

Screenplay

by

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The walls of LAURA's office boast brightly colored posters from past marketing campaigns. She points at details on a spacious computer screen, prompting nods from WARREN.

MADELYN (V.O.)

I'm looking forward to her falling flat on her face. She's been slaving over her presentation for months, but instead, she's gonna hack up a hairball. Karma can be a real bitch. It'll be the end of her, and good riddance. She's not even my real mother.

WARREN

It all looks great.

(beat)

I can't believe this is finally happening. Fighting tooth and nail, for every opportunity. That's how you succeed! I just never thought we'd get... friggin' Oshiro Corp!

LAURA

Proud to be on the team, Sir!

Warren looks up at Laura.

WARREN

Are you ready for this?

LAURA

I'm ready for this.

WARREN

(standing up)

ARE YOU READY FOR THIS!

LAURA

(stands up)

I'M READY! I'M READY!

WARREN

(patting Laura on the shoulder)

I'll see you in five.

Warren slips out the door.

2 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

2

With her laptop and papers under her arm, Laura arrives at a closed door labeled "MEETING ROOM", about to turn off her phone. The image of a girl and the name "Madelyn" appears on its screen. Laura breathes, calms herself, then takes the call.

LAURA
Maddie, I'm really, totally,
seriously super busy at the moment.
Just tell me if you're okay?

3 INT. HALLWAY/CHILD ROOM - DAY

3

MADELYN, a young girl, wearing pajamas in bed, but sporting a witch hat and a magic wand, holds another phone.

MADELYN
I'm fine, Mom.

INTERCUT BETWEEN LAURA AND MADELYN

LAURA
Is that fleabag on the sofa again?

Madelyn looks to the side where a cat, not amused, is filling up the most part of a big glass jar.

MADELYN
No, Mom. Hey, she's out of catnip.
Can you get her more?

LAURA
That cat should be grateful it gets
to stay in the house. Sorry, I
need to go. Bye sweetie!

Laura pockets her phone and opens the door.

4 INT. CHILD ROOM - DAY

4

MADELYN
(shrugging)
Oh well. Time for plan B.

Madelyn drops the phone and glances towards the cat, stretching, then flips a page of a weird-looking book.

MADELYN
(chin resting on her palm)
Let's see... Steamy Eyes with Tears
of Ice...

Madelyn's finger strokes above her upper lip.

MADELYN

Nah..

A few more pages flip by.

MADELYN

Tongue Twister in a Whisper. I like this one.

Madelyn silently reads to herself with concentration. Her eyes close, then shift about with REM-like activity. She takes a deep breath, grins, and her eyes suddenly wide. Thunder rumbles from the window.

MADELYN

(whispering)

I cast this spell to curse your verse, for all you speak shall be reversed!

5

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

5

Warren sits at the head of a long table in a dark, shadowy conference room, lit only by the brightly projected image of a company logo. Seated at the other end is the venerable Japanese businessman, Mr. Sakamoto, waiting expressionlessly, flanked on his left by a subordinate.

WARREN

(checking his watch)

Our presentation will begin in just a moment. If anyone would like coffee or ...

The door is pushed open by a stumbling Laura as relief washes over Warren's face.

WARREN

Ah, there she is...

Laura dumps her papers and laptop onto the table, looking apologetic.

WARREN

Umm... Konnichiwa, Sakamoto-san.

Warren bows toward Mr. Sakamoto, while looking for his approval. Mr. Sakamoto's eyes float upward, then, after a blink, he reluctantly nods his head.

WARREN

May I introduce our Creative
Director, Laura Andrews.

Warren pauses between sentences for Mr. Sakamoto's assistant
to translate.

WARREN

She's been hard at work, developing
a marketing strategy for your
global product launch. I'm sure
you'll be pleased.

Without further ado, Laura?

Laura briskly approaches the screen and uses a clicker to
start her presentation, displaying four demographics of
people each sporting serious cameras. She wheels around,
flashing a smile.

LAURA

Photography is undergoing a global
renaissance. The democratization of
yesteryear's state of the art
allows us to carve new inlets into
genres with luhnushanritnih
leepuh.

WARREN

Excuse me. With what?

LAURA

(motioning at the words as if
in the air)

Luhnushanritnih leepuh.

Laura's eyes make contact with bewildered expressions. Her
brows twitch downward a bit, but she clears her throat and
clicks to the next slide. The screen is split between an
evocative fashion model and a perfectly timed snowboarding
shot.

LAURA

Thobe nushkah eefuhrgahtofe, dna
nushaf, va nib eelanushidart
dityolpksehridnuh ibe roochama
eefahrgahtofe stuheezoothneh, dna
thihw orisho sluhtigid wen
tkuhdahrp nile, eew nak toop thobe
ta eth tnuhrfroof.

Laura's eyebrows twitch downwards just a tiny bit, a barely perceptible worry passing over her face. She clears her voice again, more thoroughly, then sweeps through the air dramatically with her arm.

LAURA
Nijamih!
(ahem!)
Nijamih... Nij...

Warren's perplexed gaze softens.

WARREN
Ahhh, I get it. Very impressive,
Laura! I wasn't aware that you
speak Japanese.

TRANSLATOR
That's not... that's not Japanese.

WARREN
Laura?

LAURA (V.O.)
What is going on?

LAURA
Nij-am-ih...

LAURA (V.O.)
I'm talking backward?

Laura's eyes dart about and she reaches for a bottle of water in desperation.

Mr. Sakamoto looks to his translator whose is watching with bewilderment. Warren shakes his head in resignation.

LAURA
(whispering)
Ho, Dog!

Laura pauses, fingers her chin, then moves her finger from right to left.

LAURA
Gawd?

WARREN
(to himself)
... have mercy on you.

Laura's fists clench.

LAURA
Maddahg, nuhs fuh a chib, tishluhb,
rekufrethuhm, park, poop...

Laura freezes.

LAURA
Poop?

Laura smiles in relief at Mr. Sakamoto, proudly repeating herself.

LAURA
Poop!

MR. SAKAMOTO
(with a thick Japanese accent)
No thank you.

Warren stands and silently proceeds toward the door. The rest of the room follows suit.

6 INT. CHILD ROOM - DAY

6

Madelyn finishes polishing one of her fingers. She casually picks up her cell phone, looks at the screen.

MADELYN
Yup! Time's up...

Madelyn starts texting a message.

7 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

7

Laura stands alone, with signs of despair contorting her face. Her cell starts vibrating on the table. Without picking it up, she looks down to it. The screen shows an incoming message from Madelyn, "Next time, just get the catnip. Or should I say, pintac?"

Laura chuckles. She laughs. She stands in the light of the projector and laughs hysterically.

FADE TO BLACK

8 INT. CHILD ROOM - DAY

8

Madelyn, with neither hat nor magic wand, is laying on her bed flipping through the weird-looking book, a bored expression on her face.

The cat stands near, craning her neck toward a page. She taps some text with her paw, then looks up, expectantly.

MADELYN
 (giggling)
 My little kitty cat wants me to
 cast a spell?

Madelyn looks at the page and starts reading the lines silently. She nods her head and strokes her chin, bemusedly impressed.

MADELYN
 I wonder what trans-fer-rence
 means.

She looks at the cat.

MADELYN
 Sure, why not? Looks like fun!

Madelyn raises her arms, closes her eyes, then pauses. The cat sits and continues to observe patiently as the lights dim. Madelyn's eyes attack the book, her hands clamping down on its edges.

MADELYN
 I switch myself, my mind in whole,
 become the one whose soul I stole!

FADE TO BLACK

9 INT. CHILD ROOM - DAY

9

MONTAGE

- Madelyn turns and gently leaves her seat.
- Madelyn gracefully lands on all fours, then stretches, arching her back.
- Madelyn pads toward the cat.
- Madelyn grins while placing a cap on a glass jar, with the cat in it.

END OF MONTAGE

Madelyn picks-up her cell phone, looks through the numbers and dials. The ringing stops, replaced by noise that sounds like Laura.

MADELYN
 I'm fine, Mom.

Madelyn impatiently waits through more noise.

Madelyn looks to the side where a cat, not amused, is filling up the most part of a big glass jar. The cat's name tag says "Karma".

MADELYN (O.S.)

No, Mom. Hey, she's out of catnip.

Can you get her more?

FADE TO BLACK

Karma walks around, innocently, then curls up, purring as she falls asleep.

FADE TO BLACK