the silent, little car.

INT. JOSH'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Noam climbs the stairs to fetch his son while Isobel leads Ayato from the entryway to the living room. She motions for him to sit.

AYATO
Thank you.

And so, he does.

The living room is purely white with a large fluffy couch and wide Picasso prints on each of the two walls.

AYATO (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for stopping by so late, but I was in the neighborhood.

Isobel shakes her head and smiles. She sits, and together, they wait.

A still silence fills the room until Ayato decides to break it.

AYATO (CONT'D)
You have a lovely home.

Isobel continues to smile, putting her hand over her heart.

Noam finds his way down the stairs and enters the living room.

NOAM

I'm sorry, but he will not come down to see you.

AYATO

Should I go up to see him?

NOAM

Perhaps it's best you do not. He seems...out of his element.

Isobel stands, thinking. She rubs her thumb across her lip and turns to leave the room, heading through a door that leads to the unknown.

AYATO

Actually, that's why I came.

Noam mumbles nervously.

NOAM

I would not recommend it. He is not well.

AYATO

Mr. Seidler, with all due respect, I'm only returning a letter.

NOAM

A letter?

A plate shatters in the other room.

Ayato turns to the noise.

NOAM (CONT'D)

Make it quick.

Noam brushes past Ayato and heads into the other room.

Ayato climbs the staircase, slowly, with his hand against the railing. He pushes himself upward equally with his arm as he does with his legs.

He reaches Josh's door and rests a hand on the knob. A woman places her hand on top of Ayato's.

He looks up. It's Teena.

TEENA

Kaede and I have been arguing, and I don't think I've treated you fairly.

Ayato nods.

TEENA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

AYATO
Wow. Thanks. I appreciate that.

JOSH (O.S.)
Who is it?

AYATO
You know who it is.

Ayato turns the handle and opens the door. No light pours through.

TEENA
I'm going to help you out, and then we'll part on good terms. Does that sound fair? Can you trust me?

AYATO
We'll see.

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

The room is very dark. A little light pours through the door and the windows.

Ayato enters and Teena follows.

TEENA
Turn the light on.

Josh cannot hear her.

AYATO
Do you mind if turn on a light?

TEENA
I didn't say to ask.

JOSH
Yeah, actually.

AYATO
It's kind of hard to see.

Ayato reaches for the light switch.

JOSH

Stop it, I know. Can you close the door?
Give it a good slam, so you know how
pissed off I am.

AYATO

Josh, I'm sorry about the letter, but I
had to know.

JOSH

Just shut the door, Ayato.

TEENA

Tell him no.

AYATO

No.

Josh sighs and stands up. He pushes past Ayato and slams
the door.

TEENA

That little shit. Turn on the light.

Ayato hits the light switch and Josh pushes him. Ayato
trips over a pile of clothing and catches himself, nearly
on his back.

AYATO

Hey!

JOSH

I told you not to turn it on. I have eye
burn now, fuck head.

TEENA

Give him back the letter.

Ayato pulls the letter from his pants.

JOSH

Interesting place to keep my stuff.

Ayato hands the letter to Josh. Josh steps over Ayato
and kneels down to take it.

TEENA

(worried)

Ayato, move.

Josh presses his knees down on Ayato's arms and drops the
letter on the floor.

TEENA (CONT'D)

Ayato!

AYATO

(nervous)

Josh, what are you doing?

JOSH

We need to talk about your behavior. You cannot just take shit from me as you please. Do you understand?

AYATO

Yes.

TEENA

Ayato, kick him!

Ayato turns to Teena.

AYATO

I can't!

JOSH

Who are you talking to?

Josh's hands fall flat next to Ayato's head.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I can't trust you anymore.

AYATO

You can't trust *me*?

JOSH

Shut up.

Josh places a hand on Ayato's mouth and pushes heavily. Ayato is unable to yell.

TEENA

It's not gonna stop, is it?

Josh looks at Teena from the corner of his eye, smiling. He moves his other hand to Ayato's throat.

JOSH

Maya, you're back.

Ayato desperately grabs at the air, but his movement is heavily restrained.

TEENA
It's not gonna stop.

Teena walks over to Josh and puts a hand on his shoulder and smiles.

TEENA (CONT'D)
Be still.

Josh's grip falls weak and he collapses onto the floor.

Teena sighs in relief.

Ayato coughs.

AYATO
Thanks.

TEENA
You're such a weak little boy, but I guess I owed you one after almost getting you into a car accident.

AYATO
Uh huh.

Teena reaches out a hand to pull him up.

AYATO (CONT'D)
Is that possible? Are you real right now?

TEENA
I'm a lot of things.

Ayato grabs Teena's hand and she pulls him up.

TEENA (CONT'D)
I'm afraid guilty is one of them.

INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ayato and Teena walk down the stairs. Josh's parents are waiting by the door.

TEENA
Don't worry, they can't see me.

NOAM
How did it go?

AYATO
He decided to get some sleep, but I think things are settled.

NOAM
That's good to hear.

Isobel smiles.

AYATO
Thanks for letting me stop by.

NOAM
It's not a problem. You looked flushed. Do you need some water?

Ayato laughs quietly.

AYATO
I'm fine, thanks.

Ayato shakes hands with Noam and gets the door.

Teena smiles-

TEENA
Thank you, sir.

-and exits. Ayato follows.

EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE

Ayato begins to walk towards the car but Teena stops him.

EXT. CAR

Rachel is watching them through the window.

EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE

TEENA
Gotta say good bye.

AYATO
Okay.

Teena giggles.

TEENA

I guess you can't change everything about a person. Well, I'm sorry I messed things up so much.

(facetious)

It's hard being so powerful and beautiful all the time, you know.

Ayato rolls his eyes.

AYATO

What is all of this?

TEENA

There are very few people who listen. It's funny, because most people hear the pains of the earth or the cries of the less fortunate. You listen to everything you want to deny yourself.

AYATO

(confused)

Like Orin?

TEENA

Like love, like intimacy. Your voice. Everything has a voice.

AYATO

I've noticed.

Teena giggles.

TEENA

People who listen...they don't come around too often, so...

Ayato nods.

TEENA (CONT'D)

You get it. Well, I guess that's it. Maybe I'll see you around some time.

AYATO

Hehe, yeah. Good luck finding your family.

Teena smiles.

TEENA

You too.

Ayato walks to the car.

INT. CAR

Rachel quickly buckles herself into the passenger's seat and pretends to relax.

Ayato knocks on the passenger's window and Rachel shrugs. He heads to the other side of the car and gets in the driver's seat.

RACHEL

Do you think you can drive now? It's too disorienting for me.

Ayato nods.

AYATO

Maybe we should go pick up my car before it gets towed.

RACHEL

Okay, okay, but tell me what happened. Was he pissed? And who was that woman you were talking to?

Ayato is taken aback.

AYATO

That woman?

RACHEL

At the doorstep. Was that his mom? Wait, never mind, don't tell me--I want to hear it all from the beginning.

Ayato laughs and turns the key. The car starts.

AYATO

Okay, but it's not that exciting.

RACHEL

Sure it is.

Rachel smiles, then feigns seriousness.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Now talk.

AYATO

Well, I think weirdness is hereditary in his family, because...

EXT. STREET

The car drives off into the night. Ayato turns left, off of Josh's street, without signaling. He's driving awfully fast.

Nearby, a mailbox is upset.

MAILBOX

Slow down, this is a neighborhood!

FADE TO:

INT. AYATO'S ROOM - UNKNOWN

INSERT: The finished painting. A young girl is wearing a green dress with her arm around a boy. Together, on a hill, they stare into a cyan sky.