

HALCYON DAYS

By Shoji Kokami

English Translation by Aya Ogawa (October 2010)

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Cast of Characters:

Masayuki Harada *Male. Age 30. Works for a major on-line retail company, where he is charge of marketing food and drink products. High-performing business man.*

Kazumi Tanikawa *Female. Age 28. High school counselor. Due to certain circumstances, she resigned from her post a few months ago.*

Tetsuzo Hashimoto *Male. Age 45. Employee at an electronics company. A closeted homosexual, he is married. He even has a child. His user name is "Hello Kitty." He speaks in a slightly effeminate way.*

Akio Hirayama *Male. Age 17. A high school senior who killed himself. He claims that the reason he committed suicide was that he had made up his mind to die before reaching adulthood.*

Prologue

Projection of text (Slide): "Three ways Three people 3cm"

Kazumi Tanikawa is revealed in light.

Kazumi: There are three ways to get through a sleepless night. Gaze up at the moon. Take a Halcyon. Boot up the computer. This is the routine that's taken over me somehow, ever since that day. I type the words "suicide" and "despair" into a search engine. I get thirteen thousand hits. Next I try "suicide" and "hope." Thirty thousand six hundred hits. Apparently "suicide" is tied to the word "hope" more than "despair." I look up at the moon once more. The suicide website where I met them had this disclaimer: "The recruiting of suicide partners is strictly forbidden on this site."

Lights fade on Tanikawa and Masayuki Harada appears.

Masayuki: On a calm Sunday afternoon in this peaceful-looking park I'm thinking not about products, but suicide. When was the last time I thought about myself? I've spent my life thinking about what other people want, not me. Before I knew it I came to be known as an excellent business man. Now I'm thinking about what I want: suicide. In this park there are at least two others who are thinking about the same thing. I decided to meet the people who responded to my email here. Three people with a death wish will come together today.

Masayuki's light fades and Tetsuzo Hashimoto is revealed.

Tetsuzo: I climb over the handrail on the roof and as I look down, the tears start spilling out. If I took a step of a mere three centimeters I would be released from all of life's problems. The tears that fall are of joy at that thought, but also of self-pity – that I can't even take that three centimeter step. I wonder how they felt, those who were able to take the three centimeter step? What kind of courage and what kind of fear? I've also heard about people jumping from the 14th storey and not dying – and I don't know what to do. Failing to kill yourself and having to suffer the consequences are far worse than suicide. I desperately want my death to be fun, and also complete. Are you Masa?

Lights up.

Masayuki is standing there.

Act 1

Slide: As long as he's got a roof over his head

The park.

Masayuki: ...Hello Kitty?

Tetsuzo: Hello. Wow Masa, you're exactly how I imagined you.

Masayuki: What did you imagine?

Tetsuzo: Someone intelligent and sincere and serious

Masayuki: Oh please... You are

Tetsuzo: What about me? Am I as you imagined?

Masayuki: Well, Hello Kitty, with a name like Hello Kitty... this is kind of awkward.

Tetsuzo: Awkward? It's awkward? Awkward how? Awkward good? Or awkward bad?

Kazumi Tanikawa enters, followed by Akio Hirayama.

Kazumi: Excuse me, are you Masa?

Masayuki: Are you Haruko?

Kazumi: Yes.

Tetsuzo: I'm Hello Kitty.

Kazumi: Oh, I'm Haruko.

The three of them look at each other's faces deeply for a moment. Then as if to shatter the mood;

Akio: You're not Haruko. You're Kazumi.

Masayuki and Tetsuzo do not react at all to Akio's exclamation. Kazumi seems to be aware of his accusation and appears to be consciously ignoring it.

Masayuki: Here we are, finally.

Tetsuzo: You know, Haruko you're totally different from what I imagined. I thought you would be more like...

Kazumi: like...

Tetsuzo: No, it's just that you look pretty tough.

Kazumi: Tough?... Hello Kitty, you're different from what I imagined too.

Tetsuzo: Different?

Akio: Calling yourself "Hello Kitty"? Think you're cute, do you?

Kazumi: Well, it's a bit awkward.

Tetsuzo: What is that supposed to mean? Haruko, are you picking a fight with me?

Kazumi: No, um..

Akio: Come on, let's see a brawl!

Kazumi: (*forgetting*) Will you cut it out?!

Masayuki, Tetsuzo: What?

Kazumi: (*Panicking*) No, uh, I mean, I'm really not all that tough.

Tetsuzo: Not tough... The timing of your rebuttal is really off.

Kazumi: I'm sorry. I'm no good at banter, and I'm nervous.

Tetsuzo: Me too. It's not easy, talking face to face like this. But we do need to talk.

Akio: Let's kill ourselves already!

Kazumi: Shut up!

Tetsuzo: Can't I talk if I want to?!

Kazumi: No, it's not that. Please don't shut up. I was just talking to myself.

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: Talking to yourself?

Kazumi: Yes. The voice sounds so real inside my head. I can't help reacting.
(*Intentionally imitating a comedy routine*) Cheeky!... Oh, it just asked what colour my pants were so that was my comeback.

Masayuki: You ask yourself what colour your pants are?

Kazumi: Well, the human unconscious is a mystery.

Akio: (*To Masayuki and Tetsuzo*) So says Freud.

Kazumi: So just ignore me, if I say anything weird out of the blue.

Tetsuzo: Shall we get to the matter at hand?

Masayuki/Kazumi: What?

Tetsuzo: About what we're going to do.

Masayuki: Yes. Let's discuss.

Kazumi: Yes. Let's.

Tetsuzo: Wait a second. I'm getting nervous. I'm going to the bathroom.

Tetsuzo leaves. Masayuki and Kazumi are left somewhat awkwardly.

Masayuki: ... Um. I'm going to go get something to drink. What would you like?

Kazumi: Huh? Oh, no, I'm fine.

Masayuki: Don't be polite. What would you like? Water, coffee, Coke, or Fanta, Red Bull, juice, sparkling juice...

Kazumi: Oh, well, anything is fine..

Masayuki: Please tell me what you'd like.

Kazumi: Um, then, some water please.

Masayuki: Still or sparkling?

Kazumi: Still then.

Masayuki: All right.

Masayuki leaves.

Kazumi looks at Akio for the first time.

Kazumi: What are you trying to do?

Akio: Don't you feel guilty for lying?

Kazumi: Not at all.

Akio: Give it up. It's useless.

Kazumi: What's useless?

Akio: If people want to die, it's best to let them die. It's condescending to think you can stop them, Miss Tanikawa.

Kazumi: I'm not god, but I'm going to stop them.

Akio: You should try killing yourself once. Then you'd know how they feel.

Kazumi: Is that what you want? You want me to die?

Akio: Yeah. Did you just realize that?
Tetsuzo returns.

Tetsuzo: Sorry to keep you waiting... Where's Masa?

Kazumi: He went to get some drinks.

Tetsuzo: That's sweet of him. Hey, Masa's kind of hot, don't you think?

Kazumi: What?

Tetsuzo: What?... Oh stop, don't get me wrong. I just thought that you can get his sense of intelligence even through his e-mails.

Akio: *(to Tetsuzo)* Are you a homo?

Kazumi: That's rude!

Tetsuzo: Rude?

Kazumi: No, I'm sorry.

Tetsuzo: Did you hear that voice in your head again?

Kazumi: Yes.

Tetsuzo: You poor dear. Don't worry. It'll all be over soon.

Kazumi: Yes.

Akio: See, I told you he was a homo.

Kazumi: Stop it.

Tetsuzo: Again? What did it say?

Akio: I'm asking if you are a homo.

Kazumi: Cut it out.

Tetsuzo: What's going on?

Akio: Homo?

Kazumi: No!

Akio: Are. You. A. Ho. Mo. Sex. U. AI?

Kazumi: So what if he's a homo?!

Tetsuzo: Wha?

Kazumi: Wha?

Akio: Woops! How're you getting out of this one?

Kazumi: I mean, so what if he's a homeowner or a renter? As long as he's got a roof over his head! *(to Tetsuzo)* Tetsuzo, do your own or rent?

Tetsuzo: ...I'm not sure how to answer that.

Masayuki returns with the drinks: bottled water, orange juice and coke.

Masayuki: Okay, here we are. Water for Haruko. And Hello Kitty which would you like, orange juice or coke?

Tetsuzo: Which one do you want?

Masayuki: Never mind me. I'll have whichever one is left.

Tetsuzo: Masa, you pick what you'd like.

Masayuki: Right then, here you are *(handing him the Coke)*. It's the new coke.

Tetsuzo: New coke.

Akio: What? None for me? That sucks.

Masayuki: Shall we sit down?

The three of them sit, side by side on a bench (something like a bench) and begin to drink their beverages. Akio is nearby.

Masayuki: (To Tetsuzo) Well what do you think? Do you like it?

Tetsuzo: Hmmm, it's a little too sweet for me. Why do you ask? Do you work for this company or something?

Masayuki: No, my company is deciding whether to market this product. So I wanted to get your opinion.

Tetsuzo: Masa dear, do you remember why we're all here?

Masayuki: Oh... I'm sorry. How shall we die?

Akio: Finally!

Tetsuzo: ...I've already failed twice.

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: Huh?

Tetsuzo: I was impulsive, and ended up doing something half-assed. When you're alone you don't think things through right? I don't want to mess it up this time. But, you know, I read in a book that there have been people who jumped from the fourteenth storey and still failed. Even with more than ten stories under you it happens all the time. Just thinking about it makes me so worried. That's why...

Kazumi: That's why what?

Akio: Don't tell me you're not going through with it.

Tetsuzo: I want to die joyfully.

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: Huh?

Tetsuzo: I want to die instantly at the height of feeling like "oh my god this is sooooo fun!"

Kazumi: How are you going to do that?

Tetsuzo: Well that's what I want to discuss, isn't it!

Masayuki: How to die joyfully.

Tetsuzo: I want a fail-safe, instantaneous death at the peak of ecstasy.

Akio: Isn't that a lot to ask for?

Kazumi: Umm. Could I talk about why I want to die?

Tetsuzo/Masayuki: What?

Kazumi: Both of you could tell me about your reasons too. I'd like to know.

Akio: You're gonna start with that already? Don't you think you're getting ahead of yourself?

Tetsuzo: Why do we have to talk about something like that?

Kazumi: I'm sorry, but I really want to talk to you.

Tetsuzo: Listen, we got together to talk about how to die. Not why.

Kazumi: I know, but even just a little...

Tetsuzo: Haruko do you want a fight?!

Masayuki: (*delicately*) I'm sorry. It's all my fault!

Tetsuzo /Kazumi /Akio: What?

Masayuki: It's my fault for buying the drinks and then asking Tetsuzo what he thought about the Coke. I'm sorry. I was the one who posted a listing to the website – I'm the one who's caused this trouble. I made you both come here and now I can't seem to do anything right.

Kazumi: Masa!

Masayuki: It's my fault. I've hurt you all.

Tetsuzo: Come on, listen to yourself.

Masayuki: I'm sorry. It's all my fault. It's because of me that you're all upset.

Tetsuzo: Nobody's upset here. What's the matter?

Masayuki: I upset you with the replies to your emails, I upset you with my own suffering, I upset you because I'm incapable of having fun,

Kazumi: Masa, are you alright?

Akio: The guy's obviously sick to get all worked up like this,.

Masayuki: I'm sorry! I'm going home!

Masayuki runs away.

Tetsuzo: Masa!

Tetsuzo hesitates for a moment and then runs after him.

Akio: What's your diagnosis, Miss Tanikawa?

Kazumi: ...

Akio: He must be sick to be posting stuff on a suicide site.

Tetsuzo returns.

Tetsuzo: I couldn't catch up with him.

Kazumi: Oh.

Tetsuzo: What should we do?

Akio: Why don't the two of you die?

Kazumi: Can I talk to you? About why I want to die?

Tetsuzo: Haruko, I'm going home too. See you.

Tetsuzo leaves.

Kazumi: Hello Kitty!

Akio: I so wanted to die!

Kazumi and Akio are left. The light focuses in on Kazumi.

Kazumi: That's how the three of us met. I went home and e-mailed them right away, but I got no response. Every night as I gazed up at the moon I hoped that the two of them were still alive. A week later, early on a Saturday morning, I got a reply from Masa. It said "Thank you for everything. I'm going by myself."

Tetsuzo appears out of the darkness.

Tetsuzo: Di di di di di...

Kazumi: Don't stutter in an e-mail!

Tetsuzo: Di di di di did you see Masa's email?

Kazumi: Yes I did.

Tetsuzo: Why didn't you tell me? It's already evening. You got the message early this morning right?

Kazumi: I didn't read it until just now.

Tetsuzo: I'm going to Masa's place.

Kazumi: What, you know where he lives?

Tetsuzo: I mailed him a DVD once.

Kazumi: Give me his address. I'll come too.

Tetsuzo: It's ok. I'll take care of it.

Kazumi: No, wait!

They both leave.

Act 2

Slide: This is kind of like a field trip.

*Masayuki's apartment. Living room.
The door bell rings. Twice. Three times.*

Masayuki (*from off-stage*): Co-ming.

Masayuki emerges wearing an apron, stirring something in a large salad bowl.

Masayuki: Coming, coming, coming, coming.

He crosses the stage and exits. Sound of a door opening. Masayuki re-enters followed by Kazumi who leaps on stage out of breath. Akio follows silently behind.

Masayuki: Haruko! What's wrong? How did you find me?

Kazumi: (*taking in how Masayuki is dressed*) ...Why are you dressed so casually?

Masayuki: Why? I'm just making dinner. Wouldn't it be strange for me to be dressed up?

Kazumi: What on earth are you doing?!

Masayuki: I thought that I'd try out a new brand of salad dressing that my company's marketing. There are five different flavors! Oh, Haruko, why don't you come in and sample some yourself?

Kazumi: This is hardly the time for that!

Masayuki: What? It's not time for salad? Then is it time for soup?

Kazumi: Your e-mail.

Masayuki: My e-mail?

Akio: I know. He got scared and chickened out.

Kazumi: You sent me an e-mail this morning saying that you were going to kill yourself!

Masayuki: No way!

Kazumi: What do you mean, no way?

Masayuki exits into a room upstage startled.

Akio: I don't know what he's up to but he's a terrible actor.

Masayuki returns with a laptop computer, looking at the screen.

Masayuki: ...

Kazumi: You sent it didn't you?

Masayuki: ...I did send it.

Akio: We know.

Masayuki: ...I see. *(Facing Kazumi)* Thank you. So that's why you came.

Kazumi: How can you act as if this has nothing to do with you?

Masayuki: Because it doesn't.

Kazumi: What is that supposed to mean?

The tea-kettle in the room upstage starts to whistle. Next, the door-bell, chimes over and over again.

Masayuki: *(to Kazumi)* Just a minute.

Masayuki goes into the room upstage.

Kazumi: What's going on?

Akio: How the hell should I know? You, Miss Tanikawa, are the one who makes the diagnoses.

Kazumi: I know!

Masayuki emerges from the room upstage and heads towards the doorway.

Akio: *(watching Masayuki)* My diagnosis would be that he's acting. A run of the mill wrist-cutter or suicide-faker.

Tetsuzo's voice can be heard.

Tetsuzo *(voice)*: Masa, darling, you're alive!

Tetsuzo and Masayuki return.

Tetsuzo: Oh what is going on!? Why did you even think about going by yourself? What made you think that! We found each other, didn't we? When we do it, let's do it together. Repeat after me: When we do it...

Masayuki: That's not it.

Tetsuzo: No no no. When we do it...

Kazumi: Hello Kitty.

Tetsuzo: Oh, Haruko, you got here before me. That was quick. Where were we: When we do it...

Masayuki: That's not it.

Tetsuzo: What? What's not it?

Masayuki: I don't remember it.

Tetsuzo/Kazumi/Akio: What?

Masayuki: I don't remember writing that e-mail.

Tetsuzo: Were you pissed? Masa, do you drink a lot? Do you drink til you black out?

Masayuki: I wasn't drinking.

Tetsuzo: What about medication? Or drugs?

Masayuki: I don't take any drugs.

Kazumi: Then how do you explain this?

Masayuki: That's what I'm saying – I must have written an email that I have no memory of.

Tetsuzo: That's impossible! (suddenly) You're not a raving lunatic for God's sake!

They all wince.

Tetsuzo: What?

Masayuki:...

Akio: He speaks his mind.

Tetsuzo: Did I just say something outrageous?

Kazumi: *(to Masayuki)* Has this ever happened before?

Masayuki: Sorry?

Kazumi: Has this kind of thing ever happened to you before? Or was this morning's e-mail the first?

Masayuki: No that was the second time.

Tetsuzo: The second time

Kazumi: What was the first?

Masayuki: The listing I posted to the suicide site.

Tetsuzo, Kazumi and Akio are surprised.

Akio: Are you for real?

Tetsuzo: You mean the message that said “I want to die. That is my truest, deepest desire.”

Masayuki: That’s right.

Tetsuzo: Wait a second! Just what is going on here? Masa, are you saying that you sent that e-mail and brought us together without knowing you were doing it? You didn’t actually mean to do this?

Akio: You gotta be joking.

Masayuki: No! The only thing I don’t remember is that first e-mail. I remember everything else.

Tetsuzo: But you don’t remember how it started. That’s...

Masayuki: I have no memory of writing it, but I have no doubt that I did. So...

Kazumi: So?

Masayuki: I thought it must have come from my deepest truest intentions. I had never even thought about it before, but the moment I realized that I wanted to commit suicide, my body relaxed and I felt calm. I realized that I didn’t have to fight anymore. So I take full responsibility for everything I wrote after that. (*Warmly*) Doesn’t that ever happen to you? You look through your “sent mail” folder and find messages you don’t remember sending?

Tetsuzo: Never.

Kazumi: ... You thought that what you really wanted was to commit suicide?

Masayuki: No I didn’t think it, I came to the realization for the first time that that was my deepest desire.

Kazumi: I see...

Akio: An intriguing patient! What do you think Miss Tanikawa? Could he be schizophrenic?

Tetsuzo: ...But I’m so glad.

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: Huh?

Tetsuzo: ...That you didn’t do it by yourself this morning.

Masayuki: I may have been out on the balcony for a long time. I vaguely remember my hands gripping onto the railing.

Tetsuzo: We're on the sixth floor right? That's not high enough, you know.

Masayuki: I'm sorry. My email brought you all out again... Oh now I can't stop this train of thought. I, my email has upset you all,

Tetsuzo: (*sharply*) Don't worry. Shall we get ready?

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: Huh?

Tetsuzo: The three of us were able to come together again like this. Before we drive each other crazy, let's just kill ourselves.

Masayuki: Yes. Yes, maybe we should.

Tetsuzo: I was actually just worrying about how I was going to do it by myself.

Kazumi: (*hurriedly*) What about fun? You want to die having fun, don't you?

Tetsuzo: Yes. And with the three of us together again I think that we can definitely find a way.

Akio: Three including me.

Kazumi: But we haven't yet found a way!

Tetsuzo: No, but you have to prepare yourself for when that moment comes, otherwise you won't be able to die.

Kazumi: But...

Tetsuzo: Haruko, have you had a change of heart?

Kazumi: Huh?

Tetsuzo: Look, if all you want to do is talk about it, it's probably best that you just go home.

Akio: Uh-oh, your cover's blown.

Masayuki: That's right. If you really don't want to be here, there's no reason to keep us company to death.

Akio: Well, let's pack up.

Kazumi: Please, wait a minute.

Akio: You failed! You can't stop them from killing themselves!

Tetsuzo: Goodbye. It's been fun, seeing you like this one last time.

Kazumi: Hello Kitty!

Akio: Miss Tanikawa, let's go home!

Kazumi: Will you shut up! *(To Akio)* Go home by yourself.

Akio: That's just not possible.

Masayuki: Is someone there? *(points towards Akio)*

Tetsuzo: What? It's not just a voice inside your head?

Akio: What's up. The name's Akio Hirayama.

Kazumi: *(despite herself)* Stop!

Masayuki: There really is someone there, isn't there?

Tetsuzo: Ewww, cut it out! What is it? A ghost? An ancestral spirit? A guardian angel? A genius loci?

Kazumi: No. It's not a ghost, um, I can see it.

Tetsuzo: Then it IS a ghost! You see dead people! You're cursed!

Kazumi: No. It has nothing to do with the spirit world. It's a vision that only I can see.

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: A vision?

Akio: Hello. I'm a vision.

Tetsuzo: What does it look like?

Kazumi: It looks like me.

Akio: Oh, I do, do I?

Masayuki: Just like you?

Tetsuzo: So it's your double?

Kazumi: That's right.

Akio: Oh come on!

Tetsuzo: So you always see another version of yourself?

Kazumi: Yes.

Tetsuzo: Where is it now?

Kazumi: *(pointing)* Right there.

Tetsuzo: So there's another you right there and it talks to you all the time?

Kazumi: Yes.

Akio: Liar!

Tetsuzo suddenly embraces Kazumi.

Kazumi: Um...

Tetsuzo: It's OK. I'm not interested in women. I understand how you feel. You've suffered a lot.

Akio: What's this about?

Tetsuzo: The other you is criticizing the real you. Don't worry. It'll soon be over.

Kazumi: ...

Tetsuzo: The three of us are together. Soon you won't see the other you.
Because there'll be no need to see it. You'll be liberated.

Akio: I'm not another her, you know.

Tetsuzo: *(to Kazumi)* Shall we liberate ourselves together?

Kazumi: Um... Ye... Yes.

Tetsuzo releases Kazumi.

Tetsuzo: Ok. Let's do it by burning charcoal.

Masayuki: Good idea.

Akio: Agreed.

Kazumi: !?

Tetsuzo: Carbon monoxide poisoning. It's relatively simple.

Masayuki: Should we rent a car?

Tetsuzo: No. With a car there's a chance we'll be found. With charcoal we need at least seven hours.

Masayuki: Then...

Tetsuzo: Can't we do it here?

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: Here?!

Tetsuzo: Yeah. Apparently when you seal off a car it gets really hot. Even if you take sleeping pills, there's a chance you'll wake up when it gets like a sauna inside.

Akio: He's done his homework.

Tetsuzo: Doing it in an airtight room is better. You won't be found and it won't get as hot. So Masa, if you're ok with it, this is the safest bet right here.

Masayuki: I understand. I'll go buy some charcoal.

Akio: All right!

Tetsuzo: Great! What about sleeping pills?

Masayuki: I have some Halcyon.

Tetsuzo: Lovely. Also, something delicious to eat.

Kazumi: Something delicious?

Tetsuzo: That's a must-have if we want to go out with a bang. Haruko dear, can you take care of that?

Kazumi: Sure.

Tetsuzo: Why don't you get going? Masa and I will discuss whatever else we need and then we'll go out and get it.

Akio: Are you two up to something?

Kazumi: All right, see you later.

Akio: Let's get ready to die!

Kazumi exits followed by Akio.

Tetsuzo: So that leaves duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal the place up.

Masayuki: I might have some duct tape.

Tetsuzo: Do you think you could check on that? We should get some snacks. And some games too.

Masayuki: I have a pack of cards.

Tetsuzo: Do you want to play Asshole?

Masayuki: This is kind of like a field trip.

Tetsuzo: Isn't this fun? You just don't know until you get started!

Masayuki: I guess so!

Tetsuzo's cell phone goes off. Tetsuzo looks at it and is about to answer but hesitates because of Masayuki.

Masayuki: *(being sensitive)* I'll go check on the duct tape.

Masayuki exits.

Tetsuzo: *(into the phone)* Hello... I told you I'll pay. I'm about to come into some money. I know that. Don't call my home! If you call my home you won't see any of it... Don't you think I know that? Monday, for sure.

Tetsuzo hangs up the phone and speaks in the direction that Masayuki exited.

Tetsuzo: Did you find the tape? And sorry, can I use your bathroom?

Tetsuzo exits.

Act 3

Slide: A really animated conversation by yourself

Out of the darkness Kazumi comes into view, wearing a white gown. Akio is across from her.

Kazumi: Why?

Akio: How many times do I have to tell you? I made up my mind that I was going to die before I was twenty. That is my reason.

Kazumi: No matter how many times I hear that it just doesn't sound like much of a reason to me.

Akio: Miss Tanikawa, why are you living?

Kazumi: What?

Akio: Do you have a clear reason? Is it one that would be convincing to everybody? Aren't you living just because you want to? *(Pause)* I just want to die. That's my reason.

Kazumi: But why do you want to die?

Akio: Why do you want to live? Do you think there's some meaning in being alive?

Kazumi: There is.

Akio: What? What kind of meaning?

Kazumi: Aren't there moments when you've thought you were glad to be alive? I'm sure it's different for different people but, times you shared a laugh with friends, or spent with someone you love, or when you tasted something delicious,

Akio: Those are the things that give life meaning?

Kazumi: There are other examples too, like...

Akio: You told my parents that I was sick, didn't you?

Kazumi: I told them you were a bit depressed. They seemed so worried. If you receive treatment, you'll definitely be cured.

Akio: The psychiatrist that you want to refer me to... Is he your lover?

Kazumi: Of course not.

Akio: Do you have a lover?

Kazumi: No.

Akio: There you go again.

Kazumi: It's true. I wouldn't lie about that.

Akio: Miss Tanikawa, did something happened?

Kazumi: No, not really. Why don't you tell me about school?

Akio: There's nothing to say. Same as always.

Kazumi: That's OK.

Akio: Oh, all right...

*The light on Akio goes out. Akio is speaking but his voice cannot be heard.
Kazumi is deep in thought. Suddenly:*

Akio: Miss Tanikawa. Miss Tanikawa!

Kazumi: What?

Akio: Are you listening to what I'm saying?

Kazumi: Of course I am.

Akio: So what do you think about it?

Kazumi: Sorry?

Akio: Wasn't it kind of interesting?

Kazumi: Yes, very.

Akio: How so?

Kazumi: ...

Akio: What was I just talking about?

Kazumi: ...

Akio: Miss Tanikawa, something's wrong with you today.

Kazumi: I'm the same as always.

Akio: I'm going home.

Kazumi: We're not done yet.

Akio: I'm going. I was talking about the moon.

Kazumi: About the moon... Anyway, come again next week. It's a promise.

Akio: I'm never coming again.

Kazumi: You're coming. Because you promised.

Akio: See ya.

Akio exits.

Kazumi: Come again. Promise me.

Kazumi alone.

She removes the white gown and places it where the audience cannot see it (off stage). Akio has entered.

Akio: What's wrong?

Kazumi: Nothing.

Akio: You were remembering something from when I was alive.

Kazumi: ...

Akio: *(easily)* Sorry I died.

Kazumi: *(irritated)* How am I supposed to respond to that?

Akio: How about "That's ok"?

Kazumi: Why didn't you come back?

Akio: I'm here now aren't I?

Kazumi: Why did you die?

Akio: Uh, don't you think you're forgetting a very fundamental thing?

Kazumi: What?

Akio: I'm a vision being seen by you. I am not me. I am your idea of me. In other words, the things that I say are actually your thoughts, so there's no way I can give you an answer that you don't already have.

Kazumi: Very logical as always.

Akio: You're the one who's logical. I was never that logical.

Kazumi: That's not true. You're an incredibly logical person. You may be a vision, but I've created you by a very careful process of analysis.

Akio: Why are you bragging about it? You don't really want me hanging around.

Kazumi: No I don't. But it's important to accept the truth as such.

Akio: You know, from the outside it just looks like your having a really animated conversation by yourself, so I think you'd better finish up your shopping -- If you're worried about the two guys. Just some friendly advice.

Kazumi: How rare. Why are you so concerned?

Akio: I want the three of you to pull this off.

Kazumi: Thank you.

Akio: You're welcome.

Kazumi exits, followed by Akio.

Tetsuzo and Masayuki enter carrying shopping bags and a big bag.

Tetsuzo: What else? Don't you have a favorite sweet you want to eat?

Masayuki: Let me see.

Tetsuzo: Shall we sit and rest for a moment?

Masayuki: Alright.

The two of them sit on a bench (something like a bench).

Masayuki: Hello Kitty, why do you want to die?

Tetsuzo: Stop it, Masa. You're asking questions like Haruko.

Masayuki: I'm sorry. It's just that you seem so strong.

Tetsuzo: Do you think that everyone who wants to die has it written on their face?
If you do, then you don't have much imagination.

Masayuki: What about me? Is it written on my face?

Tetsuzo: You? Do you even know why you want to die?

Masayuki: I've been thinking about it for a long time. I haven't focused my thoughts on myself for many years. I've thought only about my customers.

Tetsuzo: What a boring life.

Masayuki: That's not so! It made me really happy – when I honed into what my customers wanted and the orders came pouring in. I was really good at guessing.

Tetsuzo: So you were an excellent business man.

Masayuki: Yes.

Tetsuzo: Then what reason do you have for wanting to die?

Masayuki: Oh, there is one reason I can think of.

Tetsuzo: What?

Masayuki: I was inside the World Trade Center.

Tetsuzo: What!?

Masayuki: On September 11th 2001, I was working at a Japanese bank on the sixty-eighth floor.

Tetsuzo: I can't believe you're bringing this up so casually!

Masayuki: That day, one of my co-workers said that he was going to buy something to drink. I was heading out anyway so I said that I would go instead. I insisted. Because of me, my co-worker died. Because I went instead of him. I was the one who was supposed to die.

Tetsuzo: That's...

Masayuki: (*with difficulty*) No. That was a lie.

Tetsuzo: What?

Masayuki: I've never been to New York.

Tetsuzo: What are you talking about?

Masayuki: I know that it's not true, but I can't help believing that's what happened. I know there's something really wrong with me, and I feel horrible about it, I can't bear it any more.

Tetsuzo: Masa.

Masayuki: This feeling just gets stronger and stronger. To think that one day I might start telling people that I was there... Tetsuzo, if that ever happens, please kill me.

Tetsuzo: Kill you?!

Masayuki: Because by then, I won't be myself anymore.

Tetsuzo: It's all right. You'll be able to kill yourself before that ever happens... I know that's a weird way to cheer you up.

Masayuki: (*smiling*) Yes... Look. The moon is out.

Tetsuzo: You're right. A crescent moon! The moon in the evening always makes me feel wistful..

Masayuki: Have you ever seen the dark part of the crescent moon?

Tetsuzo: What do you mean?

Masayuki: On the opposite side of the crescent moon, the dark part is shining very faintly and I can see the entire outline of the round moon. Haven't you ever seen that?

Tetsuzo: No. Maybe you imagined it?

Masayuki: I don't know.

Tetsuzo: I mean, there's nothing to see. Well, shall we head back? Haruko will be waiting for us.

Masayuki: Yes.

Tetsuzo: Oh. I forgot to buy something. Wait here for a minute.

Masayuki: I'll come with you.

Tetsuzo: No, no it's ok. I'll be right back. Just wait for a bit.

*Tetsuzo exits leaving the big shopping bags.
Left alone, Masayuki looks at the moon.*

Masayuki: Oh, there, I can see it. It's barely visible but the dark part is shining very faintly.

*Masayuki continues to gaze at the moon.
There seems to be a TV in a store window and we hear the sound of the news. A news report of a war or terrorist attack gets louder and louder. "...a heavy clashes broke out outside the city. Several rockets were fired and have resulted in a great number of civilian deaths. Aerial bombing has also begun..." As if transfixed, Masayuki watches the broadcast about a war or terrorist strike somewhere. Gradually the city sounds get louder. We begin to hear the sound of Masayuki's breathing and the rustling of his clothes as he moves. The noises become oppressive, almost threatening. They convey to us Masayuki's psychological state.
The city sounds get louder and we also hear explosions.
Masayuki runs away confused (he takes the shopping bags).
The stage is empty.
A pause, and then Tetsuzo enters with a bag from a convenience store.*

Tetsuzo: I'm back... Masa, Masa?

Tetsuzo picks up the large bag and exits, looking for Masayuki.

Act 4

Slide: How do you spell "conscientious"?

The doorbell rings.

*Nothing happens.
Once again the doorbell chimes.*

Masayuki (*voice from off stage*): It's open!

*Kazumi enters carrying shopping bags, followed by Akio.
Masayuki enters from the room upstage.*

Kazumi: Did you wait long?

*There is something different about Masayuki. He now seems like a leader,
drenched in responsibility. He looks at Kazumi intently.*

Kazumi: What's the matter?

Masayuki: ...I'm sorry. My memory is a bit out of fuzzy. Uh, what is your name?

Akio: What the hell?

Kazumi: I'm Haruko.

Akio: It's Kazumi.

Masayuki: Haruko. My name is Masayuki Harada. (*Looking at the bags*) Wow, look at these fresh vegetables. Where did you find them?

Kazumi: Where? The supermarket nearby.

Masayuki: I see. So the infrastructure is still in operation?

Kazumi: Huh?

The doorbell rings.

Tetsuzo: I'm home.

Tetsuzo enters with the big bag.

Tetsuzo: (*looking at Masayuki*) What happened to you Masa?? I looked everywhere for you. I wish you'd told me you were heading back!

Masayuki: Is that so?

Tetsuzo: Really! Look what I bought!

He takes four portable barbecue sets out of the bag.

Akio: Bull's eye!

Tetsuzo: What do you think? This should be enough right?

Masayuki: These are for cooking. Ah, so the gas lines don't work any more.

Tetsuzo: What are you blabbering about? You want to grill some fish on them?

Kazumi: Shall we all chip in?

Tetsuzo: It's ok. We're about to die anyway.

Masayuki: Please don't talk like that. Umm...

Tetsuzo: What?

Masayuki: I'm very sorry but I can't think of your name. This isn't the first time we've met is it?

Tetsuzo: What? You mean you don't remember? *(He exchanges a look with Kazumi)* ...It's Hello Kitty.

Masayuki: Hello Kitty? Is that some kind of joke?

Tetsuzo: What?!

Masayuki: Never mind. It's a pleasure to meet you. Well, shall we get ready?

Masayuki exits upstage.

Tetsuzo: Yes, we should get ready. *(To Kazumi)* What did you get?

Kazumi: Just some stuff. Some meat and vegetables.

Tetsuzo: Well I got these portable grills *(he looks into the bags)*, how about a barbecue?

Masayuki returns with duct tape.

Masayuki: A barbecue? We can have a barbecue at a time like this? That's absolutely amazing!

Tetsuzo: I can whip up some pickles too.

Masayuki: Pickles? We can have pickles at a time like this? Amazing!

As he says this Masayuki begins to tape big "x"s on the windows with the duct-tape.

Tetsuzo: What on earth do you usually eat? Hey, Masa, what are you doing?

Masayuki: What am I doing? I'm getting ready.

Akio: He's a man of action..

Tetsuzo: You're trying to seal the windows right? The tape has to be vertical.

Masayuki: Seal them? Why would we seal them?

Tetsuzo: What are you talking about? We have to make it airtight in here.

Masayuki: Huh? This is what you do to keep the glass splinters from flying around in an explosion.

Kazumi: Explosion?

Akio: We're going to die in an explosion!?

Tetsuzo: What explosion? I don't want anything painful.

Masayuki: Well there's nothing we can do. Surgical bombing isn't that accurate. We have to assume there's going to be collateral damage.

Kazumi/Akio: Collateral damage?

Tetsuzo: Collateral damage? What collateral damage? The only collateral damage I know is that Schwarzenegger movie. What collateral damage?

Masayuki: *(laughing)* Stop joking. This is an emergency and we became human shields knowing full well that there was a strong possibility of collateral damage.

Tetsuzo: ...I don't know where to start.

Akio: Don't give up. Just take it one at a time.

Kazumi: What do you mean by emergency?

Masayuki: *(astounded)* You volunteered to be a human shield and you're asking me what the emergency is? I don't believe this!

Tetsuzo: Me neither.

Kazumi: Who exactly volunteered to be a human shield?

Masayuki: Stop joking.

Tetsuzo: I'm not joking.

Masayuki: If you're not joking then everyone is going to think you've lost your mind. Anyway. I'll tape up the windows. Please prep the food.

Masayuki exits into the room upstage.

Tetsuzo: *(to Kazumi)* What is going on!?

Kazumi: I have no idea.

Tetsuzo: By emergency he means... he means...

Kazumi: He's talking about war isn't he?

Tetsuzo: So he thinks we're at war?

Kazumi: It seems so.

Tetsuzo: By human shield he means... he means...

Kazumi: It's a strategy to prevent bombings by deliberately placing civilians in a combat target zone. They use human shields to protect schools and hospitals and stuff

Tetsuzo: So this means Masa's... Masa's...

Kazumi: Masa's?

Tetsuzo: Masa's actually gone crazy right?

Akio: Bingo!

Kazumi: No, he's in a delusional state.

Tetsuzo: Delusional state... Haruko, what are you, like a doctor or something?

Akio: She's a counselor, not doctor.

Kazumi: No, I just have an interest in psychology.

Tetsuzo: Oh really. So, what should we do?

Kazumi is thinking.

Tetsuzo: Wouldn't it be better to take him to a hospital?

Kazumi: Yes. I think that would be best.

Akio: What! Does the story end here then?

Tetsuzo: *(Forcefully)* No. It can't be us who takes him.

Kazumi: Why is that?

Tetsuzo: Because they'll want to know who we are. We'll end up having to talk about why we're here. Then this whole thing will come out. If we're found out it'll be horrible. Totally horrible.

Kazumi: But...

Tetsuzo: I wonder if we can make him go to the hospital by himself? He can walk right in and say "It seems I've gone off the deep end, so I thought I'd drop by."

Kazumi: I don't think so.

Tetsuzo: Well what are we going to do?! How about we contact Masa's parents? How could we find out how to reach them?

Akio: All right, forget being human shields, let's try being human helmets!

Kazumi: This is no time for your stupid jokes!

Tetsuzo: What?

Kazumi: Oh, I'm sorry.

Tetsuzo: I forgot, you're nuts too. I'm the only sane one around here. I have to think, I have to think! I'm going to the bathroom.

Tetsuzo exits.

Kazumi takes out her cell phone.

Akio: Well this is turning out to be pretty boring. Is this the end?

Kazumi: ...

Masayuki returns.

Masayuki: Where's Hello Kitty?

Kazumi: He went to the bathroom.

Masayuki: I thought I would help out with the cooking.

Kazumi: All right.

Masayuki: Haruko, I have a favor to ask. While Hello Kitty and I are cooking could you write up an appeal and tape it up outside the window?

Kazumi: An appeal?

Masayuki: Stating that there are non-combatants here as a human shield. That will make it harder for them to bomb us.

Kazumi: Say that again?

Masayuki: Use large print and write "Human Shield." Or "Anti-War" or "Non-Combatants" or "Conscientious Objectors" and such. In English and Japanese.

Kazumi: In English?

Masayuki: You can handle that can't you?

Kazumi: Yes.

Akio: No.

Masayuki: Tear some pages out of that notebook in the next room... There's a marker there too. Thanks.

Kazumi: All right.

Masayuki leaves.

Kazumi takes her cell phone out again.

Akio: Part of a counselor's job is to play along with your client's delusions, isn't it?

Kazumi: It depends on the situation.

Akio: Looks like you're gonna lose them too.

Kazumi looks at Akio.

Akio: You had the opportunity to meet those two, but in the end, it was meaningless. You thought this time you'd succeed in helping some suicidal people!

Kazumi silently puts the cell phone away.

Akio: Shall we write up the appeals?

Kazumi: I have a question for you.

Akio: What?

Kazumi: How do you spell "non-combatant"?

Akio: If you don't know how should I know?

Kazumi: How do spell "conscientious"?

Akio: Yo.

Kazumi: You're a pretty worthless vision.

Akio: Don't take your frustration out on me!

Kazumi: I'm going to the other room, are you coming?!

Kazumi exits followed by Akio.

Act 5

Slide: The same is true of a grandchild

Masayuki and Tetsuzo enter laden with items for a barbecue (meat, charcoal brazier, plates, chopsticks etc...).

Tetsuzo: Hey Masa, why don't we exchange emergency contact information just in case. Like how to reach your parents?

Masayuki: From the moment I became a human shield I no longer had parents. But you can give me your information, Hello Kitty, if it'll make you feel better.

Tetsuzo (*whispering*): It's not for me, silly.

Masayuki: Hello Kitty, tell me, why did you become a human shield?

Tetsuzo: Why?... Can't say that I really know...

Masayuki: You came here without really knowing why?

Tetsuzo: I came here because... well...

Masayuki: There's a chance that we'll die. Are you all right with that?

Tetsuzo: What I mean is... Yes. I came here to die.

Masayuki: You've made up your mind?

Tetsuzo: Huh?... Yeah, kind of.

Masayuki: You're not considering the possibility that we'll survive?

Tetsuzo: No. I intend to die.

Masayuki: That's amazing. That's very noble of you.

Tetsuzo: I do have certain conditions.

Masayuki: Conditions?

Tetsuzo: Don't worry about it.

Masayuki (*changing his tone*): We're going to have a party tonight.

Tetsuzo: What?

Masayuki: To celebrate the three of us meeting. We don't know how long we'll be able to live like this so we might as well have fun while we can.

Tetsuzo: Right.

Kazumi and Akio enter.

Kazumi: I finished the appeals. Could you take a look at them before I tape them up?

Akio: Make no mistake, there are some spelling mistakes.

Masayuki: Let's eat. We've just finished as well.

Tetsuzo: I'll go and fill this with charcoal.

Tetsuzo takes portable barbecue sets and exits.

Masayuki: Hello Kitty's pickles are pretty tasty. We also have five different dressings for the salad -- all different flavors. What a feast!

Akio: You brought all that dressing yourself.

Tetsuzo returns with the brazier full of charcoal.

Tetsuzo: We bought all this stuff so we'd better use it... Let's eat! Throw that meat on the grill.

*Meat is placed on the brazier.
The meat begins to cook.*

Masayuki: We'd better open the window a bit. It's pretty dangerous if we don't ventilate.

Tetsuzo/Masayuki/Akio: ...

Kazumi: Ok.

*Kazumi mimes opening the window.
They begin to eat.*

Masayuki: I'd like to go over a few things, if that's all right.

Tetsuzo and Kazumi look at Masayuki

Masayuki: As of today we are human shields in the service of preventing the spread of the Far East Asian War. I want each of us to confirm that no one is being forced to do anything against his or her own will.

Tetsuzo: What do you mean?

Masayuki: Just what I said. If you want to quit, you can quit anytime. You can decide not to be a human shield and return to the demilitarized zone.

Tetsuzo/Kazumi:...

Akio: Where the hell is the demilitarized zone?

Masayuki: No one has been coerced into doing this, right?

Tetsuzo/Kazumi: Right.

Akio: Oh really?

Masayuki: That's all I wanted to know. My name is Masayuki Harada. (*As if joking*) I used to be a successful business man (*more seriously*) but I quit all of that to become a human shield. I'm single, no girlfriend. It's nice to meet you.

Tetsuzo: ... I'm Hello Kitty. I'm a business man. Why I'm here I'm not sure, but it's a pleasure to meet you too.

Masayuki: Do you have any family?

Tetsuzo: No, I don't.

Kazumi: I'm Haruko Yamashita. I'm not very good at conversation but I like it very much. It's nice to meet you.

Akio: I'm Akio Hirayama. I'm a high school senior. My hobbies include...

Masayuki: (*ignoring Akio*) Aren't you two celebrities?

Akio: Hey, I'm not finished!

Tetsuzo/Kazumi: Celebrities?

Masayuki: Yes. When celebrities become human shields it generates more media attention. Aren't you celebrities?

Tetsuzo: Unfortunately, no, I'm not.

Kazumi: Neither am I.

Masayuki: I see. I'm not a celebrity either. Just a regular civilian. But there are things that even a regular civilian can do to change the world.

Akio: The meat is burning.

Kazumi, Tetsuzo and Masayuki continue eating.

Tetsuzo: Can I ask a question?

Masayuki: What is it.

Tetsuzo: What does a human shield actually do?

Masayuki: Hm? What do you mean?

Tetsuzo: I'm sorry it's just that I'm new to this human shield thing and I don't understand it very well. Can you explain to me what we're going to be doing next?

Masayuki: We're all new to this. I don't think there is any such thing as a professional human shield.

Tetsuzo: Right. So what do we do?

Masayuki: Nothing. We simply draw attention to the fact that there are people here.

Tetsuzo: We don't DO anything?

Masayuki: That's right. The important thing is that we're here.

Tetsuzo: It's that easy to be a human shield? Your value is recognized just by being there? It's practically like being someone's first grandchild.

Masayuki: But you never know when you might die.

Tetsuzo: The same is true of a grandchild.

Kazumi: Why are we here in particular?

Masayuki: What? You came here without even knowing that?

Tetsuzo: You'll have to excuse us. After all we're new at this.

*Masayuki stands and mimes opening a window.
He gestures for Tetsuzo and Kazumi to join him.
Akio tags along.*

Akio: What, what? What is it?

Masayuki: *(looking out the window and pointing with his chopsticks)* That's a nursery school across the street from this building.

Kazumi: A nursery school.

Masayuki: We have to protect the nursery school, and make sure they don't bomb it!

Tetsuzo/Kazumi/Akio: Huh?

Kazumi: Why would anyone drop bombs on it?

Masayuki: There's a local FM radio station two apartment buildings down. Right now they're leaning towards pro-American broadcasts, but there's no telling when they might change. That's why it's dangerous.

Tetsuzo: That's why?

Masayuki: The radio station is a hundred and fifty meters from the nursery school, as the crow flies. The margin of error in surgical bombing is two hundred meters, so the nursery school is within the bomb zone.

Tetsuzo: (*casually*) I don't think there are going to be any bombs.

Masayuki: This is an emergency. See a bomb fell right over there.

Tetsuzo: That's a construction site.

Masayuki: There. And there. We're getting clobbered.

Tetsuzo: That's just a road construction.

Masayuki: I can understand why you would want to think so, but reality tells a different story.

Akio: What a wonderful imagination!

Masayuki: Countless people are dying every day, but we all keep living our lives without giving up.

Pause.

Masayuki: (*glancing upwards*) That's the moon isn't it. We all look up at the same moon, no matter which side we're on.

Tetsuzo: That's true.

Akio: That moon is... (*he is suddenly silent*)

Kazumi: (*looking at Akio*) What?

Akio: ...

Masayuki closes the window.

Masayuki: Shall we get back to dinner?

Masayuki and Tetsuzo go back to the table.

Akio: That crescent moon is... *(again he is suddenly silent)*

Kazumi: ?

Kazumi goes back to the table.

Tetsuzo: Hey, so basically human shields just eat and sleep, eat and sleep. Is that all?

Masayuki: I suppose so.

Tetsuzo: I don't like it. We'll just get fat. Fat and stupid. That's the worst possible thing for a person. I don't like it at all!

Masayuki: But we're human shield, we can't go on the offensive; and we're not the Red Cross so...

Tetsuzo: But I can't stand not doing anything. Haruko, you don't want to get fat do you?

Kazumi: No, no, not at all.

Masayuki: I understand but...

Tetsuzo, Masayuki and Kazumi eat in silence.

Akio: It's getting burnt again. See. This one too. Eat up. Eat up and get fat.

Tetsuzo: I can't stand living like this! I'm going home!

Kazumi: Hello Kitty!

Masayuki: ...There is one thing we can do.

Tetsuzo: What is it?

Masayuki: It may be an unusual suggestion.

Tetsuzo: That's ok. Just tell us. What is it?

Masayuki: Volunteering for community service.

Tetsuzo: What are you talking about?

Masayuki: We can provide entertainment for the nursery school.

Kazumi: You mean visiting the nursery school as a means of civic engagement?

Masayuki: Yes. I think that bringing joy to children living in times like these is noble work. Fortunately human shields have nothing but time.

Tetsuzo: What the hell are you talking about?

Akio: Yeah!

Tetsuzo: We are trying to end our lives, what business do we have trying to do noble deeds?

Akio: Yeah!

Kazumi: What exactly do you have in mind?

Masayuki: Providing entertainment in nursery schools usually entails singing or magic shows I think. Umm, I don't suppose either of you play any instruments?

Tetsuzo: I didn't think that was a requirement!

Masayuki: Of course not. I don't play anything either. So I thought...

Kazumi: You thought?

Masayuki: I thought we should put on a play.

Tetsuzo/Kazumi/Akio: A play?!

Masayuki: I mean, we don't have to if you don't want to, but there's isn't much else we can do, so I thought maybe a play... I mean I'd probably get in trouble for saying this, since it is a nursery school the play wouldn't have to be very good for them to enjoy it. We have plenty of time to rehearse.

Akio: I feel faint.

Tetsuzo/Kazumi: ...

Masayuki: Never mind. I'm sorry. It's all my fault for suggesting something selfishly. I thought rehearsing a play might be fun. I remember being in a school play in elementary school and it was a lot of fun. I thought that even if we were hit by a bomb we could die having fun.

Tetsuzo: What?

Masayuki: Nobody wants to die suffering. I thought if we were rehearsing a play we could be bombed while we were laughing. Maybe this way we could have fun as we were dying. I'm sorry, it's a crazy idea, right?

Tetsuzo: ... Actually, I don't think it is.

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: What?

Tetsuzo: I've never been in a play, but do you think I could do it?

Masayuki: Yes! It's a lot of fun.

Tetsuzo: Shall we give it a shot?

Kazumi: Wa-wait a minute.

Akio: I don't believe this!

Tetsuzo: (*finishing eating*) Time to start rehearsal!

Kazumi: Please wait a minute.

Masayuki: We ought to clean up first.

Tetsuzo: After we clean up it's rehearsal. (*To Kazumi*) And you -- make sure to do some vocal warm ups.

Tetsuzo and Masayuki exit with the barbecue things.

Akio: A play could be fun.

Kazumi takes out her cell phone.

Akio: Hey!

Kazumi: I've had enough. This is an emergency situation.

Akio: Now you're going to give up?

Kazumi: I'll ask Dr. Benitani to take care of them at the hospital. That way I can still check up on him.

Kazumi begins to dial her phone.

Akio: If you do that, I will never go away, for rest of your life.

Kazumi's hands stop and she looks at Akio.

Akio: I will never disappear from you.

Kazumi: You don't want to disappear.

Akio: No, I don't. But are you ok with that?

Kazumi stares at Akio.

Masayuki returns, preoccupied by Tetsuzo off stage.

Masayuki: I'm really sorry Haruko. I've completely confused you and Hello Kitty with my bizarre ideas.

Kazumi is still staring at Akio.

Masayuki: It's completely my fault. Don't go along with this. I'm sorry. It's my fault. Mine.

Kazumi: Let's do it. Put on a play.

Masayuki: Huh? ... Are you sure?

Kazumi: Yes. Let's do it.

Masayuki: Oh, great! Thank you so much! The children will be overjoyed I'm sure. I'll let Hello Kitty know!

Masayuki exits.

Akio: Weren't you in an English language drama club in college?

Kazumi: That was a traumatic experience for me.

Akio: Come on.

Kazumi: ...What was it you were about to say a while ago?

Akio: A while ago?

Kazumi: When you were looking at the moon, you were about to say something weren't you?

Akio: If you don't remember then neither do I.

Act 6

Slide: She spent so many nights thinking how he did her wrong

Tetsuzo runs on.

Tetsuzo: Haruko darling! This is fabulous!

Tetsuzo embraces Haruko.

Tetsuzo: We'll finally be able to die having fun!

Kazumi: Yes.

Tetsuzo: What is your other self saying about all this?

Akio: I'm looking forward to some stunning performances.

Kazumi: My other self says that putting on a play is hard work.

Tetsuzo: That's right. My other self is always critical of my real self. That's because my other self is perfect. But don't worry. It'll soon be over!
(Speaking up stage) Masa! Hurry up! Let's get started!

Masayuki enters with a script.

Tetsuzo: What kind of play is it? I hope it's not too complicated. My preference would be for something spectacular, with dance numbers, feather costumes and a spinning disco ball.

Akio: I don't think so.

Kazumi: Do we have a script?

Masayuki: Yes. I thought we'd do this.

Masayuki indicates the script.

Tetsuzo: Let's see here... "The Tale of the Red Ogre and the Blue Ogre."

Akio: Are you serious?

Tetsuzo: Isn't that a fairy tale?

Masayuki: I thought a fairy tale would be suitable for a nursery school children.

Kazumi: That makes sense.

Masayuki: This is the actual script that we used in my school production, when I was in the 6th grade.

Tetsuzo: You kept it all this time?

Masayuki: The first graders enjoyed this very much, so I think the nursery school will too.

Kazumi: What role did you play, Masa?

Masayuki: I was one of the villagers. I just love this story.

Tetsuzo: Is that why you picked it?

Masayuki: There's also another reason. This country may not exist for much longer right?

Tetsuzo/Kazumi/Akio: !

Masayuki: I don't want Japan to be forgotten. Then I started to think, what is Japan, exactly?

Kazumi: And?

Masayuki: I thought maybe it is its stories. The stories that are beloved by the people. So I chose "The Tale of the Red Ogre and the Blue Ogre." I don't want the children to forget it.

Akio: I'd forgotten that one.

Tetsuzo: Well, let's get started!

Masayuki: First of all...

Tetsuzo: First of all?

Masayuki: We have to cast it. We have to decide who's going to play what part.

Tetsuzo: Yes!

Masayuki: First of all the Red Ogre.

Tetsuzo: Me!

Akio: This guy's inexhaustible.

Masayuki: Great. Tetsuzo you'll play the Red Ogre. Next, the Red Ogre's best friend, the Blue Ogre.

Tetsuzo: Me!

Masayuki: You can't do both.

Tetsuzo: Why not? People get double-cast all the time don't they?

Masayuki: The Blue Ogre and the Red Ogre have scenes where they talk to each other.

Tetsuzo: Nowadays that sort of thing is a cinch. We can use some CG.

Akio: Do you even know what CG stands for?

Kazumi: I know, right?

Tetsuzo: See even Haruko agrees. It's not a problem.

Kazumi: No, you're talking about the movies. We're talking about a play.

Tetsuzo: I love them both, movies and plays.

Kazumi: That's not the issue here.

Tetsuzo: Why? Is it wrong to like both movies and plays? Do you have to choose one or the other? That's impossible.

Masayuki: Let's put the Ogres aside for the moment and move onto the villagers. Who wants to play the villager who is terrified of the Red Ogre.

Tetsuzo: Me!

Masayuki: ... the villager who's attacked by the Blue Ogre.

Tetsuzo: Me!

Masayuki: ... the villager who visits Red Ogre.

Tetsuzo: Me!

Kazumi: Hello Kitty needs to exit the stage!

Akio: Has he gone bonkers?

Masayuki: Think for a moment about the people we're trying to entertain.

Tetsuzo: I want to be acting the whole time. I mean what happens if we get hit by a bomb and I'm off stage? That wouldn't be fun at all. If I'm constantly on stage, I'll die while having fun. So I want to be on stage the whole time.

Masayuki: Look....

Kazumi: I understand. I think we can make this work -- if you wait a second.

Tetsuzo: We can?

Kazumi: Yes, I think we can work it out. *(To Masayuki)* Let's the two of us cast the play.

Masayuki: Good idea.

Kazumi: I think you should play the Red Ogre, Masa.

Tetsuzo: Really?

Kazumi: And Hello Kitty will be the Blue Ogre.

Tetsuzo: Just one? You only giving me one role?

Kazumi: One is plenty.

Masayuki: What about you Haruko?

Kazumi: I'll play... who else is in this play?

Masayuki: There's the narrator and the villagers. Several villagers.

Tetsuzo: Do you want me to play them?

Kazumi: Ok I'll play the villagers.

Masayuki: Could you also do the narration?

Tetsuzo: Do you want me to?

Kazumi: Can I?

Masayuki: Yes, please. That's settled.

Akio: Hold up, what about me?

Masayuki: Shall we get started?

Tetsuzo: Oooh I can't wait!

Kazumi: All right.

Akio: What about me?! *(To Kazumi)* You don't even want to act, but I do! I've got what it takes!

Masayuki: Haruko could you begin by reading?

Kazumi: Yes..

Akio: *(to Kazumi)* Let me do it! Let me do it! Let me do it! Let me do it! This is totally embarrassing for me to say, but anyway, let me do it!

Kazumi: Be quiet!

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: !?

Kazumi: ... *(to Masayuki and Tetsuzo)* I'm very sorry, but would it be ok to give my other self a role as well?

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: *(nodding and smiling)* Yes.

Kazumi: ... Would you play the villagers?

Akio: I want to play the Blue Ogre.

Kazumi: *(to Masayuki and Tetsuzo)* She's thrilled.

Masayuki: So the other Haruko will play Villager 2.

Akio: No. My name is Akio Hirayama. I'm not going to let this go. If you don't fix this I'm not going to stop talking. I can talk for a long time. I'll just keep on talking.

Tetsuzo: Hey how do you rehearse a play anyway.

Akio: (*simultaneously*) I'm Akio Hirayama. I'm not just another you!

Masayuki: So we use this script and...

Akio: (*simultaneously*) I'm right here! I don't care if I'm an illusion you created! I'm still here!

Tetsuzo: But is this the only copy?

Akio: (*simultaneously*) I am Akio Hirayama!

Kazumi: (*despite herself*) All right!

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: Huh?

Kazumi: ... Umm. It's about Villager 2.

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: ...Yes?

Kazumi: The role will be played not by my other self, but by Akio Hirayama.

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: ...Akio Hirayama.

Akio: Thank you for that introduction. I am Akio Hirayama. I will be playing the role of Villager 2 but I am secretly plotting to take over the role of Blue Ogre. Thank you.

Tetsuzo: OK, shall we continue?

Kazumi: Uh?

Masayuki: Yes. What shall we do about the script?

Kazumi: Excuse me...

Tetsuzo: Haruko. What do you think kindness is?

Kazumi: What?

Tetsuzo: Many people think that kindness means to consider another person's feelings. But to consider another person's feelings implies barging into that person's heart. I don't think that's kindness. In my opinion kindness is leaving a person alone.

Kazumi: ...

Tetsuzo: Ok. Repeat after me: "Kindness is leaving a person alone."

Kazumi: ... Excuse me. I'm going to borrow your bathroom.

Kazumi exits.

Akio follows her.

Tetsuzo: (*suddenly*) Who is it? Who is it? Who is Akio Hirayama? Her boyfriend? Her lover? Who is it?

Masayuki: Hello Kitty.

Tetsuzo: Oh she is sick. She is so very sick. This entire country is very very sick! Repeat after me: "So very very sick."

Masayuki: Your attitude is too inconsistent.

Tetsuzo: I am kindness itself! Kindness and an irrepressible curiosity about people. These are the basics for survival in the 21st Century.

Masayuki: Is that right?

Tetsuzo: (*casually*) Goodness. Here I am talking about survival when I'm trying to die.

Masayuki: You won't die. Just because you are a human shield it doesn't mean you'll die.

Tetsuzo: That's true. (*Shifting*) So, who do you think it is? Akio Hirayama. It's got to be her boyfriend right? But what do you think it means when someone sees a vision of their boyfriend all the time? Did he commit suicide? Is that why she sees him? Maybe she was afraid, she was petrified, kept thinking she could never live without him by her side. And she spent so many nights thinking how he did her wrong, she grew strong, she's learning how to carry on -- but she just can't forget him?

Masayuki: I wonder.

Kazumi returns followed by Akio.

Kazumi: Sorry about that.

Masayuki: Let's begin.

Tetsuzo: So there's only one copy of the script?

Masayuki: Oh, yes.

Tetsuzo: In a play rehearsal, each person has a copy of the script right? I saw that on TV.

Masayuki: That's true but...

Tetsuzo: Shall I go and make some more copies?

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: What?

Tetsuzo: It's not a big deal. I can do it in a flash at the convenience store.

Masayuki: Going out at night is very dangerous. You don't know where the snipers are.

Tetsuzo: It's OK. I'll just shout "I'm a civilian!" as I walk.

Masayuki: But...

Tetsuzo: I'm going. So copies for Haruko and for me, just two sets?

Masayuki: Yeah.

Akio: Hey.

Kazumi. Umm could you make three?

Tetsuzo: Three... Oh, for Akio Hirayama.

Kazumi: That's right.

Tetsuzo: Got it.

Masayuki: It's too dangerous.

Tetsuzo: It's OK. I'll be right back. Ta ta.

Tetsuzo exits.

Masayuki: I'm worried.

Kazumi: He'll be fine. Hello Kitty is very tough.

Masayuki: That doesn't change the circumstances.

Kazumi: I guess not.

*Tetsuzo appears in another space.
He is talking on a cell phone.*

Tetsuzo: Oh, hello. It's Daddy. Is Mom there? In the bath? No, just tell her that I'm spending the night at a friend's house. Yeah. Something came up. His name is Goto. Yeah. Bye.

*Tetsuzo hangs up.
Exits.*

Masayuki: Haruko, why did you decide to become a human shield?

Kazumi: Why?

Masayuki: I just thought, weren't you scared as a lone woman by yourself? Do you mind if I ask what you do for a living?

Kazumi: I... was a counselor.

Akio: Why are you telling him?

Masayuki: Counselor?

Kazumi: I was a counselor at a high school. I held office hours in the nurse's office a few times a week.

Masayuki: But why would a counselor want to be a human shield?

Kazumi: This may upset you, but I wanted to think about death.

Masayuki: Death...

Kazumi: At the high school where I worked, was a student who committed suicide. It was my fault. I haven't been able to work since.

Akio: ...

Kazumi: I wanted to know why anyone would commit suicide.

Masayuki: Why...

The doorbell chimes.

Masayuki: That's probably Hello Kitty.

Masayuki exits.

Akio: Why did you tell him?!

Kazumi: I don't know.

Tetsuzo returns, followed by Masayuki.

Tetsuzo: Did you miss me?

Masayuki: I'm just glad you're safe.

Tetsuzo hands out the scripts.

Tetsuzo: They're clipped together.

Kazumi: You've thought of everything.

Tetsuzo: Leave it to me.

Masayuki: The city's infrastructure is still functioning?

Tetsuzo: That's right. Where is Akio Hirayama?

Akio: Here, here.

Kazumi: Right there. But he can't hold a...

Tetsuzo goes to Akio.

Tetsuzo: Here?

Akio: Yes.

Kazumi: Yes.

Tetsuzo puts the script at Akio's feet.

Tetsuzo: Will this do?

Kazumi: Yes.

Akio: Thank you. This is the first act of kindness anyone has shown me since I died.

Masayuki: Now let's begin.

Act 7

Slide: Making Butter in a Trappist Monastery

Tetsuzo: Oh, this play was written by someone named Hirosuke Hamada. In 1933!

Kazumi: So it's not a folk story?

Tetsuzo: I thought it was too.

Masayuki: Haruko, could you begin with the narration?

Kazumi: Yes. "The Tale of the Red Ogre and the Blue Ogre" By Hirosuke Hamada. *(Heavily affected)* "Once upon a time..."

Masayuki: *(right away)* No, that's too unnatural.

Kazumi: Really? I was trying to give it some feeling like those old TV shows.

Masayuki: I think a normal delivery would be fine.

Kazumi: Really? That's kind of boring.

Tetsuzo/Akio: Boring is better than unnatural.

Kazumi: "Once upon a time there was a kind-hearted Red Ogre. The Red Ogre was very lonely. The Red Ogre wanted friends. The Red Ogre thought about this all the time:"

Masayuki: "I wish there were some way that I could live with the humans in harmony."

Kazumi: "One day the Red Ogre..."

Tetsuzo: Excuse me do you mind?

Kazumi: What?

Tetsuzo: I haven't had any lines yet.

Kazumi/Akio/Masayuki: Huh?

Masayuki: The Blue Ogre is coming up soon.

Tetsuzo: That's not what I mean. You said you would fix it. Right now, I'm lonely.
If I were to die now, I would die feeling lonely!

Kazumi: I understand but...

Tetsuzo: What are you trying to say? You're the one who said you would fix it,
Haruko!

Akio: Then why don't you play a tree in the forest?

Kazumi: Huh?

Akio: A tree in the forest. He'd be on stage the whole time.

Kazumi: A-ha, that's a brilliant idea! Hello Kitty you can play...

Tetsuzo: Yes?

Kazumi: A tree in the forest.

Tetsuzo: Are you making fun of me?

Kazumi: Why?

Tetsuzo: Hello! Do you think I'm ok with dying as a tree? Does a tree feel
anything? What happens if I'm killed while playing a tree? Will I be happy
as a tree?

Akio: Interesting question, but...

Masayuki: How's this -- The Blue Ogre is supposed to live far away in the
mountains. What if you portrayed his daily life there.

Tetsuzo: Daily life?

Masayuki: Yes. Be at your daily life.

Tetsuzo: Right, I've got it.

Kazumi: Let's continue: "The Red Ogre thought about this all the time:"

Masayuki: "I wish there were some way that I could live with the humans in harmony."

Kazumi: "One day the Red Ogre could no longer keep this feeling locked up in his heart."

Tetsuzo: "Ahhh. I had a such a good sleep. I think I'll go for a walk. Walk walk walk. Huh? What's a car doing up here in the mountains? Let's take a look. Aha. Three young people. It must be a web-based suicide pact. May they rest in peace. Amen."

Masayuki/Kazumi/Akio: Shut up!

Tetsuzo: But you told me to go about my daily life.

Kazumi: You can go about your life but you can't talk!

Tetsuzo: That's awkward. It's part of daily life to talk! It's not like I've taken a vow of silence and am making butter in a Trappist Monastery.

Akio: Do you have to be so long-winded to make your point?

Masayuki: Tetsuzo.

Tetsuzo: But she was being ridiculous.

Kazumi: I know. Hello Kitty, could you play a happy little bird of the forest?

Tetsuzo: A happy little bird of the forest?

Kazumi: Yes. A happy little bird of the forest, that flies around Red Ogre's house.

Tetsuzo: What kind?

Kazumi: I leave that up to you. *(To Masayuki)* That's ok isn't it?

Masayuki: Yes. I think the children will like it.

Tetsuzo: So in other words, if I were to lose consciousness now, I would die as a little bird. *(Smiles)* But I guess that's just the wheel of life.

Akio: There you go.

Kazumi: Ok. Let's keep going.

Tetsuzo: All right. Leave it to me. *(makes the sound of a nightingale)*

Akio: Of course he'd choose a nightingale!

Kazumi: "The Red Ogre wanted friends so badly that he put a wooden sign out in front of his house."

Masayuki: (*writing*) "This is the house of a kind-hearted Ogre. Won't you drop in for a cup of tea and a bite to eat?"

Tetsuzo: "Peep, peep."

Akio: Now don't tell... Could it be a sparrow?

Kazumi: "The next day, a villager passed in front of the Red Ogre's house."

Akio: Is that Villager 1 or Villager 2?

Kazumi: "Villager 1 saw the sign and thought it was very strange. After reading it a number of times he returned to the village and said to his friend Villager 2, 'By golly, I have never been more flabbergasted in all my life.' Villager 2 answered:"

Akio: "Is that so? What is it that's made you feel this way?"

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: ...? (*they don't hear Akio of course*)

Kazumi: "There is a sign in front of that house. And this sign said some mighty strange things."

Akio: "You say there is a sign in front of that house. What did that sign say?"

Tetsuzo: This is irritating. Can you please do something about these pauses?

Kazumi: I guess you can't hear him after all?

Masayuki and Tetsuzo shake their heads.

Kazumi: Maybe he can be heard only by the pure of heart.

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: ...

Masayuki: Akio Hirayama, could you give us that line one more time?

Akio: "You say there is a sign in front of that house. What did that sign say?"

Masayuki/Tetsuzo: ...

Tetsuzo: I wonder if the kids'll be able to hear him.

Masayuki: This is ridiculous.

Kazumi: Sorry!

Masayuki: There's no need to apologize.

Akio: I should say not!

Tetsuzo: Ok. I'll take over the role of Villager 2.

Akio: Hey

Kazumi: That's not...

Tetsuzo: Of course Akio Hirayama would continue to say the lines but I will say them too.

Kazumi: The two of you at the same time?

Tetsuzo: Yes. If one actor can play two roles, why can't two actors play one role?

Masayuki: Doubling actors?

Kazumi: *(to Akio)* What do you think?

Akio: No way.

Kazumi: He agrees.

Akio: Hey!

Kazumi: It's the only way the children will be able to hear him.

Masayuki: Let's try it. Take it from the line about the sign.

Kazumi: "There is a sign in front of that house. And this sign said some mighty strange things."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "You say there is a sign in front of that house. What did that sign say?"

Tetsuzo: What do you think?

Kazumi: I think it works.

Akio: Are you crazy?

Masayuki: Let's go on.

Kazumi: "Just go take a little peek. You'll be flabbergasted too, I bet!

Akio/Tetsuzo: "I best go and take a look."

Kazumi: "The Villagers came to the Red Ogre's house. 'Look. This is the sign that I told you about'."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "Let's see..."

Masayuki: "This is the house of a kind-hearted Ogre. Won't you drop in for a cup of tea and a bite to eat."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "Hell's bells! This is the handwriting of an Ogre, without a doubt."

Kazumi: "You think we ought to go in?"

Tetsuzo makes the sound of a nightingale.

Masayuki: Hello Kitty, I don't think we need birdsong any more.

Tetsuzo: Really? That's too bad.

Kazumi: "You think we ought to go in?"

Akio/Tetsuzo: "Wait, wait! I think we'd better take a peek inside first"

Kazumi: "Inside the Ogre was silently listening to the two villagers. The Ogre became impatient with the villagers, who were talking on and on but not coming in. He began to fret."

Masayuki: "Fret, fret, fret."

Kazumi: "The two villagers peeked inside the Ogre's house."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "It seems mighty quiet in there."

Kazumi: "It seems mighty spooky in there."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "He might be trying to trick us in order to gobble us up."

Kazumi: "By golly, you might be right. The horror, the horror"

Akio/Tetsuzo: "It won't do us no good to get ourselves trapped."

Kazumi: "The villagers were having second thoughts about this whole thing. The Red Ogre had been listening quietly to this, but finally he got offended and said..."

Masayuki: "How ridiculous! Who on earth is going to trap you and gobble you up? How insulting!"

Kazumi: "The honest Red Ogre stuck his bright red face out the window."

Masayuki: "Hey, Villager 1, Villager 2!"

Kazumi: "But his voice was too loud for human ears."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "It's the monster! Run for your life!"

Kazumi: "Villager 1 and 2 fled in a panic."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "Hup, two! Hup, two!"

Masayuki: "Hey, wait a minute. I'm not going to trick you. Stop! Really! I have yummy cakes and aromatic tea."

Kazumi: "The Red Ogre came out of the house and called after them earnestly. But the villagers had run away, scrambling down the mountain."

Akio/Tetsuzo: "Puff, puff, puff, puff!"

Kazumi: "The Red Ogre was very disappointed. He suddenly noticed that he had come outside without any shoes on and was standing barefoot on the hot earth."

Masayuki: "Oh, who cares!"

Masayuki becomes unsteady and almost falls over.

Tetsuzo: Masa! Are you all right?

Masayuki: I'm OK. Why don't we call it a day?

Act 8

Slide: The feelings of those who gamble their lives on the theatre

Kazumi: All right.

Tetsuzo: We have to memorize our lines anyway.

Masayuki: That's true.

Kazumi: When were you thinking that we would present our entertainment?

Masayuki: The sooner the better, I think. Even tomorrow or the next day.

Kazumi: So soon?

Masayuki: Well it would be a real waste if we died before we presented.

Kazumi: But what happens afterwards? After we've entertained?

Masayuki: That will be a good problem to have.

Kazumi: Huh? What do you mean by that?

Masayuki: I think this week is critical. Without a doubt the battle will definitely begin. The war is getting worse and worse. More and more people are dying.

Pause.

Tetsuzo: Why don't we all go to bed for today? Oh behave! I didn't mean anything by that.

Masayuki: *(to Kazumi)* Why don't you take the next room over. I'll go and find you some pajamas.

Kazumi: Thank you.

Masayuki: Hello Kitty, will you be OK in here?

Tetsuzo: What about you?

Masayuki: I'll be in the room in the back. I'll go and get some mattresses and blankets.

Kazumi: I can do that.

Masayuki: No worries.

Tetsuzo: I'll help. I don't get to share a room with you Masa? I'm disappointed...
Just kidding!

*Masayuki and Tetsuzo exit.
Kazumi lets out a heavy sigh.*

Akio: You really think you can prevent the suicides like this?

Kazumi: I'm going to stop them.

Akio: Why don't you seal up the room, light the charcoal and go into rehearsal --
and let that take all of us away?

Kazumi: If we did that, it would be the end of you too you know.

Akio: Oh, right ...That's problematic.

Kazumi: Don't you have another reason?

Akio: What do you mean?

Kazumi: An ulterior motive. Other than to eliminate me.

Akio: *(thinking)* I wonder.

Tetsuzo and Masayuki enter carrying mattresses and blankets.

Masayuki: These are for you Haruko. Shall I put them in your room?

Kazumi: That's ok. I'll do it myself.

Masayuki: Well good night. I'm pretty tired out so I'm going to bed.

Kazumi/Tetsuzo: Good night.

Masayuki exits.

Tetsuzo: Of course he's tired. The inside of his head is spinning around like a top.

Kazumi: ...

Tetsuzo: Shall we hit the hay too?

Kazumi: Yes.

Tetsuzo: You know I hate this country.

Kazumi: What?

Tetsuzo: The intrusive interpersonal relations. People don't respect your privacy and feel like they can just close in on you. I really hate it.

Kazumi: Right...

Tetsuzo: So, who is this Akio, exactly?

Kazumi: Good night.

Tetsuzo: Good night. Where's Akio?

Akio: Right here, right here.

Kazumi: Right there.

Tetsuzo: *(to Akio)* Good night.

Kazumi exits with blankets, followed by Akio.

The light dims.

Masayuki appears in a different space.

He is looking at the screen of a computer.

Masayuki: Potassium nitrite; 200 grams. Powdered sulphur; 200 grams.
Bituminous coal or wheat flour. One disposable chopstick. One funnel.

The light on Masayuki goes out, and Tetsuzo comes into view.

Tetsuzo is writing something on a piece of paper.

Tetsuzo: ...Where shall I start? Yasuko, by the time you read this letter, I will no longer be in this world. You'll be receiving one hundred million yen from the life insurance policy. Even after paying off my debts you should still have eighty million. ...I gotta pee.

Tetsuzo exits.

Black out.

---- INTERVAL ----

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