

# ***Festival of Intolerance***

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### Cast of Characters

Ken Sawada	male, early 30s. A self-proclaimed artist who sells poems and dances on the street.
Hotaru Aoi*	female, mid-20s. An alien in human form. The 83 <sup>rd</sup> Queen of the Epicurals.
Haruka Fuji*	female, mid-20s. A human whose form has been copied by an alien. A bit vulgar.
Hotaru Aoi B	female, mid-40s. Plump. The first form of the 83 <sup>rd</sup> Queen of the Epicurals.
Ryota Shimizu	male, 40s. Leader of the Homeland Defense Force movement to protect the homeland from alien invasion.
Hazuki Oki	female, 30s. Prominent member of the Homeland Defense Force.
Kazuya Mori	male, 40s. Freelance TV director. He is trying to make a program about aliens.
Tsvartokian**	female, 30s. An alien female who has taken the form of a human male.
Masato Ban**	male, 30s. A human whose form was copied by Tsvartokian.
Apirmu Hirata	male, 20s. An alien in human form. An aspiring TV director.
Tetsu Kuroi	male, 40s. An alien representative in human form.

### Ensemble

\* Hotaru Aoi and Haruka Fuji are played by the same actor.

\*\* Tsvartokian and Masato Ban are played by the same actor.

Scene 1

*KAZUYA MORI's office. APIRMU HIRATA enters and bows. He begins a presentation in the form of a kamishibai paper drama (paper slide show). The first slide is a title page, with the hand-written text "Festival of Intolerance Documentary Project". He continues with the presentation which is accompanied by charmingly crude drawings.*

HIRATA

Uh, as you know, six years ago, *(showing picture of aliens arriving)* 5,800,000 aliens suddenly came to Earth as refugees. *(Picture of the U.N.)* The United Nations held an emergency session and, taking a charitable stance towards alien life, accepted refugee aliens and requested each country take in a proportionate number of refugees.

Our nation, after huge national debate, decided to accept 500,000 aliens.

The aliens called themselves *(inaudible word)*. Transliterated into Earth sounds, it is "Epicural." Epicurals, from the planet Epicural, are in their native form a half solid and half liquid slime *(Picture of slime)* however, in order to live on Earth, they bravely transformed themselves into human form, in other words, they metamorphosed. *(Picture of slime turning into human)* However, many of those who had imprecise images of humans when transforming, ended up in rather unfinished forms *(Picture of unfinished human forms)* and in many regions this caused monster and ghost scares, resulting in tensions in human-alien relations. In order to become fully human in form, the Epicurals immediately began to copy themselves completely after specific human beings. *(Picture of aliens copying themselves completely into human form)* Because these transformations took an enormous amount of energy and caused degradation on a molecular level, each alien could only transform once. Furthermore, in order to avoid any shock resulting from the original humans randomly encountering their copies on the street, *(picture of originals in shock)* it became standard practice for the Epicurals, out of consideration, to build their lives far away from the humans whose forms they copied. *(Picture of a map of Japan, with various arrows indicating migration)* Additionally, in order to distinguish between originals and copies, Epicurals made changes in their appearances by growing beards, putting on weight, changing the folds of their eyelids, getting a Mohawk, *(picture of efforts to distinguish appearances)*

MORI

Who cares about any of that!

*KAZUYA MORI enters, shouting.*

MORI

Stop talking in so much detail about this useless information!

HIRATA

But I think it's pretty important,

MORI

Hirata, what is the most important thing about this project presentation?

HIRATA

Huh? Well, it's... to remain calm, not get nervous and to enjoy myself.

MORI

That's what's important for you! What's the most important thing for the presentation?

HIRATA

That is... What is it?

MORI

What are you, an idiot? This is why I can't count on aliens!

HIRATA

It's not because I'm an alien. This is my own individual flaw!

MORI

If you're going to talk back to me, get the hell out of here! I went out of my way to make time for you because you wanted to practice your delivery!

HIRATA

I'm sorry! Please teach me! Please!

MORI

The most important thing is to make people think this program is interesting, isn't it? Most people are expecting a documentary about aliens to be serious and dark, but you've got to make those audiences excited and enthralled, right?

HIRATA

I see.

MORI

What do you mean, "I see"? Hirata, I asked you to make this presentation in PowerPoint. What is this paper drama business?

HIRATA

I couldn't figure out the PowerPoint so I thought I'd take it back, you know, old school.

MORI

Don't take it back old school, take yourself back to your planet!

HIRATA

That's...

MORI

Hirata, what is the highlight of this presentation?

HIRATA

Highlight?

MORI

Your new queen, right? The rise of the new Epicural queen?

HIRATA

But it hasn't been decided yet, so

MORI

It's a ruse! Just make it a big deal out of it and push it through the pitch, once we're up and running, TV will take care of the rest!

HIRATA

I get it, I get it! Mr. Mori, please give me one more chance!

MORI

You're getting confident for an alien. We don't have time for that. Come on, we're going to do some reporting!

HIRATA

Yes! I'm appropriately happy to!

*MORI exits. HIRATA follows in a rush. Music. Everyone enters carrying banners for an opening dance. Then, blackout.*

Scene 2

*A street downtown. KEN SAWADA has a "poetry" shop on the street. On a small billboard, there is a sign that reads "Poetry and Dance of the Spirit". KEN is talking to a passer-by.*

KEN

How about it? Would you like some words? I can offer you the words and dance drawn from my inspiration to fit you perfectly! I'll give you words that your spirit actually craves.

*The passer-by exits. Two women enter (these roles can be voiceovers).*

KEN

Would you like Words of the Spirit?

WOMAN 1  
What is that?

KEN  
I will give you words and dance that fit you perfectly.

WOMAN 2  
What, are you selling poems?

KEN  
Yes and dances.

WOMAN 1  
Here?

KEN  
Here.

*WOMAN 1 & 2 laugh uproariously and try to leave.*

KEN  
What do you think? Why don't you give it a try?

WOMAN 1  
What, how much is it?

KEN  
However much you want. You name the price.

WOMAN 2  
I'll do it.

KEN  
All right!

*KEN holds a large sketchbook, grips a brush pen and gazes at WOMAN 2.*

KEN  
Look into my eyes. Hmmm.... It's coming. It's coming, it's coming, it's coming!

*KEN quickly writes something.*

KEN  
The words your spirit is craving are these!

*KEN shows her the paper with his writing.*

KEN

“The extra room in your stomach for cake today will be part of your love handles tomorrow!”

WOMAN 2

What is that?! That’s not inspiring at all!

WOMAN 1

This is horrible.

WOMAN 2

Let’s get out of here.

KEN

Oh, wait a second. I have a dance for you too. Watch.

*KEN starts singing “The extra room in your stomach...” as he moves in a strange way not unlike contemporary butoh dance.*

WOMAN

Are you an idiot?

WOMAN 2

Seriously creepy.

*WOMAN 1 & 2 exit.*

KEN

Wait, I’m not done yet!

*KEN finds another Passer-by.*

KEN

What about you? I’ll give you the words and a dance to fit you perfectly.

*A POLICE OFFICER enters.*

OFFICER

You here again?

KEN

Oh. Yes.

OFFICER

I told you you can't be here. You don't have a permit to conduct business on the street.

KEN

I can't get a permit.

OFFICER

Of course not, this is a street. If I find you here again, I'm going to arrest you.

KEN

...

OFFICER

All right, get going, come on.

*KEN starts to pack up.*

OFFICER

Next time I arrest you.

*OFFICER exits.*

KEN

...

*SHIMIZU and OKI run in dressed in what look like military uniforms. (If possible with more ensemble members) OKI holds a long pole with a Homeland Defense banner.*

SHIMIZU

Did you find him?

OKI / MALE DEFENSE FORCE MEMBER

No sir!

SHIMIZU

He must have escaped somewhere.

OKI

*(to KEN)* Did you see a suspicious person around here just now?

KEN

A suspicious person?

OKI

Was he here or not?

KEN  
Is that the way to ask someone?

OKI  
...Are you one of them?

KEN  
What?

OKI  
I'm asking you if you're one of the aliens.

KEN  
No.

OKI  
You sure?

KEN  
Yeah. Who are you people?

OKI  
What? You don't know who we are? Are you really Japanese?

SHIMIZU  
Oki, don't get worked up. Those of us who continue the fight must fight alone. Our enemy is not the only the aliens.

OKI  
Sir! Excuse me, Commander. I was my own enemy in that moment.

SHIMIZU  
*(to KEN)* Excuse us for the lack of introduction. We are the Homeland Defense Force. Fighting for...

SHIMIZU & OKI  
Peace and Glory for the Homeland! *(they strike a pose)*

KEN  
Homeland Defense Force...

SHIMIZU  
Won't you join us in protecting our homeland from the cockroach aliens?

OKI

All it takes is one click on-line and you too can be part of the Homeland Defense Force today!

SHIMIZU

We now have over 50,000 members.

OKI

Hurray! Truly wonderful! *(She dances)*

SHIMIZU

This is our traditional way of expressing joy. Come, why don't you join us in this glorious battle to massacre every last alien from our homeland?

KEN

No thanks.

OKI

Why not? Don't you love your homeland?

SHIMIZU

Aren't you worried about this country?

KEN

Nah, I don't really care about nationalism or politics.

SHIMIZU

Wretched citizen. You've got to open your eyes!

OKI & OTHER MEMBERS

Wake up!

KEN

No thank you...

*A voice is heard from far away.*

MAN *(off)*

Commander Shimizu! Over here! It was over here!

SHIMIZU

Excuse us. We are the

SHIMIZU / OKI / OTHERS

JapaRangers!

*They strike a pose, and then exit. KEN watches them.*

Scene 3

*A park. HOTARU AOI enters followed by KUROI, MORI, and HIRATA.*

AOI

Mr. Kuroi, I was thinking it over and I don't think I can do it after all...

KUROI

Ms. Aoi. Just last night, there were alien hunts taking place in various parts of the country, and over 100 of our people were badly injured. It's been six years since you arrived on Earth and the situation has worsened. If we don't do something now, things will escalate, irreversibly.

AOI

I understand that but

KUROI

We, the Epicurals who live in this country have no future except to depend on you, the ninth in line to succeed the Epicural throne.

AOI

But what can I do?

*MORI swiftly presents his business card to her.*

MORI

My name is Mori. I'm a freelance TV director.

AOI

...TV director?

MORI

The people who hate Epicurals are in fact almost completely ignorant about them. They rely on erroneous information and images from the internet that feed their xenophobia. So the more the general public becomes informed about Epicurals, the majority of the problems that are occurring right now should be solved.

AOI

What are you getting at?

MORI

I want to make a program about you, as a representative Epicural.

AOI

You want to put me on TV?

KUROI

We want you to present the true form of Epicurals to the people of this country, as the 83<sup>rd</sup> Epicural queen.

AOI

I don't know.

KUROI

Shrilvice.

AOI

My name is Aoi. Hotaru Aoi.

MORI

Ms. Aoi. This isn't complicated. We will use everything we have to back you up, to make sure you're represented as someone fit to be queen.

KUROI

You can count on us.

AOI

But...

KUROI

Ms. Aoi. You ought to recognize your responsibility as the ninth successor to the throne. Please. You are our last hope.

AOI

...

HIRATA

I really believe that if you'd cooperate, Ms. Aoi, Earthlings and Epicurals could get along.

AOI

Huh...

HIRATA

Don't you think so, Mr. Kuroi?

KUROI

Uh, yeah. That's right. Ms. Aoi.

AOI

...Let me think about it.

KUROI  
We don't have time.

AOI  
I'm sorry. Let me think about it. Excuse me.

*AOI exits.*

MORI  
Weak.

KUROI  
Huh?

MORI  
I was wondering what the "83<sup>rd</sup> Queen" would be like, but she's just an ordinary girl.

KUROI  
Huh, I guess so.

MORI  
And her tits are small.

HIRATA  
Is that the point?

TAKEMORIE  
Hirata, if you really want to make it as a director, remember that! That is the point.

HIRATA  
Uh-huh.

MORI  
You all copy yourselves after actual human beings, right?

KUROI  
Yes.

MORI  
Then why didn't she copy a more queen-like woman? A bombshell who's at least 5'  
5", 36, 24, 36, va, va, vroom!

KUROI  
We Epicurals didn't have any interest in earthly aesthetics.

MORI  
But you're making a life here.

KUROI  
I can understand what you're saying now.

MORI  
Does it have to be her? Aren't there people who'd be better suited for TV in your group?

KUROI  
But she's ninth in line to succeed the throne. The Epicurals would accept her as their representative.

MORI  
What happened to numbers one through eight?

KUROI  
They were all killed by the Artons. Ms. Aoi's entire family was massacred as well.

MORI  
What do you know about her social life?

KUROI  
Nothing in detail yet. We only discovered Ms. Aoi two months ago.

MORI  
We only got one pair.

KUROI  
One pair?

MORI  
Are you familiar with poker? The only pro is that it's a young woman. That's just level one. That's not enough to make a TV show.

HIRATA  
Can't we just do it on the internet?

MORI  
If you want to change the consciousness of a nation's people, you've got to use both TV and the internet.

HIRATA  
But she's the 83rd Queen.

MORI

That only means something to you Epicurals. Regular Joe earthling doesn't care about that.

KUROI

Are you saying she won't do?

MORI

I'm saying she's a weak choice. But it's my job to work with what I've got. I'll do what I can to get the right cards for at least a full house.

HIRATA

A full house?

MORI

Forget the analogy. Anyway, the first thing is to get her to agree to be on TV.

KUROI

I'll convince her somehow. *(His cell phone rings)* Excuse me... Hello? OK. Be careful not to make any mistakes. I'll be right there. *(to MORI)* Excuse me I've got to get back to the Association. What about you, Hirata?

HIRATA

I'm Mr. Mori's assistant so.

KUROI

Oh, right. Please take care of Hirata. See you later.

*KUROI exits.*

MORI

And why did you choose this appearance?

HIRATA

This? This was the first person I saw when I got to Earth.

MORI

That's it?

HIRATA

Yes. I wasn't interested in earthly appearances.

MORI

Aren't there male and female Epicurals?

HIRATA

It's not male-female, but there is a gender that can produce offspring and a gender that doesn't. When we arrived on Earth, the Epicurals who could produce offspring chose to copy human females.

TAKEMORE

I see. ...Let's get going.

HIRATA

Where to?

MORI

We're going to investigate that woman. We'll generate some kind of drama and raise the stakes.

HIRATA

Yes, gladly!

*MORI exits, followed by HIRATA.*

Scene 4

*An apartment. AOI comes home.*

AOI

I'm home.

*KEN in an apron enters holding a frying pan.*

KEN

Hey. I just made dinner.

AOI

Thanks.

KEN

I made omelets tonight. You like them right?

AOI

Oh...yeah.

*KEN efficiently prepares to serve dinner.*

KEN

What's up?

AOI

Huh?

KEN  
Did something happen?

AOI  
Oh, no.

*AOI helps him and dinner is ready.*

KEN  
Let's eat! Bon appétit.

AOI  
...

KEN  
What is it? Did something happen at work?

AOI  
Ken...

KEN  
It's OK. I've got income this month. Late-night pizza actually makes pretty good money.

AOI  
Ken, we need to break up.

*KEN is in shock.*

AOI  
Thank you for everything.

KEN  
...OK. I get it. Of course, I get it.

AOI  
Huh?

KEN  
It's not about work, right? You can't take me seriously, an artist who makes 20,000 yen a month. I'm past 30 and I have no future. I'm a freeloader. No wonder you're sick of it.

AOI

No, that's not it.

KEN

It's OK. I can't help it if you've gotten sick of me. I'm grateful that you stuck it out while I chased my dreams for the last two years.

AOI

No, that's not it at all.

KEN

Then why do you want to break up? Oh, do you want to see someone else?

AOI

No.

KEN

Then what?

AOI

Ken, you're going to hate me.

KEN

Why?

AOI

You just are.

KEN

What? Did you cheat on me?

AOI

I'd never do that.

KEN

Then did you shit yourself?

AOI

I don't understand what you mean.

KEN

Why am I going to hate you?

AOI

You just are, you definitely are.

KEN

What, did you have plastic surgery? Do you have a ton of debt? Do you have an extra mouth in the back of your head?

AOI  
No!

KEN  
Then what is it?

AOI  
Don't ask, just leave me.

KEN  
How could I do that? You have to give me a reason.

AOI  
...I

KEN  
You?

AOI  
I...

KEN  
Have a kid?

AOI  
No! ...I

KEN  
You're a wanted criminal?

AOI  
No! ...I

KEN  
You're actually a man?

AOI  
No! ...I

KEN  
What?

AOI

I'm an alien.

*Pause.*

AOI

I'm sorry I never told you. There just was never the right moment.

KEN

Alien,

AOI

...

KEN

Why?

AOI

What?

KEN

Why did you tell me today?

AOI

I was asked... to go on TV and represent Epicurals. I thought I should tell you first.

KEN

Represent Epicurals?

AOI

I'm the 83<sup>rd</sup> Queen of the Epicural throne.

KEN

I just have no idea what you're talking about anymore.

AOI

Recently there have been more and more attacks on Epicurals, so I'm going to go on TV and tell people what Epicurals are like.

KEN

But why, why are you doing that?

AOI

Because I'm the Queen of the Epicurals.

KEN

I had no idea you were so important.

AOI

I'm not important. I was ninth in line to succeed the throne, and usually being ninth in line doesn't mean anything. Usually that person doesn't become queen or emperor or anything. But everyone before me in that line has died.

KEN

Are you serious?

AOI

I'm serious.

*Pause.*

AOI

Are you surprised?

KEN

Half.

AOI

Half?

KEN

I always thought there was something. There was no way a cute girl like you would fall for a loser like me.

AOI

That's not true. Ken, you're a great guy.

KEN

Thanks. But there are very few people who understand my art, and I can't make a living. So I always thought you were probably hiding something.

AOI

So you see now, why we have to break up?

KEN

Why?

AOI

Because I'm an alien.

KEN

Because you're an alien.

AOI  
We have no future together.

KEN  
Future?

AOI  
...nobody would support our getting married.

KEN  
Hey, why don't we eat dinner?

AOI  
What? ...OK.

*KEN suddenly stands up. AOI is surprised.*

KEN  
I'm going to get some beer. I really want to drink a beer.

AOI  
...

*KEN exits the room. AOI remains alone.*

Scene 5

*In front of the Epicural Friendship Association. SHIMIZU and OKI (and other Defense members) are dressed in the Homeland Defense Force uniforms. OKI is holding a megaphone.*

OKI  
Aliens, get out of our country!

*About 30 other members join in. SHIMIZU is holding a Defense Force banner.*

MEMBERS (voiceover)  
Aliens, get out of our country!

OKI  
Aliens, go back to outer space!

MEMBERS (voiceover)  
Aliens, go back to outer space!

OKI

Aliens, eat shit!

MEMBERS (*voiceover*)

Aliens, eat shit!

*TSVARTOKIAN jumps onstage and grabs onto OKI.*

TSVARTOKIAN

That's enough!

OKI

Hey what do you think you're doing!

SHIMIZU

Who the hell are you?

TSVARTOKIAN

Shut up! You eat shit!

*People fight. KUROI enters.*

KUROI

What's going on here?

TSVARTOKIAN

Mr. Kuroi!

KUROI

Get back inside! Hurry!

*TSVARTOKIAN and KUROI exit.*

SHIMIZU

Wait! You're inciting violence!

OKI

Wait!

MEMBERS (*voiceover*)

Wait!

*SHIMIZU and gang exit after them.*

*In a different area, KEN enters. He has a thoughtful look on his face. He is sitting on the side of the road. He has an open beer and is drinking. He remains thus through the end of this act.*

*KUROI and TSVARTOKIAN run in. They are inside the Friendship Association.*

KUROI  
What happened?

TSVARTOKIAN  
They were shouting horrible things. I couldn't take it anymore. Before I realized what I was doing, I'd run outside.

KUROI  
What did you think you were doing?

TSVARTOKIAN  
But, they're too horrible!

SHIMIZU *(off)*  
Kill the violent aliens!

OKI and CROWD *(off)*  
Kill the violent aliens!

KUROI  
*(towards the wings)* Keep a close eye out on the entrance.

VOICE *(off)*  
Yes sir!

KUROI  
And whatever you do, don't run out there! Do not engage them!

SHIMIZU *(off)*  
You're lower than cockroaches!

OKI & CROWD  
You're lower than cockroaches!

TSVARTOKIAN  
Can you forgive them?

KUROI  
Be patient.

TSVARTOKIAN  
But

SHIMIZU *(off)*

Go back to being toy slime!

OKI & CROWD

Go back to being toy slime!

KUROI

If you react to them, we lose.

TSVARTOKIAN

But doesn't it make you angry?

*We hear the following conversation in the background between SHIMIZU and OKI (and CROWD)*

KUROI

I am angry. So angry I feel like my chest is going to burst.

TSVARTOKIAN

But the Association only promotes tolerance! What is this Association good for?

KUROI

Soon, the situation will change. Very soon.

TSVARTOKIAN

What happened to the woman ninth in line to succeed the throne?

KUROI

It went well. We'll be able to convince her.

TSVARTOKIAN

But you didn't get her on board today. Maybe we should just give up.

KUROI

No I'll get her on board somehow.

TSVARTOKIAN

I think the 76<sup>th</sup> in line to the throne should be enough – me.

KUROI

No. The order of succession to the throne is supposed to be a secret.

TSVARTOKIAN

Don't you love me?

KUROI

I do love you. Of course I do.

TSVARTOKIAN  
Then

KUROI  
That has nothing to do with this. The order of succession is absolute.

TSVARTOKIAN  
Abirutafri.

KUROI  
It's Kuroi.

*KUROI tries to exit.*

TSVARTOKIAN  
Where are you going?

KUROI  
Getting something to drink. I'm thirsty.

*KUROI exits. TSVARTOKIAN gazes after him, then exits. The voices outside continue.*

Scene 6  
*Apartment. KEN comes home. AOI enters holding a bag.*

AOI  
You're home.

KEN  
You're still awake.

AOI  
I was packing my things.

KEN  
I can't organize my thoughts.

AOI  
Huh?

KEN  
I met an anti-alien group today. The Homeland Defense Force or something?  
They've been getting attention on the internet.

AOI

...I know.

KEN

I really didn't like them. The way they chase after aliens with arrogant looks on their faces.

AOI

...

KEN

When I'm making my art, people say nasty things, but they're not discriminatory remarks, in fact, I don't think I'd ever fully understand the pain caused by discrimination.

AOI

...

KEN

I'm not an important person, and I'd always rather stand with the people being discriminated against than the people doing the discriminating, but when you told me you were an alien, why did I feel so conflicted?

AOI

What?

KEN

Hotaru. Sorry. I was stupid. I'm just now understanding this as I think out loud. I have no intention of leaving you, no matter what anyone says.

AOI

Ken...

KEN

I love you, Hotaru.

AOI

But Ken. Things may become very difficult for you, Ken. It might really affect you directly too, not just me.

KEN

I'll protect you. Hotaru, let's get married.

AOI

What? You know, um, the reason I brought up marriage before was because it was a clear example of what I was talking about, it's not that I

KEN  
Hotaru, let's get married.

AOI  
Ken!

*AOI jumps into KEN's arms. KEN embraces her.*

AOI  
Ken! Ken! Ken! Ken!

*KEN finally releases her.*

KEN  
Oh but, we need to discuss when we should get married. I want to be acknowledged as an artist first.

AOI  
Don't worry. You're going to be an amazing artist, Ken!

KEN  
Hotaru!

*KEN lifts HOTARU up on the air, like a baby.*

AOI  
Ken!

*HOTARU looks down at him. The two gaze at each other. They slowly kiss. Blackout.*

KEN *(off)*  
Whoah! Hotaru! It's 9 o'clock! You're going to be late for work!

AOI B *(off)*  
It's already that late?

*Lights up. KEN is hurriedly putting on his clothes.*

KEN  
We overdid it last night, eh?

*AOI B enters wearing the same clothes AOI was wearing in the previous scene. But AOI B is a completely different person from AOI. Her age and weight are completely different from AOI, and her clothes are way too tight for her.*

AOI B  
I'm going to make some coffee. Do you want some?

*KEN freezes.*

AOI B  
Do you want some? Or not?

KEN  
...Who are you?

AOI B  
What?

KEN  
*(shouting)* Who are you?

AOI B  
Oh my gosh, you surprised me, what's wrong?

KEN  
I'm the one who's surprised! Who are you?

AOI B  
What? Isn't it too early in the morning for practical jokes?

KEN  
Then why don't you tell me who you are.

AOI B  
I'm me.

KEN  
What's your name!

AOI B  
What are you talking about! My name's Hotaru and you filled me with some lovin' last night!

KEN  
No! Absolutely not!

AOI B  
What's not? Huh? Are you regretting what you said to me last night?

KEN

Who are you!?

AOI B

Ken, you're making me mad.

KEN

I'm the one who's mad! You're not Hotaru.

AOI B

I am Hotaru.

KEN

*(suddenly)* Go look in the mirror!

AOI B

Mirror? Maybe I'm all bloated because I didn't get enough sleep last night.

KEN

You are bloated. You're bloated and aged.

AOI B

Oh my gosh, how rude!

*AOI B looks in the mirror. She freezes.*

AOI B

What? What?! What is happening?

KEN

That's what I'd like to ask! Who are you?

AOI B

I told you, I'm Hotaru.

KEN

Don't lie.

AOI B

I'm not lying.

KEN

Where is she? You took her place in the middle of the night. Where is Hotaru?

AOI B

I'm Hotaru. Last night you made omelets, remember? Ken, you went out once and came back really late. And then you asked me to marry you. And then for the first time in two weeks, we made mad passionate

KEN

Stop! Say no more! ... What's the first movie we saw together?

AOI B

"The World According to Garp." Because you were like, you have to see this film.

KEN

What's my favorite meal?

AOI B

French toast.

KEN

Who are my favorite artists?

AOI B

Samuel Beckett and Pina Bausch.

KEN

The great

AOI B

The great Samuel Beckett and Pina Bausch.

KEN

...Are you really Hotaru?

AOI B

I told you that I am. *(Suddenly)* Oh no.

KEN

What's wrong?

AOI B

I have to go to work. I'm going to be late.

KEN

No, you shouldn't go.

AOI B

Why not?

KEN

Why not? You'd be greeted by greater confusion and louder screams than what just happened here.

AOI B

But I can't just take the day off.

KEN

Take the day off. Everyone will be much happier that way.

AOI B

I don't want to cause any trouble.

KEN

You'll cause more trouble if you go. Call them! Tell them you're sick, or you caught a cold.

AOI B

But

KEN

Just take the day off. And let's figure out what happened. Hurry up and call.

AOI B

Are you sure?

*AOI B reluctantly exits to get her phone.*

KEN

Are you really Hotaru?

AOI B

You're so stubborn.

*AOI B exits. KEN, with a look of confusion, follows her.*

Scene 7

*MORI, with a camera, and HIRATA with a bag, enter with KUROI*

KUROI

Maybe we shouldn't be doing this without any warning.

MORI

If we film all of her, it may open up human hearts to her. This show isn't just to promote her and the Epicurals, but to show her and the Epicurals' entire lives.

KUROI  
But what if she refuses to be filmed?

MORI  
That'll just be part of the show. Why does she refuse the cameras? We'll find some drama in the cause.

*HIRATA finds the address.*

HIRATA  
Hey, I think it's here. Is she home?

MORI  
Mr. Kuroi, you're on.

KUROI  
Huh? OK.

*MORI holds the camera.*

MORI  
Remember, Hirata. A head-on unannounced investigation is going to make her reveal her true self.

*KUROI rings the doorbell.*

HIRATA  
I'm appropriately excited!

*KEN peers out. KUROI and company are taken aback.*

KEN  
Hello? Can I help you?

KUROI  
Um, is this the home of Hotaru Aoi?

KEN  
Oh, uh, yeah.

KUROI  
Is Ms. Aoi in?

KEN  
Oh, um, no she's not in.

KUROI  
She's not here?

KEN  
No.

*MORI suddenly shoves the camera forward.*

MORI  
Excuse me but what is your relationship to Ms. Aoi?

KEN  
Who the hell are you?

MORI  
You're hiding something, aren't you?

KEN  
What?

MORI  
When you said she wasn't here, you were trembling. You're hiding something.

KEN  
I'm not hiding anything.

MORI  
Then what is your relationship to her? Are you Ms. Aoi's boyfriend? Do you guys live together? Why are you in this apartment? Are you also an alien?

KEN  
It's none of your business.

*KEN tries to close the door. MORI puts his foot in the doorway.*

MORI  
Hirata!

*HIRATA grips onto the door.*

HIRATA  
Panicked but gladly!

KEN  
Stop that!

MORI  
Do you have something to hide?

KEN  
Of course not.

MORI  
Then where is Ms. Aoi?

KEN  
I'm going to call the police!

MORI  
Go ahead! We welcome big incidents.

KUROI  
Wait a second.

*AOI B comes out.*

AOI B  
Please stop this! I'm right here!

*Everyone stops.*

KUROI  
Ms. Aoi, why didn't you come outside right away?

*MORI & KEN are speechless.*

AOI B  
I'm sorry. You took me by surprise.

KUROI  
Oh, we're sorry too, showing up unannounced.

MORI  
Time out. Mr. Kuroi, who are you talking to?

KUROI  
What do you mean?

MORI  
Um, who is this?

KUROI

What are you talking about? *(to AOI B)* Ms. Aoi, have you come to a decision? Please. I truly hope you accept.

AOI B

Yes. If you will have me.

KUROI

Thank you so much! Beginning today, we will address you as “Your Highness.”

AOI B

I am not fit to be called that yet. Please call me by my name.

KUROI

But

MORI

Wait a second! What in the world are you talking about? What do you mean, Your Highness?

AOI B

*(to MORI)* If you will have me, please feel free to film. *(She stands tall with her chest open)*

MORI

Hirata, what the hell is going on? Is something wrong with my eyes?

HIRATA

Mr. Mori,

MORI

This is a different person. This is a completely different person from the woman we met yesterday.

HIRATA

I don't see much of a difference,

MORI

There is! She's totally different! Mr. Kuroi, isn't she different?

KUROI

You think so? Her face is a little bigger than it was yesterday, but she doesn't seem that different, right?

HIRATA / AOI B

Right.

MORI

Crazy! Your sense of aesthetics is crazy! The alien aesthetic is crazy!

KEN

She is a completely different person from yesterday.

MORI

Thank you! She is! Are you an Earthling?

KEN

Yes.

MORI

This is the correct sense of aesthetics.

KUROI

Mr. Mori, everybody has changes in their physical condition. Everybody gets a little bit bloated, or loses a bit of weight. Why don't we start filming?

MORI

...Hirata, you've got to connect the dark chasm between humans and Epicurals.

HIRATA

Ummm... *(to KUROI)* It seems what we perceive as a very subtle change is a very big change for the humans.

KUROI

It can't be that big of a deal. Ms. Aoi's inner waves haven't changed at all.

HIRATA

That's true, but the humans can't seem to overcome this small difference.

KUROI

Unbelievable.

HIRATA

The Earthlings' aesthetics must be highly underdeveloped.

KEN

Who are you people?

KUROI

Excuse us. My name is Tetsu Kuroi; I'm the President of the Epicural Friendship Association.

KEN  
Friendship Association?

KUROI  
Your Highness,

AOI B  
Just Aoi is fine.

KUROI  
Ms. Aoi, who is this?

AOI B  
This is my fiancée.

KUROI  
Fiancée? Your Highness is engaged?

AOI B  
We got engaged last night. *(to KEN)* Right?

KEN  
Uh, well, um, you see,

KUROI  
Excuse me, but what do you do?

KEN  
What?

KUROI  
What is your profession?

KEN  
I'm an artist.

KUROI  
An artist? Are you famous? Do you have a page on Wikipedia?

KEN  
Oh, no...

KUROI  
Are you an artist fit for the Queen Her Highness?

KEN

Fit?

AOI B

Um, would you like to come inside? Let's not stand and talk. *(to KEN)* Is that all right?

KEN

Oh, sure...

AOI B

Please, come inside.

*AOI B invites KUROI and crew inside. Everyone exits inside the apartment.*

Scene 8

*Inside the Epicural Friendship Association. TSVARTOKIAN is holding a metal bat. Many people are listening.*

TSVARTOKIAN

Listen, everyone. Just last night, 25 of our members were violently attacked downtown, by those thugs who call themselves the Homeland Defense Force. We do not have a minute to lose. We must take arms to defend ourselves. We Epicurals must unite as one and stand up against this violence. We must bear arms not to attack, but to defend ourselves. We must hurl our collective anger at the throats of those cruel thugs.

MAN 1

What does Kuroi say?

WOMAN 2

Where's Kuroi?

TSVARTOKIAN

Mr. Kuroi should understand our reasoning. As the 76<sup>th</sup> person in line for the succession of the throne, I will take responsibility in discussing this with Kuroi.

WOMAN 1

Are you sure?

MAN 2

Is this the right thing to do?

TSVARTOKIAN

Mr. Kuroi always says, “Do not be the first to lift a finger against them” and I hold those words in my heart. For us who have no homeland, our war for independence begins now!

*The crowd goes wild.*

---- INTERVAL ----

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