

KOKO'S LEG

Jonny Lewis
Version 46.0

JonnyLewis.com
JonnyTheActor@gmail.com
Telegram: @jonnydreamsbig

EXT. CITY STREET - DUSK

SUPER: "Urakawa, Hokkaido - Japan"

A narrow urban street. Dusk, but not quite dark enough for car lights to have come on.

KOKO KAIZAWA (14), ethnic Ainu (aboriginal Japanese) backpack stuffed with groceries, moves skillfully down the sidewalk on a skateboard.

A CROSSWALK.

She rolls down into the crosswalk--weaving among pedestrians without slowing.

Reaching the other side, she turns left on the sidewalk, then quickly makes a right turn into a parking lot. She anticipates a car backing up, deftly flows wide around it.

Leaving the parking lot, she makes another left on the sidewalk.

She crosses another street, then makes a right at the corner. Onto the left-side sidewalk.

A BOX TRUCK idles at a stoplight--pulled up too far, blocking most of the crosswalk.

A SEDAN waits behind it.

As Koko comes alongside the car, six LAUGHING KIDS spill out of a KONBINI, chaotically blocking the sidewalk.

To avoid them, Koko heads for the six-foot gap into the street between the sedan and the box truck.

BUT--

In front of the truck, an ELDERLY WOMAN begins to cross. As the sedan impatiently edges forward, the TRUCK DRIVER politely backs up to clear the crosswalk.

As Koko enters the gap, it closes: the sedan comes forward as the truck quickly backs up.

She jumps high off the board to try to avoid the two vehicles coming together.

CRUNCH.

The sedan driver SCREAMS.

2 INT. AMBULANCE - MOVING - DUSK

Koko lies on a stretcher, unconscious, an IV hanging. Blood soaks the sheet beneath her left leg as EMT #1 cinches a TOURNIQUET above the knee.

EMT #1
This is bad.

The other EMT nods grimly, then looks at Koko's SKATEBOARD on the floor.

3 INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - EVENING

Ambulance doors BURST open.

Koko on a gurney--unconscious, pale, blood staining the sheet where it covers her left leg.

The EMTs rush her inside.

A YOUNG ORDERLY, SHIGERU ENDO (21)--dyed blond Caesar cut--is ready for the gurney.

EMT #1
ER. Severe trauma, left leg.

Endo takes the gurney, looks at Koko's young face, frowns. Then quickly wheels her down the corridor.

4 INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE THE O.R. - NIGHT

A set of double doors, marked 手術室 / OPERATING ROOM.

Endo waits beside them, arms crossed. A passing NURSE stops.

NURSE
They need you in supply.

Endo ignores her. The nurse frowns, moves on.

The O.R. doors swing open. A SURGICAL NURSE backs out pulling a gurney--Koko unconscious, pale, a clean sheet over her. The shape of the sheet reveals there is ONLY ONE LEG beneath it.

Endo steps over, takes the gurney from her. The Surgical Nurse goes back through the doors.

Endo looks at the missing leg, shakes his head, then pushes Koko slowly down the corridor.

5 INT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - EVENING

A folded wool blanket lies across the foot of a futon, its border woven with bold indigo-and-white Ainu spirals.

By the side window, a household altar (*butsudan*), its doors closed. Beside it, on its own small stand, a single Ainu *inau*—a whittled willow stick, shavings curled and intact—stands upright.

Kiyoshi Kaizawa (65), Ainu, full white beard, kneels at a tabletop ironing board, carefully pressing a small shirt.



A knock at the door.

He turns the iron off. Walks to the door, opens it.

Koko's teacher, SUZUKI (40) female, stands there.

KIYOSHI
Suzuki-sensei.

Suzuki fights back tears.

SUZUKI
Kaizawa-san. Koko-chan...

Kiyoshi's eyes widen and the color leaves his face.

6 EXT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kiyoshi and Suzuki get into her car. It pulls away.

7 INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Automatic doors slide open.

Kiyoshi enters. Suzuki behind him. They go to the front desk.

DESK NURSE

Yes?

KIYOSHI

Kaizawa, Koko.

The nurse types. Glances at the screen.

DESK NURSE

She is out of surgery.

KIYOSHI

I am her grandfather.

DESK NURSE

Room 224. Second floor.

Kiyoshi heads for the elevator. Suzuki nods thanks, follows.

8 INT. SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Elevator doors open. They step out. A nurses station halfway down the hall.

Kiyoshi checks room numbers--224 is third on the left. He holds up a hand for Suzuki to wait outside the door. Uncomfortable, she gladly does.

Kiyoshi enters the room.

9 INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

A four-bed room. Curtains half-drawn. Quiet.

The first bed is empty. He checks each curtain, finding Koko in the fourth bed, by the window.

He sees the flat sheet where her left leg should be. It has been amputated just below the knee.

He takes in a sharp breath. He stifles a scream--what comes out instead is an angry GROWL. One of the other patients murmurs, then settles.

In the hall, Suzuki winces, hearing the growl. Endo is pushing A PATIENT with a leg cast in a wheelchair. He stops, leaves the patient, steps into the room to investigate.

KIYOSHI

This...was not necessary.

Endo sees Kiyoshi's pain. He looks at Koko for a long moment. Then back to Kiyoshi.

ENDO

If you need anything...I am Endo.

He waits through the long moment until Kiyoshi finally nods--still red with anger, a tear in one eye. Then Endo quietly walks into the hallway and gets behind the wheelchair again.

As the door opens, Kiyoshi spots the cast on the leg of the wheelchair patient. He walks quickly into the hallway and halts Endo. He whispers into his ear. Endo nods, moves on.

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INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Endo slips in with a rolling cart: plaster rolls, gauze, a metal basin of warm water. Suzuki steps inside, staying near the door.

Endo brings the cart to Koko's bedside. Kiyoshi starts to work. Singing quietly in Ainu, he unwraps the dressing from the stump, then daubs it with saline solution.

Endo watches, confused but respectful. He makes a questioning look and gesture to Suzuki.

SUZUKI

(softly)

Kaizawa-san believes in Ainu medicine.

Kiyoshi wraps a band of gauze--making a cuff that starts six inches above the amputation.

He reaches for the plaster roll, dips it in the basin, squeezes it. He starts to make a cast--where the leg would be if it had not been amputated. A hollow cast.

Endo, uncomfortable, interjects softly.

ENDO

I am not a doctor, but, it needs to be sealed.

Kiyoshi meets his eyes.

KIYOSHI

(firmly)

It needs to breathe.

Endo looks over at Suzuki, who shrugs timidly.

Endo takes a section of plaster roll, wets it, squeezes-- holds it ready for Kiyoshi to apply. Kiyoshi takes it.

11 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Endo moves the cart into the hallway, places it against the opposite wall. Then goes back into Koko's room.

A moment later Kiyoshi and Endo emerge with Koko on a gurney-- still unconscious. Underneath the sheet covering her body is the form of two legs now. Suzuki follows them out.

In the corridor, a sleeping patient lies on a gurney against the wall. White pharmacy bag on the shelf beneath. Pill bottle beside it.

As he passes, Endo deftly grabs the bottle, tucks it under Koko's gurney sheet.

As they reach the elevator the doors open and a visitor steps off carrying flowers.

Kiyoshi and Endo wheel Koko in. Suzuki follows.

12 INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Elevator doors open onto the ground floor. Endo and Kiyoshi wheel Koko out, Suzuki trailing. They head for the exit, past the reception desk.

The DESK NURSE looks up.

DESK NURSE

Hey!

ENDO

Transfer to Sapporo hospital.

The Desk Nurse reaches behind her.

DESK NURSE

In that case...

She holds out Koko's skateboard. Suzuki takes it.

They go out through the automatic exit doors.

13 INT. SUZUKI'S CAR - AMBULANCE BAY - NIGHT

Suzuki sits in the car. In the back seat, Kiyoshi draws the unconscious Koko against him, her head to his shoulder. On the other side, Endo arranges her legs on the floor.

14 EXT. HOSPITAL - AMBULANCE BAY - NIGHT

Endo closes the door. He grabs the gurney, runs it around the corner of the building, gives it a big shove down the alley.

15 INT. SUZUKI'S CAR - AMBULANCE BAY - NIGHT

Endo gets in the front seat. Suzuki pulls carefully out.

SUZUKI

Where to?

KIYOSHI

Police will be at my home soon.

He finds Suzuki's eyes in the mirror. She gives a small shake of her head.

ENDO

They'll search both your homes.
Koko-chan can stay at my place.

SUZUKI

They won't search yours?

ENDO

I'm registered at my parents'
address.

KIYOSHI

You will lose your job.

ENDO

I make as much from crypto as I do
from the hospital.

He looks back toward the hospital.

ENDO (CONT'D)

Anyway. Too many sick people.

16 EXT. ENDO'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Four-story concrete block. Endo gets out, hands his backpack and apartment keys to Suzuki.

ENDO
Apartment 26.

He opens the rear car door. Kiyoshi takes Koko's legs. Endo takes her under the arms. She stirs but doesn't wake.

They carry her up two flights of exterior stairs. Suzuki unlocks the door.

17 INT. ENDO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Small kitchen in the entrance hall. One main room. A futon on the floor. A laptop on a desk. A condenser mic on a stand.

On a wall, a poster--anime-style portrait of Endo, arms folded, scowling. In English: ANGURI PANKU, the URL beneath.

They lay Koko on the futon. Kiyoshi takes a cushion, slides it beneath her left leg to elevate it. Endo finds a blanket on the shelf, opens it over her. Kiyoshi tucks the edges.

KIYOSHI
The leg can come back. But not if
she knows it was gone.

Suzuki raises an eyebrow.

ENDO
Understood.

Suzuki nods.

SUZUKI
The police will question me.

KIYOSHI
Tell them you could not stop me.
You came because you wanted to know
where I was taking her. I will
leave with Koko in the morning.

ENDO
I'll go stay with a friend in
Sapporo.

KIYOSHI
The police will give up in a few
days.

Endo goes to his backpack by the door. Finds the pill bottle. Sets it on the floor beside the futon.

ENDO

She will need these when she wakes.

KIYOSHI

(solemnly)

Yes.

In the kitchen alcove, Suzuki has already found the kettle.

They sit on the floor, backs against the wall, near Koko. Suzuki brings three cups, settles beside them.

Kiyoshi kneels on the floor and chants in Ainu over Koko as she sleeps. Endo and Suzuki drink their tea.

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INT. ENDO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Endo and Suzuki sleep on the floor, using towels for pillows. Koko awakens, groggy. She tries to roll onto her side.

A yell of pain. She reaches for her leg. Her hands find the cast. She looks around and sees unfamiliar walls.

Kiyoshi--already awake--jumps to her side. Endo and Suzuki wake, sit up, and watch silently.

KIYOSHI

I am here.

KOKO

Ojii-san, my leg! It hurts!

KIYOSHI

I am here.

KOKO

Where are we?

KIYOSHI

At the home of a friend. You had an accident.

Koko remembers. She winces, A tear falls from one eye. She looks at Endo, confused, then calms when she sees Suzuki.

KOKO

Why am I not in the hospital?

KIYOSHI

You will heal faster with me.

He gives her the pills with a cup of water. She sits up halfway, inhales sharply. Takes the pills.

KOKO
I need the toilet.

He puts her arm over his shoulder. She stands up carefully on one leg. Takes short painful steps toward the bathroom.

19 INT. ENDO'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kiyoshi eases her down onto the toilet. Koko cries quietly.

20 INT. ENDO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER

Koko sits on the edge of the futon between Kiyoshi and Endo, each supporting her at the shoulder. Suzuki looks on, hiding her heartbreak.

KOKO
I can't feel below my knee.

She puts her hand on the cast at mid-shin.

KIYOSHI
The doctors said it will take some
time for the feeling to return.

She eases back down onto the futon. She winces as she lies down, too tired to ask any more questions. Kiyoshi places one hand on her thigh and one hand on her shin. He chants in Ainu. Koko closes her eyes, and her breathing softens.

21 EXT. ENDO'S APARTMENT BUILDING - PRE-DAWN

Suzuki's car idles at the curb. Kiyoshi and Endo carry Koko down the exterior stairs in a two-person seat carry. She is half-awake, moaning in pain.

Suzuki holds the rear door open. Kiyoshi gets in, reaches back. Endo hands Koko in, arranges her legs, closes the door.

Endo pokes his head into the car.

KIYOSHI
You have done a good thing.

ENDO
I hope it is enough.

Endo watches the car pull away.

22 EXT. ROAD JUNCTION - PRE-DAWN

Suzuki pulls over. A kei truck idles at the junction.



Two men climb out. Kiyoshi is already opening his door.

Kiyoshi lifts the rear hatch. The truck bed is prepared--blankets laid over rice straw. He takes the skateboard and suitcase from Suzuki's trunk and sets them in the bed.

The men take Koko in a two-person seat carry. They ease Koko in. Kiyoshi climbs in beside her. The tailgate closes.

Suzuki watches from the car. The truck pulls away. She sits for a moment, then turns the car around.

23 EXT. AINU SETTLEMENT - DAWN

The kei truck moves slowly down an unpaved road between low houses--vegetable plots, stacked woodpiles. Headlights sweep across a small shrine.



The truck passes a *CISE*--a low thatched structure, a community building.



The truck stops in front of a small house next to it. A PORCH LIGHT comes on.

A woman, HUCHI (60s), opens the door, already dressed.

She walks over to greet Kiyoshi as he climbs out of the truck. She looks at the unconscious Koko, then turns back to Kiyoshi.

HUCHI
I will stay with you and Koko in
the *cise*.

Kiyoshi nods. Gets back in the truck bed. Huchi speaks quietly to the driver, then climbs in beside Kiyoshi and Koko. Koko's eyes open halfway.

HUCHI (CONT'D)
(warmly)
Welcome, Koko-chan.

The truck slowly moves the thirty yards to the *cise* and stops. Koko opens her eyes, but doesn't speak. Kiyoshi and Huchi ease Koko out of the truck bed together. As they carry her inside, she whimpers in pain.

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INT. *CISE* — DAWN

All one room, dirt floor. A hearth at the center, fire already lit. Smoke rises to a hole in the ceiling.

At the east end, high on the wall, a small window--early morning light coming through.

Kiyoshi and Huchi carry Koko to a raised platform near the hearth. They lay her down on a cushion. Koko's eyes close again. Huchi arranges a blanket over her.

Huchi looks at Koko's face in the firelight.

HUCHI
 (fondly)
 Here she will heal.

Kiyoshi watches Koko. He turns to Huchi and gives a brief small smile of thanks. He takes the pill bottle from his pocket and sets it next to the platform.

25 INT. CISE — MORNING

Kiyoshi sits watching Koko. She opens her eyes, looks at him, then around the space.

KOKO
 I am in a *cise*?

KIYOSHI
 Yes.

KOKO
 It seems...familiar.

KIYOSHI
 You have been here before. When
 your parents died.

KOKO
 I can heal here better than in the
 hospital?

Huchi enters, carrying a plastic bag. She squats next to them, pulls out some rice balls. Kiyoshi supports Koko's back as she slowly swings her legs off the edge of the platform and sits up. Huchi gives a rice ball to Koko, then one to Kiyoshi, then takes one herself.

HUCHI
 I remember you. You were three
 years old, and oh so cute. But very
 confused.

KOKO
 I am confused now. Who are you?

HUCHI
 I am called Huchi.

KOKO
 The village elder. A *tusukur*.

HUCHI
 Yes. Welcome back, Koko-chan.

Huchi points to a stack of clothes on a table near the door.

HUCHI (CONT'D)
(to Kiyoshi)
We took up a collection.

Kiyoshi bows in thanks.

Koko finishes her rice ball. Kiyoshi gives her two tablets from the pill bottle and a cup of tea to wash it down.

Koko takes the tablets, then moves to lie down again. As she does, her cast leg catches on the edge of the platform. Huchi reaches to help--guiding the cast onto the platform.

She registers the lightness of the leg--but instantly erases the surprise from her face.

KOKO
My leg feels...light.

KIYOSHI
Until the nerves heal, it will
feel...different.

He looks to Huchi.

HUCHI
Powerful healing takes place in
this *cise*. Tell me when you start
to feel your leg again.

Kiyoshi relaxes.

KOKO
I feel comfortable here.

26 INT. *CISE* - EVENING

Koko lies on the platform, staring straight up at the ceiling. Kiyoshi sits next to her.

The door to the *cise* opens. Huchi enters with two other women, around age 70, also *tusukurs*. Half a dozen villagers enter behind them and wait against the wall as the three women come over to Koko and kneel down beside her.

HUCHI
I have brought help.

The two additional *tusukurs* smile lovingly at Koko, who manages a weak half-smile in return.

More villagers enter--parents, teens, small children. About sixty people total.

Koko's smile grows full. Kiyoshi's shoulders relax.

27 INT. CISE - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

When all have entered they make a circle two lines deep.

Huchi and the two *tusukurs* rise. Moving in silence around the *cise*, they carefully place *inau*--carved wood shavings. When the last one is placed, they return and kneel beside Koko.

When all have settled, Huchi, flanked by the two other *tusukurs*, stands and addresses the group.

HUCHI

Thank you for coming to help Koko-chan. The *spirit* of her leg has suffered greatly. We shall invoke the power of the hearth fire *kamuy* [god]. We shall invoke the spirit of the salamander.

28 INT. CISE - THE CEREMONY - EVENING

Huchi nods to the two *tusukurs*. The three of them form a small circle around Koko, and begin to move clockwise.

They call out a phrase. The people answer, and begin to move counterclockwise.

Kiyoshi rises and joins the *tusukurs*. Call. Answer. Call. Answer. The sound builds--deep and strong.

Huchi steps out of the circle and goes to Koko. She raises both arms wide, palms open. Turns to face east. Gathers the sky energy, sweeps her arms down toward Koko.

Now she turns to south. Gathers the sky energy again.

West. North. Then straight up to the heavens. Guiding the energy down into Koko.

The chant accumulates--stronger without being louder.

Kiyoshi moves with his fists against his heart.

Koko's glance flutters about the ceiling--eyes shining with the energy she is feeling.

29 EXT. CISE — EVENING

The last light of dusk on the *cise* roof. Faint smoke rises through the hole in the thatched roof.

30 INT. CISE — EVENING

Huchi, soaked through with sweat, lowers her arms, puts her fists to her chest. The *tusukurs* begin to slow the chant. The outer circle slows with it.

The chant resolves into silence.

The circle of villagers breaks up. One by one, they file past Koko. Each one bows. Some leave a small token at the edge of the platform—a smooth stone, a folded cloth, a dried flower. Several children place drawings.

Kiyoshi stands beside Koko, acknowledging each bow with his own. Koko BEAMS, tears in her eyes.

The last family moves through, and the *cise* empties out.

Through the open door, it is dark now.

Huchi and the *tusukurs* remain, catching their breath.

Koko looks up at Huchi.

KOKO

Thank you so much.

KIYOSHI

Yes. Thank you, Huchi-san.

(to the *tusukurs*)

Thank you so much.

The two *tusukurs* kneel beside Koko. One takes her hand. The other begins to comb Koko's hair. Koko closes her eyes.

Kiyoshi's eyes go to the door, then back to Koko. Huchi reads his uncertainty, gestures him toward the far wall. He follows her there. She pours tea for them.

KIYOSHI (CONT'D)

Do you think this will be enough?

Huchi chuckles.

HUCHI

This is the beginning. We will do this every evening. Until Koko feels her leg again.

KIYOSHI

But--

She raises her hand, cutting him off.

HUCHI

Koko is a child of our village.
With the help of the *kamuy*, we will
heal her.

Kiyoshi looks down at his tea, then back up at Huchi.

31 INT. *CISE* - EVENING

Koko lies on the platform.

The villagers file back into the *cise*, lantern light warming the doorway. They form the circle. Huchi and the *tusukurs* takes their positions.

An 8-year-old boy darts out from the circle, sets a drawing on Koko's chest, then dashes back to his place.

Koko looks down at it: a simple but alive drawing of a smiling girl in a triangular red dress, one leg "glowing," with short yellow "rays" around it. She smiles.

Huchi nods to the *tusukurs*. The call and response begins.

32 INT. *CISE* - MORNING

One *tusukur* brings Koko a bowl of rice as the other arrives with tea. They marvel together at the sight of two empty rice bowls and a plate with the bones of three fish.

Koko looks up at them, mouth full, already working on the third bowl.

From the food preparation table, Kiyoshi watches. He allows himself a small smile.

33 INT. *CISE* - MORNING

The platform edge is lined now with children's drawings and small tokens, built up over many mornings.

Huchi sets a tray in front of Koko--three bowls of rice, soy sauce, a large grilled fish.

Koko digs into it hungrily.

KOKO
I want ikura. And a banana!

Huchi blinks at the odd request. Then she shrugs, gets up, and returns with ikura and a banana.

Koko pours the soy sauce on the banana--not the fish--and takes a big bite.

Two children sitting nearby burst out laughing. Koko looks at them, not realizing she is doing something odd.

Kiyoshi, sitting next to Koko, shakes his head and smiles.

34 EXT. CISE - MORNING

Trees near the cise, leaves turned red and gold. A woodpile stacked against the wall where there was none before.

35 INT. CISE - MORNING

Koko sits on the edge of the platform, Kiyoshi seated next to her. Her hand moves slowly down to the cast.

KOKO
My toes.

Kiyoshi goes still.

KOKO (CONT'D)
I can feel my toes.

He exhales once. Then nods.

KIYOSHI
As the doctors said you would.

36 EXT. CISE - DAY

Leaves on the ground, tree branches half-bare.

37 INT. CISE - DAY

Koko sits on the edge of the platform, Kiyoshi beside her.

KOKO
My foot is twitching. Like it is electric.

Kiyoshi smiles. He gets up excitedly and runs to fetch Huchi from the food table.

They come back together.

KOKO (CONT'D)
(to Huchi)
My whole leg and foot are
twitching. Like with electricity.

HUCHI
The healing is progressing.

Huchi smiles broadly at Kiyoshi, who can hardly contain himself.

KOKO
Can we remove the cast?

Huchi intuits for a moment.

HUCHI
Not just yet.

38 EXT. AINU SETTLEMENT - DAY

Bare branches against a gray sky. Fallen brown leaves have a light dusting of snow.

39 INT. CISE - MORNING

Koko sits on the edge of the platform--both legs twitching. Kiyoshi sits next to her, with a cup of tea.

KOKO
I feel like I want to run.

KIYOSHI
Wait.

He walks over to Huchi at the food table. They talk.

40 INT. CISE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Huchi and Kiyoshi work together, cutting away the cast in sections, starting from the top. Koko watches the process, eager. Kiyoshi is excited, but nervous.

The last section comes free.

A fully formed leg. Below the knee the skin is red and new.

Koko looks at it.

KOKO

Finally!

She moves her foot. Flexes it.

Kiyoshi takes her arm and helps her to standing.

She takes a step, tentatively. Then another. Then walks in a small circle, Kiyoshi holding her arm. She beams at him. He smiles wide in return. Huchi smiles like a proud mother.

KIYOSHI

No running today.

KOKO

But soon.

KIYOSHI

We will see.

41 EXT. CISE - DAY

Fresh snow covering the ground in front of the cise.

Koko and Kiyoshi stand at the doorway, in coats and boots. She steps down onto the snow, one hand on the doorframe.

She lets go. Walks along the wall of the *cise*, watching her feet. Reaches the corner. Stops. Turns around.

Kiyoshi steps out into the snow, away from the wall.

Koko walks out to him. They join hands, beaming.

42 EXT. AINU SETTLEMENT - DAY

Two feet of snow. Paths have been cleared between the houses. Wood smoke rises from the *cise* smoke hole.

43 EXT. CISE - DAY

Koko, in a warm coat and mittens, comes out carrying a tray-- a skewer of four sticky rice dumplings, and a cup of tea. She sits down on a nearby bench, sets the tray down. She takes off her mittens and brings the tea to her lips.

Two twelve-year-old boys appear from nowhere. One snatches the skewer and they bolt.

Koko is on her feet before she thinks about it. She goes after them--lurching at first, then finding a stride. Not quite right, but almost.

The boys outdistance her. She slows, then stops.

They look back. The friend nudges the one holding the skewer. They trot back. He holds it out, eyes down.

Koko takes the skewer. She pulls off a rice dumpling for each of them. They eat together, smiling.

44 EXT. AINU SETTLEMENT - *CISE* - DAY

The road is plowed. The kei truck waits, their suitcases and her skateboard are in back.

The villagers stand outside. The *cise* door opens. Huchi escorts Kiyoshi and Koko to the gathered group. Children playing on the snow piles climb down to see them off.

Kiyoshi turns to face Huchi.

KIYOSHI

Thank you for healing my Koko-chan.

HUCHI

She has brought us unity. And joy.

KIYOSHI

We are forever grateful.

KOKO

Maybe we can visit again sometime.

A chorus of yays from the children.

Koko and Kiyoshi bow to the group. The group bows back.

Kiyoshi and Koko walk to the truck, only a SLIGHT LIMP betraying her injury. They climb into the cab. The truck pulls away down the unpaved road. The children run after it for a dozen yards, then stop and wave.

Huchi watches until it is out of sight.

45 EXT. URAKAWA - KIYOSHI'S STREET - DAY

The kei truck rolls down the street, snow banked along the curbs. They pass Kiyoshi's corner house without stopping.

46 EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The truck turns the corner and pulls into the alley behind the house. Kiyoshi and Koko get out, grab their suitcases from the back. The truck pulls away.

47 EXT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - BACK - DAY

Kiyoshi and Koko set down their suitcases and the skateboard. Kiyoshi jimmies the sliding door lock with a thin knife, then slides the door open.

KOKO
Ojii-san, why are we entering
through the back?

KIYOSHI
Police may still be looking for me.

KOKO
But you brought me back. I am your
granddaughter.

KIYOSHI
Technically, I committed a crime.

KOKO
Surely they will understand.

He steps inside without answering. She follows.

48 INT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They move quickly through the rooms. Kiyoshi pulls clothes from a closet, hands items to Koko, who starts packing them into a small suitcase.

A KNOCK at the front door. Insistent.

Koko moves to the window and looks out.

Their neighbor, YAMAMOTO (woman, 60s), stands at the door.

KIYOSHI
Koko--!

Koko opens the door before Kiyoshi's warning registers.

49

INT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

YAMAMOTO

Koko-chan! We have missed you so much! I watch your home every day-- I think, when will Kaizawa-san come back? I did not see you enter, so when I saw movement in the house I called the police.

KOKO

It's okay, Yamamoto-san.

Kiyoshi appears at Koko's shoulder.

KIYOSHI

Hello, Yamamoto-san.

YAMAMOTO

Kaizawa-san. When the police come you can explain you live here, and it is okay.

KIYOSHI

Yes, yes. Thank you, Yamamoto-san. Goodbye.

He closes the door. Turns to Koko.

KIYOSHI (CONT'D)

We must leave now for the bus stop.

She puts on a RED WOOL CAP and heads for the front door with her suitcase and skateboard.

KIYOSHI (CONT'D)

I will follow in one minute.

He crosses to a household altar by the side window. Two framed photographs stand inside: his wife at age thirty, and Koko's parents at twenty-five. Kiyoshi presses his palms together, bows his head.

He reaches behind the photographs and draws out a thick envelope of cash. Through the window, he spots a police car turning the corner toward the front of the house.

He steps clear of the window.

He looks toward the front door--it closes behind Koko.

KIYOSHI (CONT'D)

Shit.

Kiyoshi thumbs open the envelope, riffles the bills once--a fat stack of ten-thousand-yen notes. He folds it shut, tucks it deep inside his coat.

50 EXT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - FRONT - CONTINUOUS

Koko comes out the front door and starts down the sidewalk, suitcase in hand, enjoying making footprints in the snow.

The police car pulls up in front of Koko. Two officers get out. The first holds a photo--Koko in her school uniform.

FIRST OFFICER

Excuse me!

Koko stops.

KOKO

Yes?

The first officer looks at the photo, then at Koko.

SECOND OFFICER

(quietly, to first)

Idiot.

FIRST OFFICER

She is coming from this house.

SECOND OFFICER

The girl we are looking for has no left foot.

The first officer drops his hand with the photo to his side.

FIRST OFFICER

(to Koko)

Never mind.

They move past her toward the front door.

Koko walks. Steady pace. Reaches the corner, turns and runs.

51 INT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - FRONT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Kiyoshi sees the officers let Koko go, and dashes toward the back of the house.

52 EXT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - BACK - CONTINUOUS

Kiyoshi slips out the sliding door and moves down the narrow alley behind the houses.

53 EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

He emerges from the alley at a run, turns onto the next street just as the police round the corner of the house and enter through the open sliding door.

54 EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

As Kiyoshi turns onto the street, Koko meets him from the other direction. He quickly steers her into a *konbini* (convenience store).

55 INT. KONBINI - CONTINUOUS

A staff member shouts from the back without looking up:
"Irasshaimase!"--Welcome.

They move to the back, out of sight of the window. Kiyoshi watches the street.

Koko spots steamed pork buns stacked under a warmer.

KOKO
Ojii-san.

Kiyoshi looks, hesitates.

KOKO (CONT'D)
Please.

He smiles. Goes to the register, points to the buns and holds up four fingers.

They eat standing up, Kiyoshi still watching the window.

56 EXT. URAKAWA BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Kiyoshi buys two tickets at the counter. Koko stands with the suitcases, foot rocking the skateboard.

The bus pulls in.

57 INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

They take seats near the back. The bus pulls out.

58 EXT. HOKKAIDO COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Fields. Snow. A long flat road.

59 INT. BUS - DAY - LATER

Kiyoshi rests. Koko gazes out the window.

KOKO

Ojii-san?

Kiyoshi opens his eyes.

KOKO (CONT'D)

The policeman said the girl they
were looking for has no left foot.

She looks down at her foot. Then at Kiyoshi.

KOKO (CONT'D)

Was that me?

He hesitates a moment.

KIYOSHI

Yes.

She grabs her calf with both hands. Her eyes go wide and her heart melts as she looks at Kiyoshi.

KOKO

Oh...ojii-san!

She throws her arms around him. He puts one arm around her, pats her back once.

An ELDERLY WOMAN two rows up frowns back at them, then turns forward again.

60 EXT. COASTAL ROAD - DAY

The bus moves along the Pacific coast. Low hills to the left. Ocean to the right.

61 INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Koko watches the water. Kiyoshi sits beside her, eyes forward.

KOKO
Where are we going?

KIYOSHI
It is a surprise.

She smiles, turns back to the window.

62 EXT. SHIZUNAI - BUS STOP - LATE AFTERNOON

The bus pulls away. Kiyoshi and Koko stand on the roadside with their suitcases and skateboard. Open country. Snow on the Hidaka mountains in the distance, but none here.

Nothing in any direction. Koko looks at Kiyoshi.

A kei truck appears down the road, moving fast. It pulls up and a RANCHER (60s) jumps out, already bowing and apologizing in Ainu. Kiyoshi bows back, waves to dismiss the apology.

Rancher takes their bags, throws them in the truck bed. They climb in the cab.

63 EXT. SHIZUNAI - RANCH ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

A narrow road between paddock fences. On both sides, horses graze on pale grass.

Paddocks stretch in every direction. Scores of horses. Koko gazes at them in fascination.

64 EXT. HORSE FARM - CONTINUOUS

A modest farm. Wooden stable, small house, a riding ring worn down to bare earth.

65 INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Small and warm. The Rancher sets out tea.

RANCHER
Welcome to my humble ranch.

KIYOSHI
It is much bigger than before.

RANCHER
What have you been up to all this
time?

KIYOSHI
The usual. Urakawa is a boring
town.

Koko smiles.

RANCHER
Your Koko is beautiful.

Koko blushes.

KIYOSHI
(to Koko)
I brought your mother here when she
was your age. I was waiting for the
right time to bring you.

He looks at her.

KIYOSHI (CONT'D)
This is it.

RANCHER
Are you ready to ride?

Koko smiles and nods vigorously.

66 EXT. HORSE FARM - CONTINUOUS

The Rancher leads a horse out. It breathes clouds of steam in
the cold air.

Koko looks up at it. Then at Kiyoshi.

He gives a small nod. The Rancher smiles at her.

67 EXT. HORSE FARM - RIDING RING - LATE AFTERNOON

Koko on the horse. Walking first, the Rancher at her side.
She finds her balance, quickly becoming confident.

Then a trot. The Rancher steps back.

Koko squeezes her legs. The horse moves into a canter.

She leans forward, and the horse responds, stretching into a
full gallop. Her eyes go wide and she laughs out loud.

Kiyoshi and the Rancher watch from the fence.

RANCHER
She is a natural.

KIYOSHI
Like her mother.

They smile softly.

68 EXT. HORSE FARM - Paddock Fence - Dusk

Koko sits on the fence rail, her cheeks flushed. Kiyoshi stands beside her. They watch the sun go down.

69 INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

A small table. Simple food, barley tea. Koko eats hungrily. The two men talk quietly in Ainu.

70 INT. ANA FLIGHT - FIRST CLASS - Dusk

The plane lifts off. Below, the lights of Tokyo recede.

In the aisle seat, CIA agent ANGELA STIMSON (41), 5'9", a swimmer's body, shoulder-length blonde hair. In the window seat, DARPA neurobiologist DANIEL VENBERG (32), 5'6", curly dark brown hair, glasses.

STIMSON
How much do you know about the mission?

VENBERG
Rumor some Ainu girl regrew an amputated leg.

STIMSON
From the knee down. Not a rumor. Positive ID by a neighbor and two police officers.

Venbergs opens his MacBook. The screensaver: an AXOLOTL SALAMANDER.



STIMSON (CONT'D)

Nice. Standard issue for DARPA nerds?

VENBERG

DARPA nerds brought you the internet. I have twelve of these in my lab. Axolotl salamander.

STIMSON

Yeah, they regrow their tails.

A PA chime. Captain: "Our flight time from Tokyo to Sapporo today will be approximately one hour and forty minutes."

VENBERG

This species...can regrow tail, legs, toes, parts of the heart, liver, lungs, ovaries, jaws, gills. And substantial portions of the spinal cord and brain.

STIMSON

That could come in handy.

VENBERG

That's why I'm on it. Can you imagine if we can assure American soldiers that if they lose a limb we can grow it back?

STIMSON

I can. The most fearless army in the world.

VENBERG

Not to mention CIA, FBI, Homeland Security.

STIMSON

I don't plan on losing any limbs.

VENBERG

No one does. But soon, it won't be a problem.

Stimson orders a sparkling water from a passing flight attendant, in Japanese.

VENBERG (CONT'D)

It will come in handy that you know Japanese.

STIMSON

I'm also fluent in Russian and Chinese.

VENBERG

Speaking of, the Chinese are working on this too. I was just in Shenzhen tracking their research in bioelectric signaling. Tufts University is working on that too.

STIMSON

And the Russians?

VENBERG

Russian science is shit. China is not a warring nation. But they'll sell the service to patch up Russian soldiers--for a fee. America needs to have this first.

The flight attendant brings Stimson her drink.

71

EXT. NEW CHITOSE AIRPORT - NIGHT

Stimson and Venberg emerge from the arrivals exit onto the covered curb deck, snow heaped on the canopy above them. Along with their luggage, Venberg rolls a medium size aluminum case.

A large TOYOTA ALPHARD--black, imposing--idles at the curb.



Venberg sees the Alphard.

VENBERG

Wow.

STIMSON

That's us.

VENBERG

Yeah?

KENZO HARA (50), thin, but iron character, steps out of the Alphard. One step behind is TAKESHI SATO (35), solid, strong.

HARA

Agent Stimson.

STIMSON

Hara-san. Hajimemashite.

HARA

Yoroshiku onegaishimasu.

Sato nods to Stimson.

STIMSON

Hajimemashite, Sato-san. Douzo
yoroshiku onegaishimasu.

SATO

Yoroshiku.

STIMSON

(indicates Venberg)
Dr. Venberg. From DARPA.

HARA

Pleased to meet you, Dr. Venberg.

Sato reaches for the aluminum case.

SATO

May I?

VENBERG

(proudly)
My "doctor's bag." Yes, do.

Sato picks up the case and points to the car.

SATO

Douzo.

Hara takes a small black case from his coat, holds it out to Venberg.

HARA
 From the hospital. Tissue samples.
 Blood before the surgery.

Venberg smiles, pockets it. They all get in the car.

72 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - NIGHT

Sato drives. Venberg beside him. Stimson and Hara in back.

VENBERG
 I didn't expect police to be in
 something like this.

HARA
 We are not police. We are Kōan.

VENBERG
 Kōan?

STIMSON
 Like the FBI--but scarier. Japanese
 people fear them.

HARA
 We serve our country. On this case
 I answer only to the Prime
 Minister.

STIMSON
 We appreciate that your government
 is decisive in this matter.

HARA
 The Prime Minister believes that
 what is in the best interest of the
 United States is in the best
 interest of Japan.

STIMSON
 Status of the subjects?

HARA
 Police missed them yesterday, but
 found out they took a bus to
 Shizunai.

VENBERG
 (musing)
 Actual regeneration of a leg.

HARA

She fled the scene with her grandfather, one Kiyoshi Kaizawa. Police traced the grandfather's family register. His hometown is an Ainu settlement in Hidaka. They are sending officers to speak with the villagers.

VENBERG

We need to keep this low-profile.

Stimson and Hara share an almost eye-roll.

HARA

We understand the need for discretion.

VENBERG

We must find the girl alive and unharmed.

Another look between Stimson and Hara.

STIMSON

They understand the mission, Venberg.

Venberg realizes he has overstepped.

VENBERG

Of course. I'm just really excited about this case.

HARA

Tonight we stay in a hotel. We will leave tomorrow at 5:00 AM.

73 EXT. SHIZUNAI - STREET - NEXT MORNING

Rancher's kei truck idles at the curb. Kiyoshi pulls their bags from the back. Koko, with her skateboard, bows to the Rancher--once, twice, a third time. He laughs, pulls away.

74 EXT. SHIZUNAI - STREET - MORNING

A quiet commercial block. Koko and Kiyoshi walk with their bags and Koko's skateboard.

KOKO

I am hungry.

KIYOSHI
We just had breakfast.

KOKO
Rice and miso soup. Not enough.

Kiyoshi smiles--happy about her continuing appetite.

A diner on the right--breakfast menu on the wall. Kiyoshi pushes the door open.

75 INT. SHIZUNAI - DINER- CONTINUOUS

A few tables. A TEENAGE GIRL comes to take their order. They point to their menu choices. She nods, leaves.

Koko sets her skateboard against the wall.

KOKO
I understand now why we must leave
Urakawa.

KIYOSHI
You must never speak of your leg.

KOKO
I understand.

KIYOSHI
If someone notices your walking is
not right, say you fell.

KOKO
We are still close to Urakawa. Why
are we not going farther?

KIYOSHI
The authorities will find us if I
continue to accept my pension. I
need to decide where to live.
Someplace I can work.

KOKO
Soon I will be 15, and I can work.

Kiyoshi ignores this.

KIYOSHI
I will find Ainu who will let me
fish with them.

The girl arrives with their food. They eat in silence.

Koko glances out the window. Three men and a tall woman in dark coats--expensive--move along the far side of the street, checking in the windows. Two of them western.

KOKO
Ojii-san.

The group starts to cross the street.

Without hesitation, Kiyoshi grabs her hand, pulls her out of her seat. She grabs her skateboard just in time. He walks her quickly past the counter--dropping some yen on it--through the kitchen past surprised cooks, and out the back door.

76 EXT. SHIZUNAI - BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

They emerge into a narrow alley. Koko sets the skateboard down and steps on.

One push. The wheels catch on uneven asphalt and she wobbles--not a fall, but close. She steps off fast.

Kiyoshi frowns at her. She picks up the board and carries it.

77 EXT. SHIZUNAI - BUS TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

A small covered platform. A digital board above the counter:
SAPPORO - 3 MIN.

Kiyoshi buys two tickets at the counter. Cash.

Koko starts toward the bus. Kiyoshi grabs her sleeve.

KIYOSHI
No.

He starts to lead her away, then notices a girl about Koko's age waiting for the bus.

KIYOSHI (CONT'D)
Give me your skateboard.

KOKO
What?

He gently takes it from her, motions her to continue walking down the street. Confused, she complies.

Kiyoshi takes the skateboard over to the girl, chats with her. She is confused, then smiles, takes the skateboard. Kiyoshi nods in goodbye.

The bus pulls in. Passengers board. The girl gets on, skateboard under her arm. The bus pulls away.

78 EXT. SHIZUNAI - BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Stimson, Venberg, Hara, and Sato approach the ticket counter. Hara speaks to the TICKET SELLER. He turns to the group.

HARA

Old man bought two tickets to
Sapporo. Girl had a skateboard.

He turns to a WAITING PASSENGER, asks in Japanese. The passenger answers. Hara turns back.

HARA (CONT'D)

Waiting passenger confirms the girl
boarded with the skateboard.

VENBERG

Well that's it. They got back on
the bus.

STIMSON

Did the old man board with her?

Hara turns to the passenger, asks. The passenger shrugs.

HARA

He's not sure.

Stimson looks at Hara, who gives a small nod.

HARA (CONT'D)

(to Sato)

Take the car. Intercept the bus at
the next stop. But first--

STIMSON

Let's get the drones up.

79 EXT. SHIZUNAI - PARK - CONTINUOUS

The Alphard is parked in the parking lot of a small park. Hara opens the rear hatch.

Two hard cases inside. Sato unlatches the first, lifts out a drone, sets it on the pavement. Then the second.

VENBERG

Can you use face recognition?

HARA
Drones are much too high. But we
should be able to spot an old man
and a girl together.

He speaks briefly into his phone, then ends the call.

HARA (CONT'D)
(to Stimson)
Operators at Kōan headquarters will
direct the drones.

Hara takes a tablet monitor and hands another to Stimson.

The first drone lifts--rotors whining--and climbs. Then the second. They disappear above the roofline.

Sato gets in the Alphard and pulls away. Hara, Stimson, and Venberg move to a bench.

80 EXT. SHIZUNAI - RIVERBANK - DAY

Kiyoshi moves fast along the bank, Koko close behind. Ahead, several small covered fishing boats idle at a wooden dock.

Kiyoshi scans the boats. One has an Ainu pattern blanket hanging inside the canopy. He moves toward the FISHERMAN (60s), loading gear.

The WHINE of a drone growing louder--but not yet visible.

Kiyoshi speaks to the fisherman in Ainu. The fisherman looks at Koko, then back at Kiyoshi. He waves them aboard.

Kiyoshi steps onto the boat, reaches back for Koko. Kiyoshi pulls her on board just as a drone comes into view.

The fisherman unties the line, pushes off.

The drone--blocked by the canopy--moves on.

81 EXT. SHIZUNAI - PARK - DAY

Hara reads from his phone. Stimson monitors both tablets.

HARA
Police in Hidaka spoke to the
villagers.

HARA (CONT'D)

The girl was there six months.
Ceremonies every evening. She
walked out on her own.

VENBERG

Ceremonies?

HARA

Dancing, chanting. Apparently the
whole village was involved.

VENBERG

Chanting does not regenerate a leg.
There's no scientific evidence for
such a thing. It's not a factor.

HARA

Regeneration of limbs is not part
of the Ainu repertoire--not even in
legends.

VENBERG

It's not the Ainu. It's the girl.
I'd have given anything to have
been there, seen the process.

STIMSON

I'll get you the girl soon enough.

82 EXT. SHIZUNAI - RIVER - MOVING - DAY

The boat moves upriver. Low hills on both sides. The town
falls away behind them. Flat farmland, then forest.

Kiyoshi and Koko sit under the canopy.

KOKO

That drone. It was looking for us.

KIYOSHI

Yes. But we are safe for now.

83 EXT. SHIZUNAI - PARK - DAY

Stimson and Hara continue watching drone video on the tablet.

VENBERG

Still haven't found them?

STIMSON

(to Hara)

They're not on any road out of town. What about the river?

HARA

The river is there, but it goes nowhere. Fifteen kilometers and it becomes too shallow for a boat. After that, only forest.

VENBERG

Maybe they're on the bus after all.

They ignore Venberg.

STIMSON

(to Hara)

Call back the drones.

84 EXT. RIVER - UPPER REACH - DAY

The river narrows and becomes shallow. The Fisherman cuts the engine, the boat drifts and crunches through thin ice at the edge. He steps out onto the bank and pulls the boat in.

He points up a track through the trees.

FISHERMAN

Road is there. You can see it from the top.

He takes out his phone. Makes a brief call. Exchanges a few words. Hangs up.

FISHERMAN (CONT'D)

Taxi. Fifteen minutes.

Kiyoshi bows. Koko bows and smiles. The Fisherman bows back, then gets in his boat, pushes off and heads back toward town.

KIYOSHI

Can you walk to the road?

KOKO

I must. I will.

85 EXT. SHIZUNAI - PARK - DAY

The two tablets lie on a bench. Hara gets a phone call, speaks briefly, then hangs up.

STIMSON

Sato?

HARA

They were not on the bus.

STIMSON

Possible escape routes?

HARA

We are good as long as she doesn't reach Honshu.

STIMSON

Can she from Tomakomai?

HARA

Ferry takes eighteen hours. Too slow.

STIMSON

The train? Through Seikan Tunnel?

HARA

I have Kōan agents covering the train, the airports. Probably they are going to Sapporo.

STIMSON

I don't work with "probably."

Hara pulls out his phone. A brief exchange. He ends the call.

HARA

Kōan agents will cover the ferry. We will head to Sapporo.

STIMSON

How long?

HARA

Two hours.

86

EXT. FOREST TRACK - DAY

Kiyoshi and Koko climb through the trees toward the road.

KIYOSHI

Maybe we are not alone. Maybe we can have help.

Koko scrunches her face.

KIYOSHI (CONT'D)

There was a young man who helped me
and Suzuki-san at the hospital. At
his apartment he had a poster.
"Anguri" something. Blond hair.

KOKO

Anguri Panku?!

KIYOSHI

Yes.

KOKO

Anguri Panku got me out of the
hospital?!

KIYOSHI

Yes. He was an orderly there. But
now he is in Sapporo.

KOKO

Wow. Anguri Panku, the blogger.

KIYOSHI

He has a website. We should contact
him.

KOKO

Yes, of course.

Through the trees above them, they see a road.

87

EXT. SHIZUNAI - PARK - DAY

The two drone cases sit stacked by the bench. Stimson and
Hara wait beside them. Venberg sits on a drone case.

STIMSON

The drones didn't find them. They
weren't at the bus station. They
took the river.

HARA

Perhaps.

STIMSON

You said the river goes nowhere.

HARA

Nowhere as an extended route.

STIMSON

There's a road above it?

HARA

Yes, but--.

Stimson looks away.

STIMSON

So they were on the road while we
were flying drones all over town.

Hara says nothing. Venberg looks at them and frowns.

Sato pulls up in the Alphard. He gets out, opens the rear
hatch, and loads the drone cases.

HARA

(to Sato)

Sapporo.

SATO

Yes.

They get in.

88 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Kiyoshi and Koko stand at the road's edge. A taxi pulls up.

89 EXT. BUS TERMINAL - DAY

A covered platform, snow plowed against the curb. Kiyoshi and
Koko sit on a bench.

A KIOSK at the entrance: drinks, snacks. On a pegboard: WOOL
CAPS in many colors. The caps catch his eye.

KIYOSHI

I have an idea to keep you safe. I
must borrow something from a
friend.

KOKO

How do you know so many people?

KIYOSHI

A man who has lived a long life
will either have a lot of enemies,
or a lot of friends.

KOKO

I trust you.

Kiyoshi steps to the kiosk, takes a GRAY WOOL CAP from the pegboard to the counter.

90 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Hara on the phone. Ends the call.

HARA

I have ordered a transit dragnet--
police will check all bus stations
within 100 kilometers of the
presumed river exit. An older Ainu
man traveling with a teen girl.

91 EXT. BUS TERMINAL - DAY

From behind, a girl wearing Koko's RED WOOL CAP boards a bus.
Kiyoshi follows her up the steps.

92 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

*NOTE: From here, snow is on the ground in every exterior to
the end.*

The Alphard speeds along the highway, snow banked high on
both shoulders, headed toward Sapporo.

93 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Hara's phone rings. He answers, listens, ends the call.

HARA

Coastal highway bus terminal.
Ticket seller confirms an older
Ainu man and a girl boarded a bus
for Sapporo.

STIMSON

Same route Sato just checked?

HARA

Yes. One station farther up.

STIMSON

Positive I.D.?

HARA

Taxi driver who dropped them off
gave positive I.D. for both, and
slight limp for the girl.

STIMSON
How far ahead?

HARA
We can cut them off before Sapporo.

94 EXT. ROUTE - BUS - MOVING - DAY

The bus moves along the highway. Through a window, Kiyoshi's profile.

An older silver sedan passes the bus, horn honks once.

95 EXT./INT. BUS - INTERCEPTED - DAY

Sato flips on the Alphard's siren and flashers. The bus pulls over. The Alphard stops behind it. They board. Hara and Sato move down the aisle. Stimson stays at the front, scanning.

Hara and Sato stop beside Kiyoshi and the girl next to him, who wears Koko's red wool cap.

Hara looks at the girl. Looks at his phone--Koko's school photo. Back to the girl.

HARA
(quiet, to Sato)
Not her.

Kiyoshi smiles up at them, and stands up. The forty-year-old Ainu man across the aisle takes Kiyoshi's place next to the girl, and they smile at each other. Kiyoshi nods to them and they nod back.

Sato takes Kiyoshi by the arm, leads him to the front of the bus. Stimson frowns.

STIMSON
You said the girl was confirmed.

HARA
By the taxi driver, not the ticket seller. They must have switched somewhere in between.

Stimson shakes her head, steps off the bus.

96 EXT. SAPPORO STATION - DAY

The silver sedan pulls up. Koko gets out, pulls on the gray wool cap, nods to the driver. The car pulls away.

97 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Kiyoshi sits between Hara and Stimson. Venberg in front.

VENBERG
She could have gone south. Alone.

STIMSON
(to Hara)
Anything from the south routes?

HARA
Nothing yet.

STIMSON
Sapporo still our best bet?

HARA
Yes. It's a hub, lots of routes.

Hara's phone buzzes. He reads it.

HARA (CONT'D)
Odori Station subway camera. Twenty
minutes ago.

Kiyoshi's mouth slackens.

Hara makes a call.

HARA (CONT'D)
Drones, Odori Station area.
(to Sato)
Pull over.

98 EXT. SAPPORO - STREET - DAY

The Alphard pulls to the curb. Sato is out, around to the hatch. He lifts out one drone, sets it on the sidewalk, then the second.

Hara steps out, phone to his ear. He ends the call.

HARA
Operators have them. Tracking Odori
Station area.

The two drones lift from the sidewalk and climb, disappearing above the roofline. Sato gets back in.

99

INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Hara and Stimson each monitor a tablet. Hara wears a headset. Stimson gestures toward Kiyoshi.

STIMSON

Having him in the car will impede the operation.

HARA

Sapporo Central Police Station is three blocks away. We can drop him there and not lose any time.

STIMSON

(to Venberg)

Do you want him for tests?

VENBERG

Yes. But I can only test for post-regeneration markers. To judge his genetic potential, I'll need a DNA marker panel.

(joking)

Or cut off his foot and see what happens.

STIMSON

So you'll need a full research lab?

VENBERG

Yes.

HARA

I will have officers escort him to Camp Sapporo. They can report results to you.

VENBERG

Good. But the real prize is still the girl.

Kiyoshi bows his head.

100

INT. SAPPORO APARTMENT - DAY

A knock. Endo opens the door. Koko stands there, nervous.

ENDO

Please come in.

Koko quickly enters. Endo closes the door.

KOKO
You are the one who helped my
grandfather at the hospital?

ENDO
Yes, I am Endo.

KOKO
(smiles)
Anguri Panku.

Endo smiles.

KOKO (CONT'D)
Unfortunately, I think a drone saw
me.

ENDO
Are you sure?

KOKO
Pretty sure.

Endo puts a thumb to his lower lip, thinking.

ENDO
I think...that is okay.

He gestures toward the kitchen table, with a teapot and a
plate full of mochi, and his open laptop.

101 INT. SAPPORO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

They drink tea. Koko munches a mochi.

ENDO
You are being pursued by some
dangerous people. You must
understand--they will not stop.

She sets down the half-eaten mochi.

ENDO (CONT'D)
You must leave the country.

KOKO
Where? Korea?

ENDO
They control the airports. Besides,
Korea is theirs. Russia.

KOKO
Russia?

ENDO
Sakhalin Island. I will set it up.
Once you get past them, head for
Wakkanai.

KOKO
How can you do this? You are only a
blogger.

ENDO
Not only blogger. I am Anguri
Panku.

Koko nods. He turns his laptop toward her.

ENDO (CONT'D)
Use the Signal app. Scan QR for my
contact.

She scans with her phone.

102 INT. SAPPORO APARTMENT - LATER

Endo walks her to the door.

KOKO
(repeating instructions)
Left, two and a half blocks. Then
right.

ENDO
Yes. I will meet you on a scooter
on the other side. If the drones do
not see you, it will be easy. If
they do, this tactic should clear
them.

He opens the door. They listen toward the sky.

ENDO (CONT'D)
Either way, you will be okay.

She nods, then leaves.

103 INT. VEHICLE - MOVING - DAY

Sato drives. Stimson and Hara watch their tablets.

On Stimson's screen: Koko moving along a sidewalk, seen from above.

STIMSON
There!

HARA
(into headset)
Drones, drop low.

The image drops--Koko filling the frame now, the drones just yards behind her.

HARA (CONT'D)
(to Stimson)
We are very close.
(to Sato)
Take her at Kita-sanchojo Street.

SATO
Yes.

On screen, Koko turns right into a narrow alley.

STIMSON
She's turning.

The image swings after her.

SATO
We can follow.

Stimson looks at her tablet and smiles.

104 EXT. COVERED MARKET ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Koko moves through a narrow alley. Ahead: a crowded roofed arcade--stalls, hanging goods. She walks in. The low roof blocks the drones' sightline.

105 INT. VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

HARA
Drones lost visual.

STIMSON
We need to keep eyes on. Push a drone in.

Hara listens on headsets.

HARA
Operator is flagging a no-fly. High
obstacle density.

STIMSON
Override it. Go in.

HARA
It is not wise.

STIMSON
Follow the damn girl.

HARA
(into radio)
Drone One, follow girl into market.

106 INT. COVERED MARKET - CONTINUOUS

The drone enters low, and too fast. Immediately wrong--
hanging fabric, stall canopies, narrow sight lines.

It clips a metal crossbar--crashes into a spice stall,
sending bottles flying.

The sound is huge in the enclosed space. People flee in every
direction toward the exits.

107 INT. VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Stimson watches the feed cut to static.

HARA
(into headset)
Hold Drone Two.

STIMSON
Fly it to the other end of the
market.

HARA
(into headset)
Move Drone Two to far exit.

Stimson sets her tablet down, jumps out of the car.

108 EXT. COVERED MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Hara gets out.

HARA
(to Sato, through the
window)
Bring the car around.

Sato turns the Alphard around.

Stimson enters the market, scanning the crowd. Hara moves in behind her.

109 INT. COVERED MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Koko runs through the stalls, Stimson gaining on her.

Ahead, a bicycle leans against a stall post, a boy (10) beside it. Koko grabs the bike and trots it away as she swings a leg over.

BOY
Hey!

Koko rises onto the pedals and pulls away.

The boy, waving his hands in the air and shouting, steps out into the aisle--right into Stimson's path. She stumble-vaults over him, nearly falling, puts down a hand to keep herself upright. But the gap has widened.

A shopper steps into Koko's path. She turns right to avoid him and plows into a stall--produce and baskets flying.

Stimson closes the gap.

Koko rights the bike, stands hard on the pedals, and pulls away again.

Stimson keeps pace with Koko now, as they navigate the crowd--but still a ten-yard gap.

110 EXT. MARKET FAR EXIT - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Koko bursts out onto the snow-shoveled sidewalk, a bike rack directly in her path. She brakes hard, the bike slides. She wrenches the bike around, gets one foot back on a pedal--.

Stimson explodes out of the exit behind her--vaults an OLD WOMAN bending to examine baskets--and slams into Koko, knocking her off the bike into a snow bank at the curb.

Stimson gains her balance without falling, puts her hands on her hips, looks down at Koko.

STIMSON

Yeah.

Across the street, Endo sits watching astride an idling scooter. He dons his helmet, turns the scooter around and rides off in the opposite direction.

111 EXT. MARKET FAR EXIT - STREET - CONTINUOUS

The drone hovers overhead now.

Stimson pins Koko's arm behind her back.

The old woman Stimson vaulted over stares disapprovingly.

Hara arrives.

TWO PARENTS pass with their TWO TEENAGE DAUGHTERS. The girls stop, concerned. The parents move past, then also stop.

Koko drives her heel straight down onto Stimson's instep.

Stimson absorbs it, wrenches the arm higher. Koko gasps.

STIMSON

(to bystanders, in
Japanese)

Caught her in the market. Stealing.

The old woman's glare hardens--she's not buying it.

KOKO

I did not steal!

The Alphard rounds the corner fast and pulls to the curb. Sato quickly gets out. Hara opens the rear door. Sato and Stimson move Koko toward the open door.

KOKO (CONT'D)

Help!

One of the teen girls takes out her phone.

Koko twists, kicks, grabs the door frame.

The girl starts taking photos.

Stimson grabs a fistful of Koko's hair and forces her head down into the car. Hara grabs her by an arm and a leg, and Stimson gets in next to her. Sato gets back in the driver's seat and the Alphard pulls away.

The parents and the girls move on--the girls looking at the photos and chattering excitedly. The old woman stands, glaring after the car.

112 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Koko sits between Stimson and Hara, wrists zip-tied.

Stimson reaches into Koko's jacket, pulls out a phone and thumbs it awake. A lock screen, a keypad. She holds it in front of Koko. Face recognition not enabled. Stimson powers the phone off and slides it inside her own coat.

Venberg turns around from the front seat and looks at her. He reaches back and squeezes her left lower leg--the new one. She tries to twist away, but there is nowhere to go.

113 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - AFTERNOON

VENBERG

Thank you, Hara-san, for arranging the clinic.

STIMSON

I have a jet scheduled to fly her to secure facilities at Yokota Air Base tomorrow afternoon.

Koko understands "Yokota Air Base." Her eyes go wide.

VENBERG

We have to keep her someplace overnight anyway. It might as well be at the clinic.

STIMSON

You'll be on the research team later. You don't need to start your experiments now, Venberg.

VENBERG

It will be beneficial if I can have preliminary information to present to the team.

Stimson stares at Venberg, but he looks out the window.

114 INT. ALPHARD - DRIVE-UP - AFTERNOON

A freestanding building, parking lot in front. The Alphard stops near the entrance.

STIMSON

You sure no one will be here?

HARA

Closed for the weekend.

STIMSON

Cleaning staff?

HARA

Told to take the weekend off.

115 EXT. CLINIC - DRIVE-UP - AFTERNOON

Venberg is out before the others, heading for the door. Hara gets out, produces a key, moves past Venberg to unlock it.

Sato opens the rear door. Stimson climbs out first, then pulls Koko out.

As they walk, Koko glances around, looking for anyone who could help. No one.

Hara gets the door open, steps in. Sato and Stimson bring Koko in behind him. Venberg follows.

116 INT. CLINIC - STORAGE ROOM - AFTERNOON

No windows. Shelving lines two walls. A wire-screened window in the door. Koko scours the shelves for anything useful.

The lock CLACKS open.

She quickly moves to sit on a box in the corner, knees together, toes fidgeting in pink clinic slippers.

Sato enters, carrying a stack of exam table foam pads and a bottle of water. He glances at her, sets the bottle on a shelf. He lays the foam pads on the floor in a neat row.

He straightens, turns, leaves. The door shuts.

After a moment, Koko gets up, goes to a shelf, pulls down some folded linens.

117 INT. CLINIC OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Hara sits in an armchair. Stimson sits on a black leather couch. Venberg enters, sets his aluminum case on the desk, and puts the small black case on top of it.

Sato enters carrying a plastic tray with four paper cups of coffee. He sets it on the desk. He and Stimson each take a cup, and Sato joins her on the couch.

SATO
How did she do it?

VENBERG
You ever hear of phantom limb?

STIMSON
Of course.

VENBERG
Guy loses an arm--still feels it.
Even tries to move it. That's the
blueprint. The brain doesn't
immediately erase it.

Hara picks up a cup of coffee.

HARA
That does not bring back the arm.

VENBERG
Because you keep feeding the brain
new information. You look down, you
see your arm's gone. The blueprint
adjusts--"no arm."

STIMSON
(sarcastic)
So just don't look?

VENBERG
I don't yet know the mechanism for
the regeneration. But the
grandfather may have done something
brilliant.

HARA
What he did is not in the known
tradition of Ainu shamanism.

VENBERG
Whatever his reasoning--shamanism,
intuition, pure denial--the girl
didn't spend six months looking at
a stump.

HARA
Hospital workers said she never
regained consciousness there.

VENBERG

Exactly. She never had a conscious moment contradicting the blueprint. So the brain keeps behaving like the leg is still there. Firing nerve impulses, sending growth hormones, circulating blood, feeding cells--*reproducing* cells.

STIMSON

Until we end up chasing a two-legged girl.

VENBERG

To figure out the biological mechanism, we'll need to study her in a black ops laboratory. But this could be part of the picture.

Done with his speech, Venberg remembers the coffee and grabs the last cup from the tray.

118

INT. CLINIC - MONTAGE

-- Koko lies still inside the MRI bore. Sato stands next to the machine. Venberg watches through the window at the console, scrolling through slices as they generate.

-- Koko stands against the X-ray plate. Venberg watches the position.

VENBERG

(to Sato)

Turn the foot toward me.

Sato adjusts Koko's leg with both hands. The machine clicks. She flinches at the sound.

-- Koko sits in a chair, electrodes dotting her scalp, wires running to a monitor. Sato stands behind her. Venberg watches the readout.

-- Venberg ties off Koko's arm. He draws blood into a vial. Koko looks away from the needle. Sato stands by.

-- Venberg preps a syringe. Sato holds Koko's leg steady, bare from the knee down. Venberg injects in the calf. Koko winces.

He takes a surgical scalpel from a tray and makes a small incision. Koko stares at the ceiling, jaw tight.

END MONTAGE

119 INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - AFTERNOON

Koko sits on the exam table, leg extended. Venberg, Hara, and Stimson look at the regenerated section--the skin below the amputation line is a shade pinker than the rest of her leg. Sato points to it.

SATO

The color is like aka-chan.

VENBERG

What?

STIMSON

Aka-chan. Japanese for "baby." It means "red."

VENBERG

Exactly. Brand new tissue. Amazing.

120 INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - AFTERNOON

Hara sits in the armchair, laptop open. Stimson leans against the wall.

Venberg's aluminum case sits on the floor next to the desk. On the desk, the small black case is open--foam insert holding microscope slides and specimen vials.

Venberg bends over a metal cylinder the size of a small flashlight, a cable running from it to his MacBook. A gray unit the size of a lunchbox scrolls numbers on its display.

Sato enters with a cup of coffee, nods at the cylinder in Venberg's hand.

SATO

What is that?

STIMSON

DARPA toy. High-resolution microscope.

Venberg straightens, puts a hand on the gray unit.

VENBERG

(proudly)

And *this* is my portable mass spectrometer.

Sato leans in, looks at the tissue on the screen.

Venberg glances back at the MRI slices on the monitor.

VENBERG (CONT'D)
I wish I could do a brain biopsy.

HARA
This clinic does not have a
stereotactic head frame.

STIMSON
They'll have one at Yokota.

VENBERG
I could use calipers, fixed points
on the skull. Mark the entry point
off the MRI coordinates. Drill a
burr hole.

He grabs a tape measure from his kit, holds it against a
diagram on the screen, frowning.

HARA
Dr. Venberg, are you a brain
surgeon?

VENBERG
No.

Venberg sets the tape measure down.

STIMSON
We have a jet in less than a day.
Sit on it, Venberg.

Venberg looks at the MRI image again. Closes the program.

VENBERG
Right. It can wait.

STIMSON
You've got a day to go over all
your test results.

VENBERG
(perks up)
Right.

121 INT. CLINIC OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Venberg at the desk, face in his monitor, techno music
playing a bit too loud from the laptop.

Stimson leans against the far wall, arms crossed, frowning at the noise. Hara types on his laptop in an armchair.

Venberg turns the music way down.

VENBERG
(excited, to Stimson)
C'mere.

She crosses, leans in at his shoulder.

VENBERG (CONT'D)
Her brain is normal. Mostly.

He points at something on screen. Stimson peers.

VENBERG (CONT'D)
But this part of the brain--very deep. Magnetic detection usually can't even read it. But here...

STIMSON
The whole thing's lit up.

VENBERG
It's the region of the left leg.

He smiles like a kid in a candy store.

122 INT. CLINIC - NIGHT

A brightly lit lab. Stainless steel table, a specimen tray.

Venberg stands at the monitors. Hara and Stimson watch with interest. Sato observes silently.

On one monitor: cross-sections of a leg--color-coded. On another: scrolling gene readouts.

Venberg taps a key. A new scan image appears.

VENBERG
There's no inflammation, no disorganized collagen, no scar tissue. *Healing leaves scars.* This didn't.

STIMSON
Meaning what?

VENBERG
This is not repair. It's regeneration.

HARA
Are you sure?

VENBERG
I ran histology, gene expression
panels. Developmental pathways are
active--just like we see in fetal
limb formation.

Hara shifts slightly. Interested.

VENBERG (CONT'D)
Cells didn't just divide. They
changed roles.

HARA
Like stem cells in an embryo.

VENBERG
Exactly. But in a fourteen-year-
old.

STIMSON
You're saying she actually regrew
her leg?

Sato points out the obvious.

SATO
You are looking at it.

They ignore him.

VENBERG
It's impossible, but--yes.

HARA
How?

VENBERG
No idea.

He brings up blood data on a monitor.

VENBERG (CONT'D)
Mass spectrometer found compounds
in her blood that were not in her
hospital lab results. I don't even
recognize them.

STIMSON
Can such regeneration be
replicated?

VENBERG

Through circulating proteins, stem cell behavior, neural-immune coupling... Perhaps.

HARA

Is the girl special? Or is it something the grandfather did?

VENBERG

I don't believe in shamanism. Anything more, I can't say without tests--lots of tests.

123 INT. CLINIC - NIGHT

SATO

Why this girl? Why Koko? Out of all the people on the planet?

VENBERG

File says her parents are dead. Can we exhume the bodies and check DNA?

HARA

No. In Japan cremation is nearly universal: 99.9%.

STIMSON

She's one in eight billion.

VENBERG

Maybe not. There've been hundreds of cases of people regrowing fingertips--including bone. Especially in children, but also in adults.

STIMSON

So she just took it up a notch.

VENBERG

Theoretically, maybe *you* can regenerate a limb; maybe *I* can.

HARA

I would rather not find out.

VENBERG

Most amputations come from war. But in such traumatic injuries, the body's biological imperative is not regeneration, but survival.

(MORE)

VENBERG (CONT'D)

In her case, somehow that got switched. I don't know--maybe her grandfather had a good instinct to make the cast. Without constant visual confirmation of "Oh my God," maybe her biology was able to choose the regeneration path.

124 INT. CLINIC - NIGHT - LATER

STIMSON

Eventually they'll figure this all out in a research facility.

VENBERG

But I'm here now.

HARA

You want your name on this discovery.

VENBERG

I'm scientifically curious. And yes, I would like to establish my authority in the research process.

125 INT. CLINIC - STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Sato stands guard by the door.

A KNOCK from inside. Sato looks through the small window.

Koko stands, knees together, her fist clenched at her pelvis.

KOKO

Toilet.

He opens the door, escorts her to the bathroom. Stimson sees what's going on, quickly steps to the bathroom, enters.

126 INT. CLINIC - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stimson quickly checks the room: sink, toilet, the corner behind the door. A SOILED LINEN TROLLEY parked against the wall, canvas bag full of used gowns. Solid walls.

She leaves.

Koko enters the bathroom, LOCKS the door, moves to the toilet, sits down.

As she pees, she spots what Stimson could not from her POV: through a small gap between the trolley top and the canvas bag she sees a SQUARE STEEL PANEL in the wall.

She gets off the toilet, pulls up her pants, squats by the cart, reads the sign above the panel.

汚物投入口. (SOILED WASTE DISPOSAL)

She moves the cart, pulls the panel open. A stainless steel chute--just wide enough for her small body. She goes in head-first. Her shoulders scrape the walls. She pushes the flap at the other end, slides through and falls out the other side.

127 INT. LAUNDRY ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Koko drops two feet, lands in a plastic bin full of soiled gowns. The fabric muffles the thud, but there is a slight squeak of the wheels as the bin shifts.

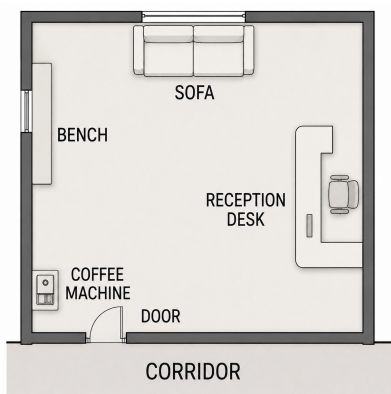
She pauses, listening. Nothing. Using a nearby shelf to brace herself, she climbs out onto the linoleum floor.

She cracks the door, peers into the hallway.

128 INT. CLINIC ATRIUM – NIGHT

Koko moves to the front door. Locked. She steps back into the reception area. A long decorative banner hangs from the second-story ceiling to the floor.

She climbs onto the sofa against the far wall, tries the windows. Sealed. She climbs onto the bench against the left wall. Sealed.



Footsteps in the corridor.

She quickly steps off the bench, slides under it, presses flat against the wall.

Hara enters, goes to the coffee vending machine. Buys a cup. Takes a long sip. Casually gazes around the room.

Koko doesn't breathe. Hara turns, leaves.

As Koko begins to slide out, she sees--

Next to the banner, second floor level--a skylight.

129 INT. CLINIC ATRIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Koko grabs the end of the banner and tugs. It is firmly hung.

She climbs onto the sofa, grabs the banner with both hands. She puts one foot on the wall, then the other.

The banner SWAYS back and forth.

Wrapping herself around the fabric, she half climbs, half drags herself upward.

Halfway up, one slipper threatens to fall off. She wriggles her foot back into it, and continues.

130 INT. CLINIC ATRIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Koko holds the banner now at the second floor level. She places one leg on a wooden support beam along the wall.

Footsteps in the hall. Quickly she brings her other leg onto the beam, releases the scrunched banner, and steps behind it. It sways as it widens into its normal shape.

Below, Venberg enters and goes to the coffee machine. The banner ends its movement.

VENBERG

(to Hara down the hall)

You coulda asked me if I wanted
coffee too. So much for Japanese
hospitality.

Venberg turns, facing the banner. He admires the calligraphy at the bottom as he takes a sip of his coffee.

HARA (O.S.)

I defer to American self-reliance.

Venberg turns and heads back down the hall.

131 INT. CLINIC ATRIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Koko edges across the beam to the skylight. She grabs the frame, pulls the skylight window.

Nothing. She pulls harder.

The window suddenly JERKS inward--making a suction sound. Snow from the ledge falls in, hitting the sofa below.

She pauses until she is sure no one heard. Then she squeezes through, pulling the skylight silently shut behind her.

132 INT. CLINIC - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sato stands outside the bathroom door, arms folded. He checks his watch, looks again at the door.

133 EXT. LOWER ROOF - NIGHT

A full moon. Shivering, Koko crawls out onto the snow-covered roof. The front is exposed to the lighted parking lot.

She looks upward. Another roof section rises above her--about eight feet higher--sloping down to the back of the building.



Koko spots a maintenance ladder. She climbs up and carefully pulls herself onto the steeper upper roof. Icy.

A careful step. Then another.

Suddenly her foot SKIDS forward.

She falls hard and SLIDES fast down the steep roof. In three short seconds she shoots off the back edge of the roof.

134 EXT. REAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Koko WHUMPS into a huge plowed snow pile below.

She rests for a minute, sitting in the depression she made when she landed. Both her slippers are gone.

She digs through the snow around her, finds one slipper, puts it on her right foot.

She spots a dumpster not far away.

She lifts herself and slides down off the snow pile. She hops toward the dumpster on her slippared right foot.

When she reaches it, she lifts the lid, looks inside.

Translucent blue trash bags. One contains a bunch of disposable plastic shoe covers.

She opens the bag, pulls several shoe covers over both feet.

135 INT. CLINIC — HALLWAY — NIGHT

Sato knocks once.

SATO
Koko-chan.

He waits. Then three hard knocks.

SATO (CONT'D)
(in Japanese, subtitled)
Come out!

No response. He grabs the handle and yanks it. Locked.

136 INT. PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE — NIGHT

Venberg studies the monitor. Hara types. Stimson sits on the corner of the desk, scrolling her phone.

Sato enters abruptly.

SATO
She does not answer my knock.
Bathroom door is locked.

Stimson is already off the desk.

STIMSON
(to Hara)
Keys!

She holds out her hand. Hara takes the keys from his pocket and moves past her toward the door, following Sato.

Stimson frowns and follows him.

Venberg looks up from his monitor, follows them out.

137 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hara unlocks the bathroom door. He enters, then Stimson and Sato. Venberg comes in last, observing from the doorway. They all spot the moved cart and the laundry chute door.

STIMSON
(to Sato)
You let her escape?

SATO
I am to watch a young girl on the
toilet?

STIMSON
(in Japanese)
Yes, you fucking should have.

HARA
(to Sato)
Did you check the room when she
entered?

SATO
Stimson-san checked the room.

Stimson scowls as Hara and Sato brush past Venberg in the doorway and head for the adjoining laundry room.

138 INT. CLINIC - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Stimson dashes to the windows. Sealed. They run into the corridor.

139 INT. CLINIC - HALLWAY - NIGHT

HARA
(to Sato)
Check front door and atrium.

Sato runs toward the front door. Venberg follows.

HARA (CONT'D)
(to Stimson)
I will check rooms this way.

Hara goes one way down the hall, Stimson goes the other.

140 INT. CLINIC - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Sato tries the front door as Venberg looks on. Locked.

141 INT. CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

Hara checks the window. Sealed. He moves on.

142 INT. CLINIC - BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

Stimson tries a window. Sealed. She tries another. Sealed.

143 INT. CLINIC ATRIUM - NIGHT

Sato moves along the wall, testing each window in turn. He leaves the atrium and heads down the hall.

144 INT. CLINIC - SECOND EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

Hara checks the window. Sealed. He moves on.

145 INT. CLINIC - PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Stimson checks the window. Sealed. She moves on.

146 INT. CLINIC ATRIUM - NIGHT

Venberg gets a cup of hot chocolate from the coffee machine.

Hara, Sato, and Stimson return from their searches and stand in the space where the entryway and atrium connect.

SATO

Nothing.

HARA

Same.

STIMSON

Where the hell did she go?
Everything's locked or sealed.

Venberg carries his hot chocolate over to the leather sofa and sits down in front of the banner.

Stimson paces, crosses to the window behind him, checks it.

VENBERG

Sato already checked those.

Stimson shoots him an irritated frown. Venberg takes a sip of his hot chocolate, rests his hand on the sofa. It finds the water left by the snow that fell. He brushes it off.

Stimson notices. Comes over, checks it herself.

VENBERG (CONT'D)

It's just water.

STIMSON

Cold water. Snow.

She looks up. Sees the skylight. Her eyes drop to the banner.

She grabs the banner, pulls. It's sturdy.

STIMSON (CONT'D)

The roof! She went through the skylight!

They dash to the entryway, grab their coats from the coat rack and head outside.

147 INT. IZAKAYA - REAR ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

An izakaya restaurant. Koko slips through the rear alley door. Four employee COATS hang on hooks by the door.

She grabs a coat. When the kitchen door opens, she quickly sits on a bench, pulls the coat down to cover her feet.

Through the door steps a COOK (21), apron, cigarette already between his lips.

KOKO

Can I have one?

COOK

Who are you?

KOKO

New dishwasher.

He looks her over.

COOK

How old are you?

KOKO

Sixteen.

He shakes his head no, lights his cigarette.

A DELIVERY GUY enters, takes off his helmet. Koko glimpses his SCOOTER as the door closes behind him.

DELIVERY GUY
(to Cook)
Hey, where's my order?

He ignores Koko, sets his HELMET on the bench next to her.

COOK
(he forgot; lying)
Almost ready.

He jumps up and goes through to the kitchen. The Delivery Guy follows him.

Koko puts on the coat, grabs the helmet, slips out the door.

148 INT. IZAKAYA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Cook sets two thermal delivery boxes on the counter.

COOK
One more coming.

The Cook goes deep into the kitchen. Delivery Guy taps his fingers on the counter.

149 EXT. IZAKAYA - REAR ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

The delivery guy's CELL PHONE--map app still open--sits between the handlebars of the idling scooter.

Koko holds the helmet, steps onto the seat, twists the throttle and rides around the right corner of the building.

150 EXT. IZAKAYA - RIGHT SIDE - NIGHT

The scooter rolls up along the right side of the building, by the front corner. Koko leaves it idling, gets off.

151 INT. IZAKAYA - FRONT ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Koko steps in. Rows of shoes line the entryway. She crouches, finds a pair of boots close to her size, pulls them on fast.

152 INT. IZAKAYA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Cook walks up and drops the third delivery box on the counter. Delivery Guy picks them up.

COOK
New dishwasher didn't have any
shoes.

DELIVERY GUY
New dishwasher?

COOK
Says she's sixteen, but I doubt it.

Delivery Guy drops the boxes, dashes to the back door, looks out. The scooter is gone.

153 EXT. IZAKAYA - REAR ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Delivery Guy jogs to where the scooter was, looks around.
He jogs around the left corner of the building.

154 EXT. IZAKAYA - LEFT SIDE - NIGHT

Nothing. He turns, jogs back the other way.

155 EXT. IZAKAYA - RIGHT SIDE - NIGHT

He sees the scooter idling near the front of the building.
Puzzled but relieved, he walks toward it.

Koko rounds the corner, jumps on the scooter, puts on the helmet, and pulls away.

DELIVERY GUY
Hey!

The scooter roars off down the street. He runs a few yards, then stops.

156 EXT. CLINIC - FRONT ENTRY - NIGHT

Hara and Sato burst out the front door. The porch light shows fresh snow, no prints. They break right.

Stimson comes out next, scans the empty lot, breaks left.

157 EXT. CLINIC - RIGHT SIDE - NIGHT

Hara and Sato move along the building, scanning the snow at the base of the wall.

158 EXT. CLINIC - LEFT SIDE - NIGHT

Stimson quickly inspects along the building, Venberg now following.

159 EXT. CLINIC - REAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Hara and Sato round the corner. They see Koko's mark in the snow pile, and a scrape mark where she slid off it.

Stimson and Venberg arrive from the other side.

HARA

She came off the roof here.

Sato crouches at the base of the pile. A single track of hopping prints, leading to the dumpster.

He walks over, lifts the lid. Sees the open bag, the scattered shoe covers.

SATO

(holds one up)

She covered her feet with these.

He follows the prints out to the alley, filled with numerous tire tracks and footprints.

STIMSON

Which way?

Venberg points at a line of clear prints.

VENBERG

These?

SATO

Those have tread. Not her.

Sato moves down the alley. Goes a few yards, finds a print. Moves further, finds another. A third, and he's sure.

He points to the izakaya.

SATO (CONT'D)

The izakaya.

HARA

I will get the car. Meet you there.

Stimson trots with Sato toward the izakaya. Venberg falls in behind Hara.

160 EXT. SAPPORO - STREET - NIGHT

On the scooter, Koko checks the mirrors. She turns into a narrow side street, cuts the engine.

She takes the mounted phone from the handlebars. She thinks a minute, remembers Endo's Signal handle, types it, then taps.

He picks up. She speaks quietly, listens, then ends the call.

She puts the phone in a pocket, pulls out onto the street.

161 INT. IZAKAYA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sato and Stimson enter through the back. They move through the entryway into the kitchen. Sato presents credentials to the Delivery Guy. Hara bursts in and joins them.

DELIVERY GUY

That was quick. I just called.

HARA

We are not police. Kōan.

The Delivery Guy stares. The Cook looks up from his station and comes to the counter.

Hara holds up his phone--Koko's photo.

HARA (CONT'D)

Have you seen this girl?

DELIVERY GUY

That's the bitch who stole my scooter!

COOK

Said she was a new dishwasher.

Hara turns the phone to the cook.

COOK (CONT'D)

Yeah, that's her. Why are Kōan looking for a scooter thief?

Hara looks at him.

HARA
That is not your concern.

COOK
You can track her on our delivery app.

DELIVERY GUY
Last we checked it was still moving.

STIMSON
Which app?

DELIVERY GUY
Uber Eats.

Hara pulls out his phone. Cook points to a piece of paper taped to the counter.

COOK
Our login.

Hara logs in to the app. As they leave, a WAITER comes in from the dining area.

WAITER
(to Cook)
Customer says he cannot find his boots.

The last to leave, only Sato hears it. He grins ever so slightly, then steps outside to follow the others.

162 INT. ALPHARD - NIGHT

Venberg is waiting in the car. The others join him. Hara gets in the rear, delivery app open on his phone.

HARA
She is about ten blocks north.

He shows the map to Sato, who pulls away from the curb.

HARA (CONT'D)
It looks like she has stopped.

163 EXT. SAPPORO - BUS STOP - NIGHT

Koko stands at a bus stop, the scooter and helmet stashed behind some bushes.

The bus pulls up. The doors open.

She tosses the Delivery Guy's phone through the middle door.
She doesn't board. The doors close and the bus pulls away.

164 INT. ALPHARD - NIGHT

Hara tracks the app.

HARA
She is moving again.

165 EXT. SAPPORO - BUS STOP - NIGHT

Koko crosses to the other side of the street and waits at the bus stop there.

166 INT. ALPHARD - NIGHT

Sato makes a right, then a left.

SATO
I think...this is the Number 12 bus route.

STIMSON
That spot where she stopped?

SATO
Yes. I think it was a bus stop.

VENBERG
But she's not on it, is she?

STIMSON
Oh, now you've decided to be smart?

HARA
(unenthusiastic)
Intercept the bus.

167 EXT. SAPPORO - BUS STOP - NIGHT

Just a small rain shelter. Endo waits, hands in his pockets.
The bus pulls up, Koko steps off, smiles with relief.

KOKO
Thank you for meeting me.

ENDO
 (pointing)
 This way.

They walk.

KOKO
 I think maybe you are putting
 yourself in danger.

ENDO
 I am not worried. Besides, it is
 fun to play spy.

He smiles.

ENDO (CONT'D)
 Very few cameras in this
 neighborhood. They can track you
 from bus cameras, but not here.

He steers her right at the next corner. He stops at a scooter
 chained to a telephone pole, two helmets.

ENDO (CONT'D)
 Now we can go where you will be
 safe.

168 EXT. SAPPORO - BUS STOP - NIGHT

The Alphard, flashers on, pulls in front of the bus. Hara, in
 back, signals out his window for it to pull over. It does.

Sato, Hara, and Stimson get out and board the bus. At the
 middle of the bus, Sato bends down, picks up the phone. They
 get off the bus, stand on the sidewalk.

STIMSON
 She either walked, took the
 opposite bus, or someone picked her
 up.

HARA
 Or rode this bus for some distance,
 then got off before here.

STIMSON
 Any connecting buses near here?

SATO
 No.

Hara is already on his phone. He ends the call.

HARA
We will have footage from
everything in the area by morning.

STIMSON
By which time she could be
anywhere.

Hara makes a second call, brief.

HARA
I sent out an APB. For now it is
all we can do. I will get us a
hotel.

They get back in the Alphard.

169 EXT. AIRBNB - NIGHT

Endo punches a combination into a lockbox mounted to the
doorframe. Pulls out a key.

KOKO
Another friend's apartment?

ENDO
Airbnb.

They enter.

170 INT. AIRBNB - NIGHT

A narrow kitchen in the entry hall. One chair. A futon
against one wall.

ENDO
Find some tea, please.

Koko puts on the kettle and checks the cupboard. Endo sits on
the futon, opens his laptop.

ENDO (CONT'D)
We need to get you to Wakkanai, so
you can cross to Russia.

KOKO
I can't go somewhere else in Japan?

ENDO
They will catch you. You will
become...a laboratory rat.

Koko sighs. The kettle whistles. She pours two cups, hands one to Endo, and sits next to him on the futon, legs out straight in front of her.

ENDO (CONT'D)

In Yakutia there are many who look like you. You will blend in.

KOKO

I will have to learn Russian. I will need money.

ENDO

I can send you some crypto to start.

KOKO

Where will I live? How can I make a living?

Endo sets the laptop aside.

ENDO

First, we save your life. Then we think about the future. I will take the train to Wakkanai in the morning and set up your crossing.

He stops. His eyes drop to her feet.

KOKO

What?

ENDO

Your left leg is shorter than your right leg.

KOKO

A couple of centimeters. That's why I walk a little funny.

ENDO

We can use that.

He grabs the laptop and pulls up the Anguri Panku blog site.

171 INT. AIRBNB - MORNING

Koko wakes on the futon. Endo is in the chair, laptop open.

ENDO

Good morning.

KOKO
Good morning.

She rolls off the futon and stands next to him. On screen:
the Anguri Panku blog site. Heading: PLEASE HELP MY FRIEND.
Below it, a photo of a Dr. Scholl's-type shoe insert.
Comments scroll beneath: Yes! I will be there! - Bringing my
sister too! - Excited to help! - Yes! - on down the page.

ENDO
This will buy you some time to get
out of Sapporo.

Koko inspects the page.

ENDO (CONT'D)
I will make some tea and explain.

172 INT. TAXI - MORNING

Endo and Koko pull up to a loading dock. Endo hands her his
Android phone.

KOKO
Your phone?

ENDO
I use iPhone. This is a spare.

KOKO
Will you have time to arrange the
crossing?

ENDO
The train will get me north long
before you.

KOKO
My coastal route will be slow.

ENDO
It will be much safer.

Koko gets out of the taxi.

KOKO
Thank you, Endo-san.

ENDO
It is my honor to help, Koko-chan.

173 EXT. FREIGHT DISPATCH OFFICE - MORNING

The taxi leaves. Koko walks toward the office door--no limp.

She stops by the door, pulls out an empty Dr. Scholl's package, drops it in a trash bin.

174 INT. FREIGHT DISPATCH OFFICE - MORNING

Koko sits in a chair against the wall. Above the desk: a stylized fish above kanji - FISHING LIGHT LOGISTICS.

A TRUCK DRIVER (50) enters, goes to DISPATCHER (60) at the desk.

TRUCK DRIVER

The loading dock was empty. Where
is my freight?

The Dispatcher points to Koko.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

This is most unusual.

DISPATCHER

It is paid for.

The Truck Driver shrugs, nods at Koko to come along.

175 INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Room service breakfast is arriving. Sato holds the door for the attendant to enter with the trolley.

Venberg comes out of the bathroom, towel around his neck.

HARA

We just got a hit. Security guards
at the Sapporo Ice Festival.

Sato wolfs down some breakfast. Stimson joins him.

STIMSON

How far away?

HARA

Twenty minutes.

Venberg pulls on his shirt. Sato and Hara are already in their coats.

STIMSON
Move it, Venberg.

VENBERG
I am, I am.

Hara's phone buzzes and he checks it.

HARA
Another girl with a slight limp.
Also at the ice festival.

STIMSON
What the--

Venberg, coat on, grabs a mouthful of food.

VENBERG
Ready.

Sato opens the door and they head out.

176 INT. TRUCK CAB - MOVING - MORNING

The coastal road. Sea of Japan out the window.

TRUCK DRIVER
Excuse me. It is not my business.
But why is a young girl going to
Wakkanai in a freight truck?

KOKO
Bad guys are after me.

He gives a chuckle-snort, then looks forward again.

177 EXT. ICE FESTIVAL - DAY

Fanciful ice buildings and giant sculptures glow in shifting colors. Masses of people move through the lanes between them. The team makes its way toward the security office.

178 INT. ICE FESTIVAL - SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Two separate banks of ten video monitors each.

Two teenage girls sit on chairs to one side--one nervous, the other smiling as if she is in on a joke.

The smiling girl is wearing an ANGURI PANKU t-shirt.

Venberg squints at it.

VENBERG
An-goo-ri Pan-ku.

STIMSON
"Angry Punk."

Venberg nods.

Two security officers stand with the team.

SECURITY OFFICER #1
Overhead cameras gave only a
partial match.

HARA
Neither is the girl.

SECURITY OFFICER #1
Two girls with limps seemed odd, so
I checked.

He hands some Dr. Scholl's inserts to Hara. Security officer
#2 points to a video monitor.

SECURITY OFFICER #2
Here is another girl limping.

On screen: a girl matching Koko's description, limping.

HARA
They knew security would pick up at
least one false Koko, and we would
come here.

STIMSON
The festival is a closed space, not
an exit route. This is a diversion.

VENBERG
Then where is she?

STIMSON
If you had to get off Hokkaido in a
hurry, and couldn't use plane or
train, where would you go?

SATO
Russia. Sakhalin.

STIMSON
She's headed north.

HARA

There's no way she could make it
across the strait.

STIMSON

Not without help. But someone is
helping her--someone smart.

HARA

I will send out the APB again. With
or without limp?

Stimson exhales in frustration, thinks, waves her hand.

STIMSON

Both.

179 INT. TRUCK CAB - MOVING - DAY

Koko watches flat sandy coastline slide past. The Sea of
Japan, gray and wide.

180 INT. ICE FESTIVAL - SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

The two girls sit against the wall. The security officers
stand to one side.

STIMSON

We need to find out who set this
up.

Hara opens the door to the adjacent room.

HARA

(to the girls)

I have some questions for you.

The girls get up--one slowly, one brightly, smiling.

Stimson steps forward and speaks to them in sharp Japanese.

STIMSON

You have absolutely no reason to
smile right now.

The smiling girl loses her smile. The nervous one starts to
shake. The girls enter the room. Hara and Stimson follow.

181 INT. TRUCK CAB - MOVING - DAY

Koko watches the coastline. Gray sea to the west, snow-covered mountains to the east.

182 INT. ICE FESTIVAL - SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Hara and Stimson emerge from the interrogation room. Venberg and Sato stand and join them.

VENBERG

Well?

The two girls edge out behind Hara and Stimson. A security officer gives them a nod and they leave, quickly.

STIMSON

Request from a popular blogger.
They got some merch and a thank-you
on the site.

HARA

Anguri Panku. I will have Kōan
trace his site, get his name,
phone, email.

VENBERG

How long?

HARA

With a direct order from the Prime
Minister's office--fifteen minutes.

Sato walks to the door, opens it. Hara thanks the security officers, and the four of them file out.

183 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Hara's phone rings. He answers, listens.

HARA

Wakatte iru. Arigatou.

He ends the call. A text arrives. He reads it.

HARA (CONT'D)

Anguri Panku is Shigeru Endo. He
was an orderly at the hospital
where the girl was treated.

STIMSON

Interesting.

HARA

Two phones registered. One iPhone,
one Android. The latter rarely
used.

STIMSON

Perhaps he gave her a phone.

HARA

Neither is currently on. But the
minute either of them turns on a
phone, we'll have the ping.

VENBERG

That gives their location?

HARA

Yes.

STIMSON

Sooner or later they'll have to.

184 INT. ALPHARD - DAY

The four sit in the parked Alphard.

STIMSON

We need to go to Wakkanai.

HARA

Perhaps she is not fleeing, but
hiding.

STIMSON

She knows she can't hide.
(to Sato)
Wakkanai. Now.

Sato glances in the mirror at Hara. Hara stiffens--then nods.

SATO

(to Hara)
Main highway or coastal?

HARA

Main highway is faster.

Sato pulls out.

185 EXT. DOCK OFFICE - PORT - AFTERNOON

A small building at the edge of the pier, a light in one window. Endo knocks, then enters.

186 INT. DOCK OFFICE - PORT - AFTERNOON

A desk, a radio set, a logbook. A dock worker (50s) opens a door to a side room, waves Endo in.

The worker exits. Endo sits down and opens his laptop.

187 INT. TRUCK CAB - MOVING - DAY

Wind turbines line the ridge to the right, blades turning slow against the gray sky.

She pulls Endo's Android from her coat pocket. Turns it on.

She takes a photo, lowers the phone, sets it in her lap.

188 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Hara's phone buzzes. He reads it.

HARA

We have a ping on the Android.

Hara shows his phone to Stimson.

STIMSON

Coastal highway.

SATO

Just passed the exit.

He checks the mirror, swings the wheel hard right across the median strip, and heads back to catch the exit.

189 INT. TRUCK CAB - MOVING - DAY

Ocean on the left. Light snow fills the air.

Koko looks at the phone, turns it off, puts it in her pocket.

190 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

HARA

Dammit. Lost her.

He collects himself.

STIMSON
Soon we'll have more information on
her smart friend.

HARA
In the meantime, I will put the
police in Shosanbetsu on alert.

191 INT. DOCK OFFICE - PORT - AFTERNOON

Endo at a desk on his laptop, on video with a NIVKH GUIDE,
(40s), facial features close to Ainu. His native language is
Russian. Here he speaks in broken Japanese.

ENDO
I need you tonight.

GUIDE
Immediate delivery fifty percent
extra.

ENDO
I'll pay it. 6:00pm?

GUIDE
I can be there 7:30.

ENDO
Thirty percent.

GUIDE
Agreed.

192 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - DAY

Medium snow falling. Hara's phone beeps. He checks it.

HARA
Her friend is not so smart after
all. We tracked credit card
payments. She is riding in a truck
of the Fishing Light Logistics
company.

Stimson smiles.

VENBERG
Got her, eh?

STIMSON

Very soon.

193 EXT. ROUTE 232 - DAY

Steady snow falling. Plowed snowbanks line the highway, six feet high.

Three police cars, flashers on--two in front of the fishing company truck and one behind it. An officer directs traffic around the scene.

194 EXT. ROUTE 232 - DAY

As Hara and Sato approach the rear police car, an officer opens the passenger door, grabs Koko's hand. She snaps it back defiantly. He struggles with her a moment, puts zip ties on her hands.

Hara and Sato bring Koko to the Alphard. She walks with no limp.

Sato opens the door. Hara guides Koko in, gets in beside her. Sato shuts the door.

195 INT. ALPHARD - DAY

Venberg turns around to face Koko.

VENBERG

Hello again. Lost your limp. Angry Punk's idea?

He smiles at Koko. She gives him the evil eye.

Sato drives. Snow streaks sideways across the windshield.

SATO

There is a safe house nearby we can stay for the night.

STIMSON

It's only two and a half hours back to Sapporo.

HARA

In this weather it is better to be cautious.

SATO

The safe house is secure--on a cliff. No chance for escape.

VENBERG

Gets my vote. I'd love to do some more tests.

STIMSON

Are there comms available?

SATO

It has its own satellite dish.

STIMSON

Alright. Then tomorrow morning Sapporo and a flight to Yokota.

196 EXT. CLIFF HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A pagoda house against a cliff, on a trestle lattice. High driveway on one side, steep hill down the other. The Alphard pulls into the driveway.



197 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - AFTERNOON

Hara unlocks the door. Sato brings Koko in. Stimson and Venberg follow, Venberg wheeling his aluminum case. They take off their coats and boots.

Hara nods toward a hatch in the hallway ceiling, a pull-down ladder folded beneath it.

HARA

Put her in the attic.

Sato cuts the zip ties, pulls the ladder down.

SATO

Up.

Koko climbs up the ladder, pokes her head through the hatch.

KOKO

There is no bed, no heater.

Sato grabs her coat from a peg, gives her boots to her also.

KOKO (CONT'D)

And no toilet.

SATO

I will find a bucket.

198 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - ROOM - AFTERNOON

Two space heaters warm the room. Venberg sits at a desk, laptop open, Koko's two Dr. Scholl's inserts beside it. Stimson leans against the far wall, arms crossed. Sato stands near the door.

Hara, at the window with his phone, looks over at Venberg.

HARA

Camp Sapporo sent the grandfather's blood results. I am forwarding to you.

Venberg opens the file on his laptop, scrolls. He shakes his head.

VENBERG

No relevant markers. It's just her.

SATO

What do we do with him?

HARA

Keep him at Camp Sapporo until this is over.

Venberg closes his laptop.

199 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - ATTIC - AFTERNOON

Koko walks over to a small window in the roof, on the back side of the building. Can't reach it.

She sits for a moment, then gets up, goes over to the BUCKET in the corner, takes off her coat, undoes her belt.

200

INT. CLIFF HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

Venberg has his laptop out, blaring techno again. Stimson does tai chi. Hara drinks tea and reads Yamamoto's *Hagakure*. Sato meditates cross-legged on the sofa, despite the music.

VENBERG

Fuck! I am so close! I have all the data I thought I needed. But something is still missing.

STIMSON

You have tissue samples.

VENBERG

Samples of growth after the fact. In order to fully understand it, I need to observe it in process.

Venberg turns down his music. He puts a finger to his mouth, gazes out at the falling snow.

Hara puts his book down. Stimson continues her tai chi, but her attention moves to Venberg. Sato opens his eyes.

Venberg turns toward his medical kit next to the sofa. He walks over, opens it up, checks inside.

VENBERG (CONT'D)

I need local anesthetic: lidocaine.

HARA

For what purpose?

VENBERG

To take a finger. It's the only way to observe the whole sequence: initiation, patterning, regrowth.

Hara's stare burns into Venberg.

VENBERG (CONT'D)

It will grow back. That's the point.

HARA

This girl is a citizen of the sovereign nation of Japan.

VENBERG

She is a resource. For both our countries.

STIMSON

(to Hara)

Did you ever think this mission was about anything other than taking this girl out of Japan for American research?

Hara glares at Stimson, who shrugs casually.

HARA

I speak my formal protest. For the record.

VENBERG

There will be no record of this case, Hara. In any event, your Prime Minister has already overruled you.

Hara holds Venberg's gaze. Then looks away, out the window.

HARA

I will make a call to a clinic in Tomamae. Thirty minutes away. Sato can go.

Venberg, with a smug smile, cranks up his techno music again.

Hara sneers briefly at Venberg, then nods to Sato. Sato nods back, gets up to go.

201 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - ATTIC ROOM - EVENING

Koko lies near the floor hatch, the slop bucket next to it. She stares at the ceiling, eyes half open.

A light scraping sound at the small roof window. She looks up, sees Sato's face. He signals with one finger--silence.

Sato opens the window, looks over at the slop bucket. He points to it, then to himself. He mouths: "For me?"

She nods. He grins.

202 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - ATTIC ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Koko stands beneath the window on the overturned bucket. Sato reaches through, grabs her arms, pulls her up.

203 EXT. CLIFF HOUSE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

A knotted rope is tied around the base of the six-foot satellite dish support, running down over the edge of the roof and beyond.

SATO
Can you do it?

She nods. He climbs up to the dish and takes out some tools.

204 EXT. CLIFF HOUSE - SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Koko carefully moves across the roof, toward the supporting tower structure at the edge. Sato disconnects the satellite cable, glances over to check her progress.

205 EXT. CLIFF HOUSE - SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Koko carefully makes her way down the lattice structure. She looks up for Sato, but he doesn't follow.

206 EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

She reaches the bottom, surveys the path down. Then--WHUMP! The satellite dish drops into the snow ten yards away.

207 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - EVENING

Venberg at his laptop, techno music blaring. Hara, sitting with his book, looks at Venberg with disgust. Stimson continues her tai chi.

208 EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - EVENING

Koko looks up at the house to see if the dish's noise drew any attention. No sign of anyone.

209 EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - EVENING

Sato steps off the lattice structure and joins Koko.

KOKO
Why are you helping me?

SATO
It is best you do not know.

He walks to the dish, gives it a small push. It moves easily on the snow. He drags it toward a nearby frozen stream.

210 EXT. STREAM BED - EVENING

Sato positions the dish in the stream bed, which makes a steep ravine down through the forest.

He holds his phone out to her, then his mittens. Koko tucks the phone inside her coat and puts on the mittens.

SATO
I have disabled the password.

KOKO
Thank you.

Sato holds the dish steady.

SATO
Climb in.

Koko climbs into the dish.

SATO (CONT'D)
Wrap yourself around the struts.

Koko wraps herself around the steel struts.

SATO (CONT'D)
When you reach the bottom, stay off roads. Go east.

Koko nods. She grabs on tight.

SATO (CONT'D)
Good luck, Koko-chan.

He crouches low, then gives the dish a powerful shove.

211 EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM BED - CONTINUOUS

Gravity grabs the dish instantly.

It drops into a steep incline. Snow explodes over the edge, blinding Koko. She holds on for dear life.

There is a metallic screaming hiss as the aluminum bowl races at twenty-five miles an hour.

The ravine curves sharp left.

The dish flies up the outer wall of the trough, slamming Koko hard against the bowl. Then it drops back down into the center, and up the other wall, slamming her again.

The dish begins to spin fiercely. The landscape rotates.

Everything is a blur of white snow and gray sky as Koko now flies down the mountain at forty miles an hour.

A fallen birch tree spans the ravine.

It catches the feed horn and rips off the black plastic cap, jarring Koko, as she lets out a frightened yelp.

The dish hits a six-foot-high erosion dam and flies into the air.

Then CRASH! It slams into a deep drift at the bottom of the drop, nearly throwing her forward out of the dish.

Her speed drops to twenty miles an hour.

The dish stops spinning, leaving Koko facing backward now, as the walls of the ravine widen.

The hiss changes to a rumbling vibration. The dish shoots out of the stream bed and slides onto a flat, open sheet of ice.

When it finally comes to a stop, Koko just lies there, blowing out long exhales to calm herself.

Shaking, she slowly gets out of the dish, slips, falls. After one last long exhale, she stands, walks across the ice sheet.

212 EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Sato trudges down the mountain in the direction Koko went, hands in his pockets.

213 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - NIGHT

Venberg is still blasting his techno and pondering his database. Hara reads. Stimson finishes her tai chi set.

STIMSON

Sato should be back by now.

Hara closes his book.

HARA

I think so.

He takes out his phone, tries to send a message.

HARA (CONT'D)
Messaging app is not working.

VENBERG
(checking his laptop)
Internet is out.

Stimson walks to the front door and looks out at the drive.

STIMSON
Try calling him.

Hara hits the dialer.

214 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stimson stands at the base of the ladder to the ceiling hatch. Hara and Venberg beside her.

She climbs, pushes the hatch open.

215 INT. CLIFF HOUSE - ATTIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The hatch swings up. Stimson plants her palms on the attic floor and hoists herself up through the opening.

She realizes one of her hands is wet--from a pool of urine. The empty slop bucket sits overturned under the window.

STIMSON
Shit.

She lifts her hand away, looks around the attic room. The small roof window ajar, snow dusting the sill.

STIMSON (CONT'D)
She's gone!

216 EXT. SNOWY PLAIN - NIGHT

Koko walks across the plain in the falling snow. A cluster of shacks ahead on a frozen lake. Sato's phone rings in her pocket. She picks up her pace.

217 EXT. CLIFF HOUSE - NIGHT

Snow falling. Hara and Stimson come out onto the driveway, coats on. Venberg follows. Fresh snow, no prints.

Hara moves to the narrow walkway that skirts the side of the house. Stimson follows. They reach the rear corner, look down to the slope below. Hara's flashlight finds the footprints.

HARA
Two sets of prints.

STIMSON
Sato.

Hara shines his flashlight again and finds Sato's entrance prints coming from the cliff side.

HARA
He came to the roof from the cliff side.

They leave the walkway, run to the front of the house and over to its cliff side. Hara scans the roofline with a flashlight.

HARA (CONT'D)
Satellite dish is gone.

Stimson shines a flashlight, finds Sato's tracks, points back down the road.

STIMSON
That way!

She and Hara run down the road. Past the bend, they find the Alphard. Stimson pulls the door handle. Locked.

STIMSON (CONT'D)
Shit.

Hara catches his breath, reaches into his pocket.

HARA
I have a spare set of keys.

218 EXT. CLIFF HOUSE - NIGHT

The Alphard is in the drive, Venberg inside. Hara stands behind the car, a drone controller in his hands, a tablet clipped into it as a monitor. Stimson beside him.

HARA
No uplink. I will fly it directly.

The drone lifts off and banks over the slope. Its spotlight sweeps the snow--the beam glares back off the falling flakes. The feed on the controller becomes a churning white.

HARA (CONT'D)
Snow's too heavy. Switching to
thermal.

The spotlight dies. The tablet turns to gray. A single white-hot figure moves down the mountainside.

HARA (CONT'D)
There she is.

Stimson examines the image.

STIMSON
Too big. That's Sato.

Hara studies the figure a moment longer.

HARA
Then she is already gone.

STIMSON
Send the drone farther on, same
direction he's moving.

The drone pushes past Sato's image, moves on.

STIMSON (CONT'D)
I want a rifle. With a scope.

HARA
You know it is forbidden for
foreign nationals--even CIA--to
carry weapons on Japanese soil.

STIMSON
I don't plan to shoot anyone. But I
will not allow this girl to leave
Japan. We may need to have access
to force at a distance.

HARA
I will not authorize that.

Stimson looks at Hara for a moment, then takes out her phone and starts texting.

219 EXT. SNOWY PLAIN - FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT

A row of snowmobiles parked outside a cluster of fishing
shacks. Koko approaches. No one in sight.

She gets on the nearest snowmobile. Keys are in the ignition.

The door to a shack opens. An ICE FISHERMAN (50s), slightly drunk, comes out, fishing gear over his shoulder--his pole snags the doorknob. He wrestles it free, sees Koko. She dismounts and takes a step toward him.

KOKO

Is Tanaka-san here? His wife is looking for him.

ICE FISHERMAN

(slightly slurred)

I do not know Tanaka-san.

He goes to his snowmobile, fumbles in his coat pocket for keys--realizes they are in the ignition. He starts the machine and pulls away, north.

Koko takes a few more steps toward the shack. When he is far enough gone, she turns back, gets on the snowmobile, dons a helmet, starts the engine, and rides off, east.

220

INT. ALPHARD - NIGHT

Parked in the front drive of the cliff house. Hara in the driver's seat, Stimson in front now, Venberg in back.

HARA

Her tracks end at a cluster of shacks near a small lake. A local hangout for men ice fishing.

He hands the tablet to Stimson. Starts the car.

HARA (CONT'D)

You manage the drone now.

Stimson looks at the video feed.

STIMSON

There are snowmobiles.

HARA

Tracks in many directions. Impossible to tell from the air whether coming or going.

STIMSON

Can we get there?

HARA

Not by car.

He takes out his phone.

HARA (CONT'D)

I will call local police and ask them to investigate. There are no roads--it will take some time. For now we head north.

221 EXT. ROUTE 232 - NIGHT

Koko rides north in a deep, snow-filled roadside ditch parallel to the highway. Overhead, red-and-white road markers hang suspended.

222 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - NIGHT

Snow falling. Hara driving.

HARA

We can stay in a hotel for a few hours in Wakkanai tonight.

VENBERG

You should set up another dragnet.

STIMSON

To look for "fourteen-year-old girl, with or without limp"?

VENBERG

We have her photo.

HARA

Trains do not run until morning. We cannot stop every car on all highways.

STIMSON

We have to catch her where we know she'll be--at the coast.

HARA

Trains do not run at night. She must take a snowmobile across a vast area. She will not arrive before 4:00AM. We will be at the coast by 3:00.

STIMSON

She'll be exhausted. We'll at least have a few hours of sleep.

Hara smiles.

HARA

And, we will have a helicopter.

223 EXT. ENBETSU RIVER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Heavy falling snow obscures Koko's vision. Just in time, she sees a concrete river bridge abutment. She turns hard left, powers up the bank, then rides over the snow-packed bridge.

At the far end, she banks right, drops back into the ditch.

224 INT. ALPHARD - MOVING - NIGHT

Hara, driving, on the phone.

HARA

Yes. Good. Oh?

A curse in Japanese. He ends the call, puts the phone away.

HARA (CONT'D)

Police confirmed the stolen snowmobile. Tracks going east.

STIMSON

And?

HARA

Police found Sato. Drinking sake with the local ice fishermen.

Stimson bites her lip for a second.

STIMSON

Any results from northbound stations?

VENBERG

I hope you roast that bastard Sato.

They ignore him.

HARA

No. But she can't be that far yet.

225 EXT. ROUTE 232 - FARM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

At a crossroad, a three-foot ridge of snowplow snow.

Koko stands tall on the running boards, flies up over the ridge, slams down onto the roadway, then steels herself to do the same on the other side of the road.

226 INT. DOCK OFFICE - PORT - NIGHT

Endo has the Guide is on video call on his laptop.

GUIDE

We have waited half the night. She has not come. We must return to Sakhalin.

ENDO

One more hour.

GUIDE

Her time is up.

ENDO

I will double the money.

GUIDE

One hour. Then we leave.

227 EXT. TESHIO - AGRICULTURAL FIELDS - NIGHT

Koko turns east off the highway onto an unplowed access road-- a featureless white expanse of snow.

228 INT. HOTEL ROOM - WAKKANAI - NIGHT

A knock. Stimson opens the door.

A JAPANESE MAN (40s), down jacket, black knit cap, stands holding a long hard-case. Stimson takes it. The man turns and walks away.

Stimson shuts the door, sets the case on the dining table-- unlatches it.

A rifle with a scope, broken down in foam. She assembles it, checks the action, puts her eye to the scope, sweeps it once across the room.

Hara comes out of the bathroom and sees the rifle at her shoulder. He snorts.

Stimson lowers the rifle, begins to break it down.

229 EXT. SAROBETSU PLAIN - NIGHT

The snow has stopped. Tired and sleepy, Koko is jolted to attention when she slams into a concrete-hard crest of blown snow. In front of her, hundreds more--as far as she can see.



She starts again, in a low crouch--using her knees as shock absorbers--hitting each crest, one after the other.

230 EXT. SHIMONUMA STATION - NIGHT

Koko rides up to the train station on the snowmobile. She pulls out Sato's phone and calls Endo.

KOKO
I am at Shimonuma station. On a
snowmobile.

ENDO
Wow!

KOKO
But it is too early for trains.

ENDO
How much gas do you have?

She checks the gauge.

KOKO
About one-quarter tank.

ENDO
That should be enough to get you to
Yūchi station. Ride north alongside
the tracks. I will have the guide
drive to meet you there.

KOKO
Alright. Bye.

She pockets the phone, starts riding parallel to the tracks.

231 INT. DOCK OFFICE - PORT - NIGHT

Endo sits, laptop open. The Guide on video call.

ENDO

She is on a snowmobile--forty
minutes out.

232 INT. HOTEL ROOM - WAKKANAI - NIGHT

Venberg sits at the small desk with a Coke and a plate of
ichigo daifuku. Hara and Stimson stand in the small kitchen
with coats on, eating bowls of noodles and drinking coffee.

VENBERG

So, helicopter is cool, but how can
it stop a boat?

HARA

A Coast Guard cutter will move with
us along the coast. They will use
the ice floes for cover. Once we
spot her boat we will drop down and
take the cutter. It is faster than
any boat she can find.

Stimson finishes her noodles, checks her phone.

STIMSON

Two-thirty. Time to move.

Hara downs his coffee. He and Stimson stand, move to the
door. Venberg finishes his Coke.

VENBERG

(to Stimson)

Don't let her get away this time.

STIMSON

(annoyed)

She's an effing fourteen-year-old
girl being aided by an effing
blogger. I will *not* allow her to
escape.

VENBERG

Uh...you lost her twice.

STIMSON

(sharply)

Those were both Sato. I *will* bring
her back, one way or another.

She picks up the rifle case.

VENBERG
Unharmed.

STIMSON
Of course.

Hara picks up the drone case and they exit.

233 EXT. SNOWFIELD ALONGSIDE TRACKS - NIGHT

Koko rides parallel to the rail line, the tracks to her left.

She lifts one hand from the grip, removes a mitten, pulls Sato's phone from her coat, checks the time.

234 EXT. YŪCHI STATION - NIGHT

Koko rides up to the tiny unstaffed platform, cuts the engine. She dismounts, looks up and around--no cameras.

She waits at the drive leading out to the highway. Through the dark, headlights approach.

235 INT. SMALL SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

The Nivkh Guide drives. Koko in the passenger seat.

KOKO
How far to the boat?

GUIDE
One hour. On these roads--maybe more.

She leans her head against the window to sleep.

236 INT. ALPHARD - AIRPORT - NIGHT

The Alphard rolls up to the tarmac gate. A helicopter idles at the runway's edge, rotors turning slow.

STIMSON
(to Venberg, in back)
You coming up?

VENBERG
Not in this weather.

Hara steps out and goes to the trunk. Stimson gets out and opens the rear door.

STIMSON
(to Venberg)
Hand me the rifle.

VENBERG
Don't shoot her.

STIMSON
I won't. But the copter will be
coming down somewhere else, so all
gear goes.

Venberg hands her the rifle.

237 EXT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Hara and Stimson cross toward the helicopter. They climb aboard and the helicopter lifts off under a full moon.

238 INT. COAST GUARD HELICOPTER - MOVING - NIGHT

Hara and Stimson are strapped in behind the pilot, headsets on. An infrared display is mounted in the cabin between them. Below, the black ocean is dotted by the working lights of fishing boats scattered along the coastline.

HARA
The cutter is already on the ice
floe side. Once there, we will
cruise up and down the coast.

Stimson sits with her binoculars ready in her lap. A sudden gust of wind pushes the copter sideways--the pilot corrects.

239 INT. COAST GUARD HELICOPTER - MOVING - NIGHT

The ice floe: white pack ice runs out from the shore to the horizon, broken here and there by narrow channels of water.

Stimson has the binoculars up. Below, a fishing port slides past, berths empty.

The infrared display shows the same port in cold grey. Nothing moving.

Again, wind buffets the copter.

PILOT

Hara-san, winds are strong.

HARA

Continue.

240 EXT. FISHING DOCK - NIGHT

The sedan pulls up at the edge of a working dock. Koko and the Guide get out. The port is empty except for one 65-foot trawler at the far end--engine running, but lights dark.

As Koko and the Guide run toward it, it fires up its engine.

241 INT. TRAWLER - CABIN - NIGHT

The Nivkh Boatman (40) steers.

Koko stands in a dark one-piece foul-weather suit.

The Guide finishes drawing the fur-trimmed hood around her face. A narrow band of neoprene sits inside the fur, close against her cheeks.

He turns her by the shoulder, takes her right wrist. The sleeve rides up--a black cuff underneath. He takes a heavy fishing gauntlet and works it up her forearm. He turns her again and does the same with the left arm.

242 INT. COAST GUARD HELICOPTER - MOVING - NIGHT

The wind shoves the copter. Stimson and Hara scan the water.

Seaward, the fleet's lights, scattered across the open sea. Shoreward, a small fishing port, dark, berths empty.

A BLAST of wind slams the helicopter sideways. The pilot corrects hard.

PILOT

We have to go down--now!

Stimson holds up five fingers to the pilot.

STIMSON

Five more minutes.

The pilot glances back at Hara. Hara nods.

They scan the infrared display as another port appears.

A HARD BLAST hits the copter. The pilot fights the stick, begins a quick descent without waiting asking.

PILOT
Landing now!

STIMSON
(points)
There!

As they descend, Hara sees it on the infrared display: one hot spot moving out of the dark port--no running lights.

HARA
Land there!

Hara keys his headset.

HARA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Cutter to the near pier. We are
landing.

The helicopter drops fast toward the port.

243 EXT. FISHING PIER - NIGHT

The helicopter sets down on a flat open space at the head of the pier. Offshore, the cutter is still a minute or two out.

Stimson and Hara climb out, with rifle case and drone case.

244 EXT. FISHING PIER - NIGHT

The cutter noses in to the dock. A crewman helps Stimson and Hara over the rail.

It pulls away from the pier and swings out toward open water.

245 EXT. SEA OF OKHOTSK - DRIFT ICE - NIGHT

A rugged, 65-foot fishing trawler plows through a wide channel, cutting through chunks of floating slush.

246 INT. TRAWLER - WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Boatman works the wheel. Koko and the Guide stand beside him, watching the channel narrow.

KOKO

What are our chances of getting
across?

GUIDE

There are always Russian patrol
boats. But the ice floes clutter
their radar, and it is impossible
for them to cover the whole area.

Koko looks aft. A hundred yards behind, the Coast Guard
cutter roars in pursuit.

KOKO

Oh shit!

247 INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A Coast Guard PILOT handles the boat's dual throttles,
tracking the trawler's wake. Stimson stands by the exit door,
a thermal-scoped rifle slung over her shoulder. She pulls a
technical beanie over her ears, adjusting a tactical headset
tight against her skull. The Pilot points to his infrared
display on the dashboard.

PILOT Channel narrows to three meters ahead.

HARA

They will be trapped.

The cutter closes hard on the trawler's stern--thirty yards,
twenty.

HARA (CONT'D)

Prepare to board.

A crewman moves to the rail with a line.

Suddenly the trawler veers hard left, placing itself sideways
directly across the entrance to the narrow gap.

248 INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The Pilot slams the twin throttles into full reverse. The
hull screeches to a violent, dead halt against the jammed
trawler.

At the rail, the crewman with the line is thrown clean over
the side into the icy water. Two crewmen scramble to the rail
and throw him a line.

249 EXT. DRIFT ICE - THE BOTTLENECK - CONTINUOUS

The Guide rips a canvas tarp off a 15-foot rubber Zodiac. He pulls a quick-release lever. The boat drops cleanly into the slush of the open water channel.

Koko and the Guide drop into the Zodiac. He hits the outboard throttle, and it speeds away down the blocked channel.

250 INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Stimson, standing, helps Hara up off the floor.

STIMSON
(to Hara)
Drone up!

HARA
It can't fly in this wind.

STIMSON
Make it fly!

Hara grabs the drone case and opens it.

Stimson flings the heavy exit door open, steps onto the bow.

251 EXT. COAST GUARD BOAT - BOW DECK - CONTINUOUS

A hundred yards out, the Zodiac is already on the other side of the channel, moving into a network of smaller channels.

Stimson unslings the rifle, grabs it in one hand, leaps from the bow directly onto the ice shelf and breaks into a run.

Behind her, the drone climbs, catching up to her.

252 EXT. DRIFT ICE - OPEN CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

The Guide pushes the Zodiac's throttle full forward. It bounces over floating slush, spraying freezing saltwater.

Koko grips the bow line, looks back at the trawler.

253 INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Hara leans over a tactical tablet.

Against a dark background, Koko and the Guide appear as two white-hot silhouettes in the Zodiac.

The image shudders violently as the wind jerks the drone. The white-hot shape of Stimson moves behind them--losing ground.

HARA
(into headset)
The drone is fighting the wind at
twenty meters. In ninety seconds
I'm going to lose the camera angle
for forty seconds. Don't lose them.

STIMSON
(into headset)
I won't.

254 EXT. DRIFT ICE - FLAT FLOE - CONTINUOUS

Stimson rounds a frozen hummock. A hundred yards out, through a gap in the ice, the Zodiac speeds down an open channel.

Stimson stops. Raises the rifle.

255 STIMSON'S POV (THROUGH SCOPE) - THERMAL IMAGING

The crosshairs settle on the outboard motor--the hottest point on the boat.

CRACK!

256 EXT. DRIFT ICE - FLAT FLOE - CONTINUOUS

Direct hit. The engine dies. The Guide quickly grabs a paddle and steers it to solid ice.

Stranded, Koko and the Guide scramble out of the boat onto the flat ice, running for cover toward a six-foot ice ridge.

Stimson raises the rifle again.

257 STIMSON'S POV (THROUGH SCOPE) - THERMAL IMAGING

Stimson adjusts her windage dial. The crosshairs center on Koko's upper torso. Then shift up to the Guide's back.

Then down--to the Guide's right thigh.

CRACK!

258 ONE HUNDRED YARDS AWAY

The Guide collapses onto the snow, clutching his leg. Koko stops, turns back toward him in panic.

GUIDE

To the ridge! Go around, left!

Stimson slings the rifle and breaks into a sprint across the ice floe. Koko runs toward a jagged six-foot ice ridge. Just as she rounds the other side of it, she drops from view.

259 INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Hara rapidly scrubs back the timeline on the touchscreen.

HARA

(into headset)

Camera lost her as she rounded the ridge.

260 EXT. DRIFT ICE - EDGE OF THE WATER - NIGHT

Stimson rounds the ridge, arrives at the spot where Koko fell.

No one there. Only water. Stimson bends down to inspect--a slide mark shows where Koko fell in.

Stimson presses her headset button.

STIMSON

(into headset)

Looks like she fell in the water.

She stands up.

STIMSON (CONT'D)

(into headset)

Thermal signature from the drone?

She waits while the drone flies back and forth over the area.

261 INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Hara stares at the tablet, then looks out over the ice.

HARA

(into headset)

Just you and the Nivkh.

Hara sets down the tablet.

HARA (CONT'D)
(into headset)
In one minute she will be dead and
her body lost under the ice.

Stimson turns and walks back. She reaches the wounded Guide, grabs him by his parka, begins dragging his semi-conscious body back across the ice toward the Coast Guard cutter.

262 INT. COAST GUARD CUTTER - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The Pilot navigates without a word. The wounded Guide lies aft on the deck, his breathing shallow.

Hara looks out over the ice behind them.

HARA
It is a shame.

Stimson slams her rifle down on a bench--a little too hard.

HARA (CONT'D)
Venberg will be disappointed.

STIMSON
Fuck Venberg.

263 EXT. DRIFT ICE - OPEN CHANNEL - DAWN

The low hum of an outboard motor approaches.

A gray Zodiac gradually becomes visible. Endo sits in the bow, watching the ice.

264 INT. PRESSURE RIDGE ICE CAVE - DAWN

Pitch blackness.

Deep, metallic GROAN of shifting ice.

Rhythmic, muffled SLOSH of the current under the ice shelf.

Breathing. Shallow--but steady.

265 EXT. DRIFT ICE - EDGE OF THE WATER - DAWN

Next to the jagged ice shelf, a soft SPLASH breaks the surface of the dark water.

A foot-high inflatable orange HOMING BEACON pops up, bobbing in the slush. A red LED light flashes at the top.

266 EXT. DRIFT ICE - OPEN CHANNEL - DAWN

A gray Zodiac boat glides into the narrow channel. The Nivkh Boatman sits in the stern, steering.

Endo sits in the bow, holding a small electronic handheld receiver. Suddenly, the device CHIRPS.

ENDO

There she is!

Endo points in the direction shown on the device. The Nivkh Boatman alters course. The chirping continues.

267 EXT. DRIFT ICE - OPEN CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

Endo and the Boatman spot the homing beacon at the same time.

The boat glides to a stop next to it. Endo reaches out, grabs the float's cord, gives it three sharp tugs.

He waits.

Next to the lip of the ice by the ridge, Koko's neoprene-hooded head breaks the surface of the black water.

She spits out a mouthful of water, face flushed deep red.

Endo reaches down, grabs the heavy shoulders of Koko's drysuit, and hauls her into the boat.

Once aboard, Koko collapses against Endo, throwing her arms around him in a long, silent hug.

The Boatman spins the tiller. The Zodiac cuts a sharp arc through the slush, moving fast into the deep of the ice pack.

268 INT. ENDO'S BOAT - MOVING - DAWN

Koko sits, shivering. Endo covers her with a large fur coat.

KOKO

It was so scary in there!

ENDO

You are a very brave girl.

Koko turns to the Boatman.

KOKO
What about Russian patrol boats?

BOATMAN
I was caught once--my first time.
(he smiles)
Never again.

Endo nods reassuringly to her.

The Boatman revs the motor and they cruise away at medium speed.

KOKO
My poor ojii-san. It will never be
safe to tell him I am alive.

Endo looks at the horizon, at the first sliver of sun.

ENDO
If you tell me something only he
would know, Anguri Panku will find
a way.

269 INT. KIYOSHI'S HOUSE - DAY

Kiyoshi sits at a low table, an empty cup of tea before him.

A knock.

He rises, crosses to the door, slides it open.

An UBER EATS COURIER stands on the step, insulated delivery bag in hand.

KIYOSHI
(irritated)
I did not order this.

The courier unzips the bag, hands Kiyoshi a paper sack. Then reaches into his pocket and pulls out a banana.

COURIER
Ikura [salmon eggs] is paid for.
You must pay only for banana. I had
to buy that myself.

Kiyoshi stares at the courier a moment, takes out his wallet, gives him a bill. The courier takes it, bows, and leaves.

270 INT. KİYOSHI'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kiyoshi sits at his table, the brilliant orange salmon roe in front of him. A small tray of condiments.

He holds the banana in both hands. Tears in his eyes, but a smile on his face.

He reaches for the soy sauce.

THE END