

LAURA points at details on a computer screen, while WARREN nods.

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, about to turn off her phone. The image of a girl and the name "Madelyn" appears on its screen. Laura breathes in, then out, and 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 luhnuhshanritnih leepuh.

WARREN

Excuse me. With what?

LAURA

(motioning at the words as if in the air)

Luhnuhshanritnih 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 sluhdigid 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.

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