

Working title:

Tethered キズナ

Script: Laurenz Lukele

Version 1.1/English version

*How to read this version of the script:**All the characters speak Japanese, Hélène speaks French.*

Int. generously sized flat in Tokyo. Nighttime, camera shows a blurry background, the focus is already set for something appearing in the front.  
(35mm)

## Charakter

Fumiko 不見子、Hansuke 半助, Hélène, Totsuya 戸津谷, Kōji 孝二

Text: a film by Laurenz Lukele

Feet appear from the left, lying on a couch. As the camera pans to the left, a Face appears. It is a Japanese Woman, clothed in very simple and loose clothing. Her face is pale white. She has no expression on her face. She looks directly into the camera, stiff as a rock. Narration starts (the mouth of the ghost is not moving).

Ghost: I am dead. I have been for quite a while now.

Wide angle shot of the ghost lying in the apartment. The flat is packed with books and trash. It is clearly a young man's apartment.

Ghost: But what am I?

Int: Apartment, daytime. A stupid game show is running on the TV. A young man sits in front of the TV, eats Instant Ramen and drinks Beer. The ghost hides in the closet, half of her face visible. She is looking at the TV. (TV close up, Mouth of eating man close up, portrait American set up with ghost in background.

Ghost: I know I am dead, but I don' t remember what I was. Or rather, what kind of thing I used to be.

POV of Ghost: seeing the Ghost inside the closet, watching the man (ghost, then man through door perspective)

Ghost: This thing looks like me, though I don' t understand what it' s doing. I have been watching it for a while now and I was able to learn the basics of its needs. It seems to find joy in sitting around, looking at a Box or a piece of paper... and that' s about all it does. At first, I didn' t even understand how it was able to move. But the more I watched it, the more I remembered.

As The man (Hansuke) leaves the room to go to the kitchen, the ghost walks out of the closet and stares at the TV. A joyful expression slowly starts to appear on her face. Glorious and triumphant music can be heard as the Title fades in. (Camera closes in on her Face)

Ghost: ...and the more I understood, the more I wanted to learn. I wanted to learn everything about it.

Title: Tethered キズナ

**Int. Night, Bedroom.**

The ghost tries to move forward. It makes small careful steps like a toddler, then falls over.

Ghost: First I tried to move like it.

**Int. In the kitchen**

Ghost: Then I tried to stare at the pages, like the human did, just to pass the time (Top-down view on Book and ghost, then view of static face 35 mm)

**Int. Bedroom.**

Ghost: And of course, I was hooked, watching the Box. As time passed, I started to understand basic things about Humans. They have to eat, sleep, meet other people. Even though this Human rarely has any visitors. A woman comes over sometimes. They seem to like each other. (Having sex in that scene) A lot, actually.

**Int. Flat**

There is a collage of Hansuke looking out the window, reading the newspaper and scanning pages, that seem interesting to him. He is watering his plants, making himself something to eat and taking out the trash. While scanning newsletters he glances to his closet. His face reveals that there is something uncomfortable within. Almost as if he tries to lock it away to be forgotten.

**Int. Ghost watches TV**

The Ghost gasps at the content of the TV and during a certain raw, emotional moment, spilling the drink as she unintentionally tips over the glass next to her. The Man, reading a Book in the neighboring kitchen, hears the noise and comes over to investigate it. Meanwhile, the ghost looks at Hansukes Face

Ghost: There are times when I can interact with my surroundings.  
But not always. I haven' t figured out yet what makes me

able to touch things. In those moments, I am always distracted.

Int. The Man is sleeping while the Ghost is looking at open Books

Ghost: I usually wait for him to forget to close a book or leave the TV on while falling asleep. So far, I have learned quite a lot about Humans. They like to challenge each other to be better at something. Also, they talk an awful lot about food. I think they try to find joy in the necessary act of survival. Maybe it scares them that their time is limited. Maybe they are scared of me...or of what they could become once they join me.

The Ghost is looking at flyers of the zengakuren Students. Hansuke seems to be affiliated somehow, or at least he used to be.

Ghost: People also like to organize. There are people who don't seem to care if others get hurt. As long as they are sure of their worldview, actions will follow. And after that, other parties fight back, until the outcome of the fight is not worth the sacrifice anymore. And once everything is over, words are used to heal what has been done. Isn't that interesting, if words were supposed to be the way to find a solution in the first place? Maybe speech is more efficient in providing comfort rather than peace. Who knows?

Ghost:                   The more I think about humans, the more I think about what kind of person I used to be. I always try to remember as much as I can, but my life only reveals itself in episodes.

**Ext. Ghost, still alive, doing grocery shopping and walking through the city.**  
**She comes across a guy in an alley**

Guy:                    How are you, beautiful?

Fumiko:                God, thanks for asking. My day was so horrible. I thought I forgot my phone at home, but then I found it in my bag. Then my mother called me to give me the usual crap about my boyfriend, marriage, and stuff. I walked to 4 different stores because none of them sold the flowers I was looking for. You see, I wanted to...

Guy:                    Never mind.

The guy turns around and leaves. Fumiko stands there for a while and looks after him. Then she is showing him the finger.

Fumiko:                Is a “What’ s up?” really all I am worth?...tssss

She turns around and keeps moving.

**Arriving in the Flat. Camera on top of the staircase.**

Fumiko opens the door and takes off her shoes. She then walks up the staircase and opens the window to the living room. She sees her Boyfriend Kōji cooking in the kitchen.

Fumiko: I am home!

Kōji surprised: Oh, hey, I didn' t hear you.

Fumiko: How did you not hear me? The staircase is so old my grand-grand parents can hear it in their graves.

Kōji: Well, I am cooking!

Fumiko places the groceries on the table. She looks over his shoulders and adores the food.

Fumiko: These are for you! (presents flowers)

As she presents the flowers, no reaction is coming from Kōji. She lays them down and approaches Kōji, looking over his shoulder and admiring the food he is cooking.

Fumiko: You are so sweet! That smells amazing!

Kōji: There is not enough for both of us.

Fumiko: oh ...

Kōji: I thought you would come later. I wasn' t planning for you to be here so soon.

Fumiko: I mean I wrote you a text messa...

Kōji: I don' t want to hear it!

Fumiko: ...ok...

Fumiko walks into the Bedroom. She turns on the TV and stretches her neck to both sides.

Fumiko: There is this book I really want to read. Apparently, it is about a woman living a double life. She has a boyfriend in Nakano she really loves. They go out regularly and plan to live together. He doesn' t know it, but she actually gets paid to kill men. It' s this typical femme fatale, noir revenge story. I bet the boyfriend is the fall guy.

Sometimes I miss the male perspective in those stories. They always seem to be reduced into a stereotype. Maybe people see strength in the weakest parts of those characters. I guess that' s what sells. Are you listening?

She stares at the TV, disappointed. Then she looks to the window. She opens it and steps out on the balcony. She sits on the floor and as she is leaning against the balcony railing, she holds the bars with both hands, looking as if she was imprisoned. She closes her eyes and enjoys the sun. She sits down and watches the clouds. The camera pans away and when it comes back, we are back in the present.

#### **Ext. On Balcony**

Hansuke sits on the same spot on the balcony floor. His clothes are drying on cables fixed on (attached to) the balcony. He looks to the street in



complete tranquility. His girlfriend comes outside and sits next to him. They cuddle.

Hélène:

I watched this movie the other day in Meguro. It was about a man that comes back from a five-month work trip in Korea. When he arrives back home and his wife greets him, he immediately feels that something is wrong. He thinks that she cheated on him because the apartment has a very masculine smell. A mix of cheap deodorant and sweat... just like changing rooms of teenage boys after sports class. At first, he wants to confront her about it/ But then he realizes that it actually turns him on, haha. But not in a kinky way or anything interesting, just very possessive. It fuels his jealousy and he likes it.

So sadistic! Making yourself miserable like that. Anyway, this turn-on eventually turns into an Obsession. He stops talking to her and denies any kind of warmth between them. And in the end, he drowns her in the bathtub because he can't take it anymore. Can you imagine? But the worst part was when he raped her dead body afterwards. I couldn't watch it. (Pause)

I don't understand why it always has to be like that in movies. Women getting punished for expressing their desires. Or women without any dignity, worse than men. It's like we can only exist in two spheres. One is to be the victim, the other to be the perpetrator. I'd like to think that we are better than that. But I guess it tells us more

about men than women. After all, being unable to communicate his feelings was his curse. What a pity.

Hansuke: I think I would like that movie. Let's watch it.

Hélène playfully punches his chest

Hélène (laughs): you fucking idiot!

Hansuke: I got you something.

Hélène: you did?

Hansuke: mhm.

Hélène: show me!

Interior, Apartment. Hélène and Hansuke step through the window inside the apartment. They make their way to the kitchen.

Hélène: I think we should make our own film where men violate other men and women pay just to watch. Imagine me standing in the corner, eating nachos and judging them like: (sophisticated voice) "Ah yes, this angle is perfect when you're entering his butt with maximum thrust. Well done, Sir!"

Hansuke hands her a present.

Hansuke: who is the sadistic person now?

Hélène smiling: A girl can dream, can' t she? What is this?

Hansuke: Open it.

Hélène opens the package. We don' t see what is inside. Hélène is flabbergasted.

Hélène: No!

Hansuke: Yes.

Hélène hugs Hansuke.

Hélène: OMG!!! You...you are a keeper, mister!

She runs to the staircase and opens the window from the other side.

Hansuke: What are you doing?

Hélène: Preparing, obviously. Do you have any Idea what this means for my schedule? I need to go shopping and - OH, the dress! I have to bring my dress to the dry cleaner' s! This is going to go just great! You know how to make a girl happy!

Hansuke: That' s because you taught me how it can feel like to be happy.

Hélène and Hansuke look each other in the eyes, lovingly, then she snaps out of it.

Hélène:                   Ok...I must hurry...see you later!

She runs down the stairway and jumps into her shoes. She looks up one last time and lets out an excited, silent scream, then leaves the apartment. After closing the door, a transition with the same camera angle happens. The ghost stands at the entrance, looking up. Noise can be heard coming from the kitchen. It is Hansuke, cooking. In a wide angle shot, we can see Fumiko looking through the glass.

Fumiko Ghost:       That smells so good!

As she is saying this, she touches the glass, which starts to wobble. Hansuke notices the noise and turns off the gas. He then approaches the glass. Fumiko feels hope that she might be able to interact with him. She keeps pushing on the glass. In the same frame, from his perspective, we see that there is no one behind the glass, but it still keeps wobbling. He then opens the window and looks downstairs. It is dark. Very dark. He closes the window again.

Hansuke:               What the fuck?! Scary shit!

Fumiko Ghost:       Is it? Are you so frightened of things you cannot explain?  
Or are you afraid to accept that there are things you cannot  
comprehend? Is this why humans fight the same wars over and  
over? Because they cannot overcome their fear of the other?  
Is it biological? Or is it simply because an easy  
explanation is less terrifying in how they see the world?  
Right now, in his mind, it could have been the wind. Does  
he even think that far?

The ghost opens the door and slowly moves behind Hansuke.

Hansuke cleans a glass and looks at it in the light. Fumikos reflection can be seen. He turns around in fear. She has disappeared. Fumiko stands right in front of Hansuke.

Fumiko Ghost:      There is something childlike about him. Almost as if his raw emotions brought out his true self. Maybe it can be compared to joy. Something uncontrollable that humans can actually accept. Or can they? Maybe people avoid being happy as well. But then, what' s the difference between sadness and joy?

**Int. Bar, Hélène and Hansuke are on a date**

Hansuke:              ...so I just had to watch him buying the wrong soil for his plants. I stood there without any idea about what to do. Do you get that feeling sometimes? You know that feeling, right? When there are things that shouldn' t bother you at all, but they still do!

Hélène:                Mhm (looking lovingly into his eyes)

Hansuke:              Like my apartment. I don' t know why, but no matter how good the weather is, there is always this wet spot in front of my door. It truly boggles my mind.

Hélène:                I could listen to you talk all night.

Hansuke:              At night, when I go home, the floors reflect the light from the street lamps, so much so that the floors glisten. It

is beautiful beyond belief. Like a dream. My dream. I see it and my thoughts just disappear. It is like a road that leads to some sacred place. But then, I arrive at my front door and I see that wet spot on the floor. It has been there ever since I moved in. It throws me off completely. Every single time. And then I remember.

Hélène: Remember what?

Hansuke: That not all of us get a shiny, sparkling road. That no matter how hard you try, there are spots that will never go away. No matter how often you clean them.

Hélène: Pull yourself together! You are a beautiful person. You treat people around you with nothing but kindness and respect. I think the spot is something that is grounding you. Even if you are completely hammered and you only manage to follow your feet and take one small step after another so that you don't fall over, you will still be able to find your apartment precisely because you know the wet spot is there. Others would get lost in the stars.

Hansuke You might be right about that. (smiling)

Hélène: I know I am, so don't get all nihilistic on me!

Hansuke: Yeah...still...there is truth in both.

Hélène: So why don't you just move out? I mean, if it is that bad...

Hansuke: Because I have worked my ass off for this apartment. I don' t have the energy to find a different place right now. Maybe someday...

Hélène: Yeah...maybe someday. Maybe we can find it together...someday that is!

They are holding hands. Hélène looks a bit distracted, as if her thoughts were fading away.

Hélène: That would be my dream.

#### Ext. on the road home, Night

Hélène and Hansuke walk towards the apartment and stop right in front of it. Hélène approaches Hansuke and tucks in one part of his shirt, that sticks out of his pants.

Hélène: This was fun!

Hansuke: Are you not coming in?

Hélène: You know I have to get up super early tomorrow and you would just distract me from sleeping.

Hansuke: Fair enough. Well then, take care.

Hélène starts walking away.

Hansuke:                This was fun!

Hélène Disappears in the night. Hansuke takes out the part of his shirt again

Hansuke (monologue):

I never saw her again. She just vanished from my life. It was as if she ceased to exist.

As Hansuke enters his apartment, the camera pans downwards to the floor, to the wet spot that is still there.

**City collage of buildings and people.**

Hansuke Monologue:        I cannot blame her. Sometimes it felt like we were speaking two different languages. I think, in a weird way, that made us a better couple. It gave us a reason to work even harder on our relationship. To respect our differences. It was a very unique kind of love, unlike anything I have ever experienced. And that made it that much harder for me to accept that she was gone. When someone makes you think about things like a common future, marriage, children, things you never imagined before, you start hoping that maybe you found the one person you could spend your life with. And then, when the reality hits you again, it can get unbearable. But why should I be sad when there was so much joy in the time, I got to spend with her? I refuse to believe that it was our differences that made us not work. I think it made us better, stronger,



wiser. Even if the others seemed to think differently. So, in a way, I guess I am grateful. I feel alive. And I would rather feel pain than nothing at all. I only wish I had the opportunity to thank her for everything.

**Ext. Park.**

Hélène sits on a bench, gazing into the void. She looks sad. A woman approaches her from the right and sits next to her. The Woman is a bit older. They have a similar expression of sadness, although the other woman seems to be handling it better than Hélène. Both of them stare into the void for a while. Then, the woman starts to observe Hélène, as if she knew that this time, she seems to struggle more than usual.

Woman:                                So...you prepared everything?

Hélène:                                Almost...

Woman:                                Good...I just finished my job. One more and I can finally pay off my inherited debt.

Silence

Woman:                                It gets easier you know...and it's not like they choose random people. They deserve what's coming to them.

Still silence from Hélène

Woman:                                You liked this one, didn't you...I've been there.

Hélène looks at the woman, then she starts looking into the void again. Then she repeats what Hansuke said.

Hélène:                      Some People don' t deserve to be on a shiny road.

The woman smiles while looking at Hélène, then she gets up.

Hélène:                      I guess I won' t be seeing you again.

Woman:                      I guess not.

Hélène gets up:    Without you I wouldn' t have lasted this long. Thank you for everything!

Hélène bows down

Woman:                      Make sure you make something out of yourself when this is over Nana (七). If I see you working in a hostess club, I will personally kill you. Farewell.

Hélène looks after the woman as she is leaving into the Darkness.

Hélène to herself:        I promise.

**Ext. Next day. Camera on the balcony.**

Totsuya, a friend of Hansuke' s, approaches his apartment. He looks like a Rowdy, a bit streetwise, and a bit simple as well. He wears a Hawaii shirt and sunglasses. As he enters the flat, he finds Hansuke on the floor surrounded by a bunch of empty beer cans. He is absolutely wasted.

Totsuya: Yo! What is this shit?

Hansuke just mumbles something inaudible. Totsuya kicks him.

Totsuya: YO! What happened?

Hansuke: SHEEE IS GOOOOOONE!!!! (Crying like a baby)

Totsuya: That one chick you' ve been seeing? Ah dude, that sucks,  
What happened?

Hansuke: She ghosted me 2 weeks ago.

Totsuya: Ghosted? Well, fuck her then. And why the fuck are you  
lying on the floor all miserable? Do you have no respect  
for yourself?

Hansuke: What is the point in self-respect? I just want to die and  
end the misery!

Hansuke tries to take another sip of his beer. Totsuya intervenes.

Totsuya: YO! There is more to life than this, stop it already!

Hansuke: LET GO OF ME!

**EXT. in an ally**

Hansuke and Totsuya sit on the streetside next to each other. There is a long

pause before anything is said.

Totsuya: You should come with me to Kabuki-Cho. Dai still owes me at the karaoke place. that should distract you for a bit. I don' t like seeing you like this. How do you expect me to respect you if you can' t even respect yourself? You are being pathetic, you know that?

Hansuke: I know...

Totsuya: Hey, just kidding. Don' t beat yourself up like that.

Hansuke: I know, but I need to let everything out to get better, right?

Totsuya: Well, sure, of course. But you don' t have to be so intense about it.

Hansuke: Hey, do you ever feel like you are not alone?

Totsuya: I am never alone. My girls and my boys are always there for me.

Hansuke: But when you are... I mean when you are home, alone.

Totsuya: What are you, stupid?

Hansuke: Forget it...

Hansuke gets up and walks away.

Totsuya: Anything you' ve been obsessing about?

Hansuke turns around, with a questioning look on his face.

Totsuya: Never mind.

Hansuke: No, what do you mean?

Totsuya: Like, are you obsessed with not being alone?

Hansuke: What?

Totsuya: Apfelstrudel...

Hansuke: Whaaaat??

Totsuya: Apfelstrudel!

Hansuke: Apfelstrudel!?

Totsuya: Apfelstrudel! It is this Viennese Pie with apples. So creamy! So delicious!

Hansuke: And I guess that is your current obsession?

Totsuya: I can' t find a good Bakery that sells it! I have been looking for it for two days now!

Hansuke: What is wrong with you, searching for something for 2 days is not an obsession.

Totsuya: Shut up. man! It is not about time; it is all about intensity! Just like politics. Whenever (political) parties find something to run on, they do so with so much emotion, but as soon as the election is over, they all just forget. Obsession comes from a driving factor. A reason!

Hansuke: And your reason is?

Totsuya: I don' t want to say. But it helps to know that I am not the only one obsessing about something stupid.

Hansuke: I am not obsessing.

Totsuya: Well...

Hansuke and Totsuya share a look and both start laughing.

Hansuke: So...you said something about karaoke?

### **Int. Apartment: Ghost**

Fumikos Ghost wanders aimlessly through the apartment

Fumiko: So boring... everything is so boring. I read all the books, and watched most of the show' s multiple times now. Even if I see something new, it' s like rinse and repeat. The same formula. Nothing exciting to experience. I guess that' s because everything has already been done, and

everything just comes in different iterations. Are humans that easily entertained? Or maybe...Maybe we just don't share the same interests. But who am I then? Existing in this space that isn't mine? I started to remember the relationships in my life now, my friends, how they supported me. But now it all seems like a distant dream. Is that happening because I am dead or because it is so distant? Do humans experience the same thing? First experiences with things can be so strong that it can feel unbearable to live without them. But with time, you can almost start forgetting they happened at all. Like all those Books and Tv shows I used to treasure so much. But then, what is the purpose of experiencing anything, if nothing eventually matters anymore? Questioning everything you ever knew? Maybe I should just stay here and do nothing. If everything is meaningless, I can exist in nothingness.

On the TV, Fumiko sees her memory. She sits in the bathtub with her clothes on. Her Hair is wet. Her boyfriend comes in and drowns her. In those moments, we see flashes of Hansuke, singing karaoke and getting drunk. When she stops moving, the Boyfriend starts undressing. When the camera cuts away to the Ghost of Fumiko, a tear is running down her cheek.

Fumiko: But if I do nothing, I would just keep on living in an apartment that isn't mine, in the shadow of this man that has defined my life for so long, resisting being in a world that isn't what I want it to be. Maybe it was those Books and Tv shows that helped me understand who I was all along, but I don't want to relive it, over and over again. Now, I could try to understand who I want to be.

Fumiko approaches the apartments front door and opens it.

**Experimental part of the movie:** not all scenes are fully scripted, except locations and key moments.

**Ext. Shinjuku, Street, night:**

Fumiko is now portrayed by 3 different actors. The camera follows Fumiko 1 through the streets of Shinjuku, she wears a colorful Jacket, Jeans and has shorter, blond hair.

Fumiko:                I realize now that I can be so much more than I used to be if I pursue my own interests. And without the need to think of someone else. I always loved the city...

**Ext. Mountains, Forest.**

Fumiko 2 is walking through the Woods, wearing hiking gear.

Fumiko:            But I never realized how beautiful the countryside is.

**Ext: Hōsei campus Ichigaya**

Fumiko 3 is at the Ichigaya Campus of the Hōsei University, looking around the courtyard while wearing a bag pack.

Fumiko:                I still enjoy learning about the world. Sitting down in my favorite café after classes. Ordering a Mocca Latte and losing track of time while looking through my books. Only



this time, they belong to me. I guess I cannot abandon this side of me completely. And why should I? I am good at learning.

The scenes change between those three versions of Fumiko while the monologue continues. In Shinjuku, Fumiko talks to people (strangers? Friends?), drinks beer, (someone offers her a cigarette, she accepts and thanks, smiling), she feels completely free and careless. Fumiko in the woods arrives at a beach, she enjoys the view, she takes off her shoes and enjoys the feeling of the Sand between her toes, Fumiko at the University sits at a window in the big tower, watching over Tokyo.

Fumiko:                Although I always felt comfortable in my own skin, I never imagined I could be so many things at the same time. Now that I can trust that I am not simply a category in a book, or like a cardboard cutout of a person on TV, I feel like I am finally starting to find my own journey.

**Ext. Bakery. Night Camera is positioned outside**

Totsuya is in a bakery and asks if they sell Apfelstrudel. Hansuke waits outside, both are visibly drunk. Totsuya leaves the Bakery, disappointed. Then Tostuya sits down in an alley, defeated.

Totsuya:                Shit...

Hansuke:                You will find it eventually!

Totsuya:                ...sure...

Hansuke:                ...come on, let's keep walking.

**Ext: Kandagawa River. Night.**

Totsuya and Hansuke walk next to the river. Both of them are holding a beer in their hand. Suddenly Hansuke stops. Totsuya looks back as Hansuke starts laughing out loud.

Totsuya:               What' s up with you all of a sudden?

Hansuke keeps laughing.

Totsuya:               Hey, you finally forgot about that bitch?

Hansuke suddenly screams:

Hanuske:              Don' t call her that, you asshole!!!

Totsuya:              ok...sorry...

Hanuske:              I just thought about what you said...and yeah. I think I am a little bit obsessed.

Hansuke walks towards the river railing and leans on it. Totsuya joins him.

Hanuske:              There is this strange presence in my apartment. It has been there ever since I moved in. It feels heavy, like the weight of another life. Depressing. I am overcome with sadness whenever I come back home. And...I know it sounds weird...but also guilt.

Totsuya: About what?

Hanuske: I don' t know. Maybe because of how I used to be, or decisions I' ve made in the past. I used to be very different. I would hurt people close to me. And while I moved on easily... what if they couldn' t? What if I took that possibility away from them?

Totsuya: Ok, now you are really being stupid.

Hanuske: Hey!

Totsuya: Seriously! You said it yourself: you were a different person. And I know you. You are being way harder on yourself than you should. Sure, you weren' t an angel, but you could never do nearly as much bad shit as I am doing now.

Hansuke: Yeah, because I am not a prick.

Totsuya: Exactly! There are people out there so much worse than you. You are one of the few people that manage to change. I mean, I kind of liked you better before but...

Hansuke punches Totsuya on the arm

Totsuya: Ouch!

Hanuske: You deserved that.

Totsuya: well...you will be fine, Hansuke! I have a gut feeling about it. Also, I am never wrong.

Pause

Hanuske : Why are you so obsessed with that Apfelstrudel?

Totsuya: I told you, didn' t I? You could never fuck things up as much as I did.

Ext: the scenery switches between the three Fumiko versions. The first one gets harassed by a group of men; we do not see their faces. The second one falls into the water and struggles with the waves. The third one sits alone in a big empty classroom. We also see Fumiko getting drowned in the bathtub again. Next, we see Hélène putting on gloves and making her makeup. She looks serious and nervous at the same time.

Totsuya: I feel amazing, not giving a shit about others. I get whatever I want, whenever I want it. But that also means that sometimes, I feel like I have already experienced everything that the world has to offer. Like I am drowning in my own joy. Like a junkie chasing after the next high. And so I have to find new things that I can obsess over, because that is the only way I get to feel anything at all. You will laugh at this, but I actually thought about opening up my own bakery, years before we met. I was serious about it, too. (sighs, then smiles) Apfelstrudel kinda reminds me of better days. But hey, I guess it was not meant to be after all. Damn, look at you, infecting me with your

emotional crap. Most people never get a taste of real happiness, and here I am wasting mine.

Hansuke: So, I guess you really are a prick!

Both starts laughing, Totsuya hits Hansuke on the arm.

Totsuya: Fuck you, asshole!

Hansuke: OKOK, I got it! Just a little prick.

Totsuya and Hansuke keep wrestling each other in a friendly manner as we see the Fumikos, devastated.

#### **Ext. In front of a supermarket**

Hélène is looking through the Fruit section and pics out an orange.

#### **Ext. Abandoned railways**

The original Fumiko runs on an abandoned railway towards the camera. She is crying. At some point, she trips and falls on the ground. Her Face is wet with her tears. As she looks up, she sees the Shinjuku version of herself standing in front of her.

Fumiko: I still cannot figure out how to get out of this. How can I break free from these chains (Kizuna)? Tell me! Tell me!

Fumiko 1: What do you know? Maybe we are all just versions of a person influenced by all your books and shows. Someone who was never supposed to be anything other than what the writer had intended them to be. Maybe the reason why you will never

be able to become like us is because you already are someone else. Meanwhile, we get confined inside these tight categories. Cool, Demure, second place... you are none of those things. And yet, the more you struggle, the more you push yourself into a made-up box that has nothing to do with real life. It would be easier to be a box, but even then you would end up keeping asking yourself those same questions over and over again anyway.

Fumiko: It is so unfair...the life I had to endure! The pain I had to feel. All for nothing... and I still don't have any answers yet!

Fumiko 1: Well, you see, life is not fair. So, fuck it all. Fuck everybody. You managed to become so much, and all by yourself. Maybe the world is not supposed to give you all the answers you need. Or any, for that matter. Maybe it is you who shapes it according to the questions you keep asking. In the end, in one way or another, all of us are looking for answers.

Fumiko seems to calm down a little bit. Fumiko 1 reaches out her hand to help Fumiko get up.

**Ext. shots of the city**

During the collage, we see H  l  ne dressed in a coat and wearing a big hat with sunglasses. We see her waiting for a man to walk by. She throws the orange in his direction so he would grab it. In that moment she stabs the

faceless man. The man tries to hold on to a vending machine, smearing blood over the Boss face symbol. He falls on the floor and bleeds to death.

### Int. Hansuke

We see Hansuke watering his Plants and scanning some articles. In a close up we see, that he is starting to think about himself. Then he stops the scanner and starts cleaning his apartment. From the closet he avoided before, he takes out a calligraphy set, it clearly hasn' t been used in a while. He prepares his workspace on the floor and draws the kanji 絆 on the Paper. He is visibly pleased with himself. The doorbell rings.

### Ext. in front of Hansukes apartment, Day

The original Fumiko rings the bell. She wears a completely different outfit. She looks self-centered. Hansuke opens the door

Hansuke: Can I help you?

Fumiko: Good day. Excuse me, are you Hansuke Nakamori 中森?

Hansuke: Yes, I am.

Fumiko: Sorry to bother you. My name is Fumiko Kazama 風間 and I am working on an article for a magazine. Would you mind if I asked you a few questions related to this apartment?

Hansuke: What questions could I possibly help you with?

Fumiko: I am working on a story about a woman who used to live in this area. Her boyfriend drowned her in a bathtub a couple of years ago. I did some research and all the leads point to your apartment. The body was found inside, but the boyfriend seems to have vanished.

Hansuke: What a story...are you sure you didn' t just see that at the movies?

Fumiko: No. It happened.

Hansuke: Yes, in a novel.

Fumiko: Yes, the one that I am writing. That' s the real reason I came today. I want to tell stories of the victims who were swept under the rug or whom the police just seems to have forgotten about. They deserve closure too, even if they are not among us anymore.

Hansuke (to himself): Obsession...

Fumiko: What?

Hansuke: Oh, nothing. That explains everything. I had no idea about all that until now. But what a horrible story. So, what happened to the man?

Fumiko: He became just another faceless murderer. Who knows, maybe it is better this way after all. I think this guy shouldn' t get the attention all the others like him usually get. I



care about the victim' s story. What a terrible thought, to only be remembered by the vile actions of the murderer. So much life forgotten, taken away in such inhumane manner.

Hansuke: Yeah...I agree. I can' t help you, but I hope that you get to tell her story.

Fumiko: I hope so too. I always try to get into their mindset. You know, the victims, I imagine them still here among us after they got murdered, trying to figure out why they had to die, what led to it. And all that could have been if they had more time.

Hansuke: A sad thought.

Fumiko: No, not at all! It gives me comfort to know that death is not the end.

Hansuke: Yeah...I' d like to think that as well.

Fumiko: In any case, this is my number (hands business card?) Please let me know if you come across anything I could use for my book.

Hansuke: Certainly!

Fumiko is about to leave

Hansuke: Hey, do you want to come in? If you take a look around the apartment, maybe you could find your answers yourself.

Fumiko: (smiles) It's ok, I can imagine.

As Fumiko leaves, Hansuke stands there for a while, then he tucks in the second half of his shirt and walks back into the apartment, the camera pans down to the wet spot.

**Ext. Alley, The night before**

Hansuke waits for Totsuya who went into another bakery. He comes back disappointed.

Hansuke: I don't know if we will ever find it, man.

Totsuya: Oh, they had it.

Hansuke: They did? Then why didn't you buy it?

Totsuya (laughs): Because it is all a big lie. Apfelstrudel isn't even from Vienna. The Baker told me. The dough was first made in Egypt and Palestine, and only came to Europe via Turkey. Hahaha. Just another fake, invented tradition. Hahaha.

Hansuke: Why are you laughing?

Totsuya: Because it's funny! Don't you see it? All this time, I was chasing after it like crazy because it was supposed to be this famous piece of pastry from a very specific region. And turns out that none of that is true. Maybe I really have nothing new to experience. Maybe it's the same with everything else. Whatever we want to experience, we assign

it the worth ourselves. But really, it' s all fakery, make-believe. Fuck, I feel good now. I' m glad the bakery didn' t work out.

Hansuke (smiles): If you say so.

The camera pans away as they keep walking.

#### **Ext. Entrance of Hansuke apartment**

Hélène leaves the apartment after she got the present from Hansuke. She stops and looks into the Bag again. She smiles and cries at the same time and keeps on walking.

Fumiko: Yes, some stories deserve to be told. But I also believe that sometimes, it' s better to keep the details away from people not involved. Not everything on our screens we watch, in the stories we read, or even what we find out in the streets can give us answers to all the questions we grapple with. Maybe we would be better off paying attention to all those small stories we share. That connect us.

Hélène stands still, we see the ghost Fumiko on the balcony, watching Hélène. When Hélène turns around, she is gone. Then she keeps walking down the road, away from the camera.

#### **Credits**

**The end**