

A TOKYO STORY

By

William C. White

WGAW Registration #: 2311860

Email: Tokyo747@hotmail.com
+81-080-4789-2098

FADE IN:

1 EXT. BALCONY - TOKYO - NIGHT

Close on a WOMAN'S HAND, resting gently on a balcony railing. A lit cigarette glows between her fingers.

She lifts it, takes a slow drag.

Tokyo stretches out below - glowing signage hovers in the air, trains hum silently across sky rails, and crowds move beneath in digital silence.

We don't see her face. Just her hand. The cigarette. The quiet.

Inside: a kettle starts to boil. A screen flickers in the background with subtitles.

The hand drops out of frame. She's gone.

The camera stays. Smoke rises Nothing moves. Then, over this still frame:

TITLE OVER IMAGE:

A TOKYO STORY

Small white sent font. Wind and city hum.

FADE TO BLACK:

Silence.

Then-the low rumble of descending plane. Landing gear clicks. A soft thud.

2 INT. TAXI LIMOUSINE - MOVING - NIGHT

Charlie WHITE, early (40's), sits alone in the back of a black autonomous taxi limousine. Disheveled, alert, but worn down. A man used to being alone.

Through the window, **Tokyo flows past**: Floating signs, motionless crowds, light rails from delivery drones.

No body talks. Everyone connected - but to something else.

Charlie watches it all, removed. A worn **notebook** rests on his lap. Closed.

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He lights a cigarette. A silent, electronic ignition. Window cracked.

He pulls out his phone. Types:

"Hey. I'm in Tokyo for a bit."

He hesitates. Then he sends it.

INSERT - PHONE:

Sent to: Claire

He puts the phone down.

3 EXT. PARK HYATT HOTEL - ENTRY - NIGHT

The black limousine glides to a stop. Blue lights shimmer across the curb.

A BELLHOP approaches, wordless. Opens the rear door.

Charlie steps out, looking up at the glass tower - modern, still, overwhelming.

The Bellhop removes his suitcase from the trunk, nods once, and wheels it inside.

Charlie lingers. Takes one last drag from his cigarette. Then crushes it out underfoot and follows.

4 INT. PARK HYATT - FRONT DESK - NIGHT

The lobby is pristine. Piano jazz drifts overhead. The CLERK speaks from behind soft glass, barely audible.

CLERK

What brings you to Tokyo, Mr. White?

Charlie shrugs. slightly.

CHARLIE

Time. Mostly.

Behind him, the Bellhop disappears down a hallway with his suitcase.

Charlie signs the check-in pad. Doesn't say another word.

5 INT. PARK HYATT - ELEVATOR/41ST FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

DING. The elevator doors open to a hushed, softly lit hallway. Charlie steps out slowly, suitcase already taken by staff. He glances around. To his right, a brushed steel plaque on the wall reads:

"Peak Lounge - 41F - City View"

He pauses. Reads it.

Maybe he's curious. Maybe he's not. He adjusts the strap on his bag.

Then walks the opposite direction, towards his room.

The sign lingers in frame.

6 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The lights fade on softly as Charlie enters.

His suitcase is already waiting for him near the closet. He does touch it.

He walks straight to the window.

Below: Tokyo. Still alive. Still unreachable.

He lights another cigarette. Watches his reflection blur into the city lights.

PING: A soft vibration across the room.

He turns to check his phone. A floating notification appears:

NATASHA - PUBLISHER

"Just checking to see if you made it in alright. Let me know how you're doing - I'm here if you need anything. (Professional of course.)"

Charlie stares at it for a long moment. Then sets the phone back down. Face-down. No reply.

The city glows beyond the glass. Unmoved. He turns away from the glass. Picks up his room key. Exits.

7 INT. PARK HYATT BAR - NIGHT

Soft jazz plays under the low murmur of conversation. The bar

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glows with warm gold light, reflected in dark glass and polished wood.

A few guests linger - couples in quiet conversation, solitary travelers nursing drinks. Time moves slower here.

Charlie sits alone near the end of the bar. His collar slightly undone. A half-finished drink in front of him. One hand resting near his phone, screen dark.

The BARTENDER approaches, discreet.

BARTENDER

Another?

Charlie glances at the glass.

CHARLIE

Still working on this one.

The bartender nods, moves on.

Charlie lifts his glass. Takes a sip. Sets it down.

Two seats away, a woman - alone - lifts her drink. She casts a brief glance toward Charlie. Not inviting. Not unfriendly. Just... passing.

Charlie meets her eyes for a beat. No smile. No words. He looks down.

Ice settles in the glass

Outside the tall windows, Tokyo pulses - vivid and unreachable.

Cut to black.

8 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Faint light slips past the blackout curtains. The soft hum of Tokyo outside.

Charlie lies in bed, fully awake, staring at the ceiling. Still wearing yesterday's shirt. He reaches for his phone.

Still nothing from Claire. Natasha's text remains "Read." He sets the phone down. Sits up. Drags himself to the bathroom.

9 INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Charlie splashes water on his face. Brushes his teeth without looking in the mirror.

He pulls a clean shirt from his half-unpacked bag. Worn but decent. Throws it on under the same blazer. He grabs his notebook., lighter, and room key, then slips out.

10 EXT. SHINJUKU SIDE STREETS - LATE MORNING

The streets are alive, but quiet. People walk quickly, silently, locked into digital overlays.

Charlie wanders with a can of vending machine coffee. Tokyo is sleek and frictionless. Emotionless.

He passes a small bookstore tucked away between a karaoke bar and convenience pod. Something makes him pause.

Inside the window: a row of novels. Fifth from the left, half-obscured - his. "The Wait Between Us" - Charlie White.

He doesn't go in. Doesn't smile. Just watches the stillness of it. Like seeing a photo of someone you used to be. He moves on.

11 EXT. YOYOGI PARK - EARLY AFTERNOON

Charlie sits on a bench. Notebook open. Blank page. Cigarette hanging from his lips.

He writes in his notebook.

INSERT - NOTEBOOK

"Tokyo is quiet. Everyone's here, but no one's really here."

He stares at it. Crosses it out. Across the path, two girls take a picture with a holographic filter. Neither of them looks up from their lenses.

Charlie writes again:

INSERT - NOTEBOOK

"What do you say to someone you haven't seen in over ten years, who used to look at you like you mattered?"

He underlines it. Circles it. Closes the notebook.

12 EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie leans against a rail as a silent train glides past. Passengers board wordlessly. Some don't even look up from their lenses.

Charlie checks his phone. A new text. Spam. Not Claire. He deletes it. Watches the train pull away. Not upset. Just... blank.

A soft breeze lifts his coat.

13 INT. PARK HYATT LOBBY - NIGHT

Charlie returns, tired, worn down.

He passes the concierge. Music filters from the hotel bar.

He pauses at the entrance.

Inside:

A small group laughs around a table. Among them: a young woman, mid 20's, stylish, relaxed - not unlike Claire in age. She leans in, animated, holding a cocktail. Laughs at something a friend says.

Charlie watches for just a moment. Not intruding - just observing. A subtle shift in his eyes. Recognition. Regret. Maybe all three.

He lingers. Then looks away. And walks on, heading towards the elevator.

14 INT. PARK HYATT ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie enters the room. Takes off his coat. Tosses it over a chair. The silence is thick - hotel silence. Distance elevators. Faint hum of air conditioning.

He lights a cigarette near the window. Tokyo pulses outside, soft and unreachable. He grabs his notebook, Stares at the page he circled earlier:

"What do you say to someone you haven't seen in over ten years, who used to look at you like you mattered?"

No answers come.

He closes it.

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His phone buzzes.

He stares at the screen.

INSERT - PHONE::

text from A text from Claire: "Hey. Got your text. You still in Tokyo?"

Charlie blinks. Thumbs hovers. Deletes his first thought. Writes his first thought something else.

"Yeah. Been here a few days."

Waits.

Another text appears.

INSERT - PHONE::

text from A text from Claire: "You want to get lunch or something?"

Charlie stares out the window.

A smile almost shows. Then fades.

He replies:

"Yeah. Sure. Just say when."

He locks the phone. Sets it down face up this time. Then exhales. Just a little.

15 INT. NOODLE SHOP - EARLY AFTERNOON

Sunlight streams in through narrow windows. Wooden counters. Steam rising from the pots in the back. A quiet hum of conversation.

Charlie sits near the back, already there, early.

He wears the same blazer, a cleaner shirt. He checks his phone. No new texts. He sips water. Fidgets with his lighter.

The doorbell chimes as it opens.

CLAIRE (22), black boots. Hair pulled back. She carries herself like someone who's used to being fine on her own.

She offers a polite nod to the staff as she steps in -

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natural, fluent.

Charlie stands halfway. Doesn't quite know whether to smile or not.

CLAIRE
(quietly)
Hey.

CHARLIE
Hey.

A pause.

They both sit. An awkward silence as they look at menus they don't need.

CLAIRE
This place is good. Cheap.

CHARLIE
Looks solid. I wouldn't know.

Beat.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You look... older.

Claire lets out a small laugh - not warm, but not cold.

CLAIRE
That's how time works.

The server approaches. Claire immediately shifts to soft, fluent Japanese.

CLAIRE
(In Japanese/sub, calmly)
Two orders, please. Pork ramen with
extra seasoned egg. And some water.

The server nods, smiling. Charlie hands over his menu awkwardly.

CHARLIE
Uh, same. That sounds good.

CLAIRE
(In Japanese/sub)
He'll have the same.

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The server bows and walks away.

Charlie watches her a moment, then looks down at the table.

CHARLIE

You always speak that well?

CLAIRE

Better now. My friends barely speak English, so I had to.

CHARLIE

Right.

A pause. She leans back in her chair. Looks at him - sizing up the moment, maybe him too.

CLAIRE

So... you're writing something?

CHARLIE

Trying. It's mostly walking around and pretending to think.

CLAIRE

Tokyo's good for that.

Claire gives a faintest smile. A silence settles - not cold, just full.

CHARLIE

How long have you been here?

CLAIRE

Since Kyoto. So, almost two years now.

(shrugs)

Didn't really plan to stay, it just kind of... happened.

Charlie nods. Another pause.

CHARLIE

I didn't expect you to answer.

CLAIRE

I almost didn't.

CHARLIE

That's fair.

Their ramen arrives. Claire grabs her chopsticks naturally.

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Charlie follows, a half-second behind.

They eat. Quietly. For a while, there's just the sound of slurping, muffled conversation from other tables.

CLAIRE

I didn't know you were in Japan until the text.

CHARLIE

I didn't tell anyone. I didn't want it to be a thing.

CLAIRE

It's a thing.

Beat.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I know.

She looks at him again - not accusing, but not forgiving either.

CLAIRE

You always said you hated flying.

CHARLIE

Still do.

CLAIRE

But you came anyway.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

Claire looks down, then out the window. A stray dog trots across the street. No one seems to notice but her.

CLAIRE

So, what now?

Charlie takes a sip of water. He doesn't answer.

She doesn't press.

16 EXT. SIDE STREET OUTSIDE NOODLE SHOP - LATER

Claire and Charlie step out. The light is softer now.

They pause. No hug, No touch. Just two people on the same

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sidewalk.

CLAIRE
Thanks for lunch.

CHARLIE
Yeah. Any time.

She walks away. He stays behind a moment, watching. He doesn't follow.

17 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - EARLY EVENING

Charlie walks alone, hands in his pockets. The light is soft - blue hour. Buildings shimmer with layered digital signage. A translucent tram glides silently past on a nearby rail.

People pass him wearing discreet earbuds, eye pieces, smart wear - but no one's talking.

He pauses outside a corner bento kiosk.

A woman taps her wrist, and a box lowers from a vending panel with a steam puff.

Charlie watches. Says nothing. Keeps walking.

18 INT. PARK HYATT BAR - NIGHT

Dim and elegant. City lights shimmer beyond the glass.

A small jazz trio plays in the corner - upright bass, soft brushes on snare, and a low, murmuring sax. No spotlight. No applause. Just live music, filling the quiet with warmth.

Charlie sits alone at the bar. His drink rests on a smart-glass coaster glowing faintly with his room number and open tab.

He watches the skyline. A drone billboard flickers in the distance - glowing advertisement for "Offline Retreats: Disconnect to Connect."

A group of young women laugh at a nearby table. One of them swipes at a projected drink menu hovering above the table. Another leans back, glancing towards Charlie - curious, indifferent.

Charlie lifts his glass. Drink.

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BARTENDER
Another?

CHARLIE
Yeah. Why not.

19 INT. HOTEL POOL - LATER THAT NIGHT

The pool glows from underneath, lit by built-in LED that ripple gently in preset waves.

Charlie floats, alone. His arms drift outward, slack. City lights flicker on the water's surface through the ceiling-to-floor windows.

Outside, a train hums silently across a track suspended midair - barely visible through the glass.

20 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie enters with a towel around his neck. The room lights fade on automatically. Soft acoustic guitar begins to play from a recessed speaker - something ambient, generated by his mood settings.

He lights a cigarette. Walks to the window. The skyline pulses quietly, like it's breathing.

He opens his laptop. The screen wakes up instantly. A writing app displays:

Untitled Document - 01:32 AM.

He types:

"He thought seeing her would fix something. It didn't."

Pauses.

Deletes it.

His phone buzzes. He picks it up.

INSERT - PHONE::

text from Natasha: "Did you meet her? I'm here if you need anything. Not as a friend. OK?"

Charlie reads it. sets the phone face down. Watches the smoke curl.

21 INT. SMALL IZAKAYA - NIGHT

The Izakaya is packed but cozy - a blend of traditional wood and modern accents. An air filtration unit glows softly in the corner, barely humming.

At a small table near the window, Claire sits with four Japanese friends. They're all in their 20's, casually dressed, speaking in quick bursts of Japanese.

A small circular device in the center of the table projects a shared ordering screen. One friend scrolls through skewers and drinks with a flick of her fingers.

Claire sips from her glass of highball. She smiles when someone says something funny - but her eyes drift to the window.

RIE, sitting beside her, leans in.

REI

(Japanese/sub)

You, okay? You seem off tonight.

CLAIRE

(Japanese/sub)

Yeah, I'm fine. Just tired.

Rie nods, not convinced but polite enough not to push it.

The others continue chatting. A server passes, balancing drinks on a hovering tray.

Claire glances at her phone. Still nothing.

She opens a text draft. Hesitates. Types:

"Let me know if you're around tomorrow."

Deletes it. Locks the phone.

Her eyes drift back to the glass - reflection of lights outside faintly in the rainy window.

22 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - SAME NIGHT

Charlie lies on top of the covers, fully dressed. The cigarette has burned out in the tray.

A soft chime sound from the room's smart system.

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"Sleep mode initiated."

He doesn't respond.

The room dims further on its own. Outside the window, distant traffic hovers in quiet motion through the sky.

Charlie stares upwards, not blinking.

23 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The light is pale and cold as it filters into a compact Tokyo apartment.

A sketchbook lies open on a small table. An unfinished drawing - a quiet profile, mid-line. A pencil rests across the page. A faint music stream plays low-fi jazz through a speaker in the corner.

Claire stands by the window, wearing a long tee and socks. The balcony door is cracked open, letting in the city's muted hum - trains in the distance, the occasional soft voice from the street below.

She lights a cigarette. Takes one drag. Sets it down on a small ceramic dish.

She checks her phone. No notifications. She opens a text thread labeled:

DAD - Charlie

She types:

"Free later?"

She waits for half a second. Taps send.

No read receipt. No dots. She sets the phone facedown beside the sketchbook.

Claire picks up her pencil again, tries to finish the curve of the cheekbone - but stops. Her hand wavers. She closes the sketchbook instead.

She returns to the window and takes a long drag from the cigarette. The city stretches out before her - stacked, layered, alive, but emotionally unreachable.

A train glides along a track between two rooftops. Her eyes follow it until it disappears behind a tower.

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She exhales.

And stands there, still.

24 EXT. SMALL TOKYO CAFE - LATE MORNING

A narrow cafe rests between glass towers and weathered apartments. A soft digital billboard loops silent ads overhead - minimalist design, mostly negative space.

A delivery drone hisses, sharp and clean. Japanese conversation murmurs in the background - polite, subdued.

A YOUNG GIRL stands at the front, pressing her hand against a glass koi display. The digital fish swim lazily across the panel.

Charlie sits alone at a table near the window. His clothes are presentable, but just barely. A used transit ticket folded into a paper crane rests on the saucer beside his coffee.

His phone vibrates on the table.

INSERT - PHONE:

text from A text from Claire: "Free later?"

Charlie watches the text. Then quietly types:

"Sure. Coffee?"

He sends it.

A pause. Then:

A text from Claire:

"Small Park near Nakameguro Station. Noon-Ish?"

Charlie opens a navigation overlay on his phone. A thin projection of Tokyo appears - quiet translucent lines mapping the walk. Estimated time: 12 minutes.

He closes the screen.

A BARISTA approaches silently and places a second coffee beside him, along with a folded napkin printed with train lines. She bows gently.

Charlie nods back but doesn't touch the drink. Instead, he

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tucks the paper crane into his pocket.

He stands, slinging his bag over his shoulder. One last glance out the window - commuters, bicycles, flicker of neon from above.

Then he steps out in the light.

25 EXT. SMALL PARK NEAR NAKAMEGURO - EARLY AFTERNOON

A quiet park tucked beneath a rail line and low apartment buildings. Worn benches. Two humming vending machines. Trees swaying gently under overhead wires.

Cicadas buzz somewhere nearby.

Charlie sits on the edge of a planter wall. Coffee in hand, bag at his feet. A few schoolkids play near the swings. A woman eats lunch under an umbrella.

He checks his phone, but there's no new text.

Then - a voice from behind.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
You always show up early?

He turns:

Claire, calm, but unreadable, stands a few steps away. Comfortable in her space. Hair tied back. canvas tote over her shoulder.

She doesn't approach yet.

CHARLIE
Thought I might not recognize you.

CLAIRE
You didn't.

A soft, almost-smile between them. Claire steps forward and sits behind him, leaving space.

CHARLIE
Thanks for meeting me.

CLAIRE
Didn't expect you to still have the same number.

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CHARLIE
Didn't expect you to use it.

A beat.

They both glance forward, watching a group of pigeons scatter near a vending machine.

CLAIRE
I was thinking... maybe we could leave the city for a bit.

He turns slightly toward her.

CHARLIE
Leave?

CLAIRE
Not forever. Just a day. It's kind of loud here.

CHARLIE
You always liked quiet.

CLAIRE
Still do.

Charlie watches her. She's different, but not unfamiliar.

CHARLIE
Do you already know where?

CLAIRE
Sort of. Not far. You'd hate anything crowded.

CHARLIE
You say it like it's news.

She gives a small shrug, then stands.

CLAIRE
C'mon. I'll show you the line.

Charlie doesn't move right away. He just watches her - calm, casual, not asking for anything.

He stands. Slings his bag over his shoulder. Follows.

They walk together down the path.

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A train glides overhead, momentarily drowning out everything else.

26 INT. TRAIN TO THE COUNTRYSIDE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Claire and Charlie sit side by side on a clean, quiet, train as it hums out of central Tokyo. The windows frame a passing mosaic of rooftops, vending machines, and fading signage.

A soft announcement in Japanese plays overhead.

Claire has one earbud in, other dangling, she scrolls through quiet playlist but doesn't press play.

CHARLIE

I used to know this city. Now I don't even recognize the train lines.

CLAIRE

It doesn't stop growing. You were here when I was, what, nine?

CHARLIE

Yeah, we took you a picture outside that shrine. You had on this enormous purple hoodie.

She smiles faintly.

CLAIRE

I remember the picture. Not the shrine.

They ride in silence for a moment. Outside, a patch of greenery breaks the line of apartments.

CHARLIE

Five years is a long time.

CLAIRE

Not long enough for everyone to stop asking when I'm coming back.

Charlie glances over, thoughtful.

CHARLIE

And are you?

CLAIRE

No.

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A child across the aisle adjusts a floating holographic screen - an anime game projected in mid-air. Charlie watches the colors dance, disconnected.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You're not writing a novel, are you?

CHARLIE

I told myself I was.

CLAIRE

But?

CHARLIE

It feels like a lie I had to believe
to buy the ticket.

She removes her earbud.

CLAIRE

Well... maybe now you'll write
something honest.

The train enters a tunnel, shadows sliding across their faces. Then bursts into light - revealing open countryside, low hills, quiet.

Charlie watches. He doesn't say anything. Claire does the same.

27 EXT. RURAL TRAIN STATION/OUTSKIRTS - AFTERNOON

The train slows to a stop beside a wood and glass station, faded signs, and platform vending machines. The air is cleaner. Quieter.

Charlie steps out, blinking into the sunlight. Claire walks ahead, relaxed.

Two high school girls bow and pass them. A delivery drone lowers behind the station and disappears down a narrow farm road.

Charlie looks around. Tree sways. A dog barking somewhere in the distance.

CHARLIE

This isn't the kind of quiet I'm used
to.

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CLAIRE

That's why I brought you here.

They walk toward the edge of the station - where a small footpath leads into a grove of tall grass and cedar trees.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

There's a ramen shop just past the slope. It's been here forever. Old couple runs it. Not flashy, but the broth's real.

CHARLIE

That smell... that's it?

CLAIRE

Yeah. They start cooking before lunch and stop when the soup's gone.

Charlie breathes in again, slower this time.

CHARLIE

Now that's a business model.

CLAIRE

It's the opposite of Tokyo. You'll like it.

They walk off the platform together, the station fading behind them.

28 EXT. ROADSIDE RAMEN SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

A modest shop tucked into the slope of a quiet hill. Faded cloth banners sway lightly in the breeze. The aroma of simmering broth drifts into the open air.

Charlie slows as they approach, breathing in.

CHARLIE

That smell... it's exactly what I hoped it would be.

Claire doesn't respond with a smile, but there's a softness in her eyes.

They step inside.

29 INT. RAMEN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Simple. Lived-in. Two booths. A wooden counter. Behind it, an

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older couple - the OWNER and his WIFE - move quietly. A muted TV plays news without sound.

Claire and Charlie take a seat in the corner.

She glances at the handwritten menu, not because she needs to.

CLAIRE
(In Japanese/sub)
Two ajitama ramen, please. And water.

The owner nods and vanishes into the kitchen.

CHARLIE
That sounded effortless.

CLAIRE
It is now.

CHARLIE
I used to think places like this were
all the same. Now it feels like I
never noticed anything at all.

Claire watches him for a second.

CLAIRE
You were rushing back then.

CHARLIE
Was I?

CLAIRE
Yeah. Through everything.

A moment later, two steaming bowls of ramen are placed before them - no fanfare, no words.

Charlie reaches for his chopsticks. Fumbles a little.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Still upside down.

CHARLIE
still works.

They eat quietly. Their broth steams gently between them. It's the kind of silence that doesn't need filling.

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CLAIRE

You and Mom... it got bad after here?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

CLAIRE

Was it because of me?

Charlie looks at her. She doesn't look away. But she doesn't push either.

CHARLIE

No. But we made it about you
sometimes. And that made it worse.

Claire sips her broth. No flinch, no shift.

CLAIRE

Just wondering.

They sit together. It's not warm yet. But it's not cold.

And that's enough for now.

30 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE PATH -LATE AFTERNOON/EARLY EVENING

Charlie and Claire walk side by side down a quiet rural road.

The lights is gold and fading. Long shadows stretch from the trees.

They don't speak.

Footsteps on gravel.

The sound of insects.

Distant wind through tall grass.

Claire walks ahead. Charlie lingers half a step behind, glancing at her occasionally.

CHARLIE

You come out here often?

CLAIRE

Sometimes. When I need to slow down.

A beat.

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CLAIRE (CONT'D)
There's a place I want to show you.
It's not far.

Charlie nods without asking.

They continue walking, turning down a small path lined with stone lanterns half-swallowed by moss.

31 EXT. HILLTOP SHRINE - EVENING

They arrive at a tiny, hillside shrine - barely more than a gate, a worn altar, and a single stone bench.

Below them, the valley spreads out in blues fading gold. A few rooftops glint. The wind carries the faint sound of a temple bell in the distance.

Claire stands near the edge of the overlook, gazing out.

CHARLIE
Hard to believe this is the same
country.

CLAIRE
It's not. Not the one you knew,
anyway.

Charlie looks at her. She doesn't look back.

CHARLIE
What did you wish for?

CLAIRE
(shrugs)
Don't remember.

A pause.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What about you? Would you come back
here... if I wasn't here?

Charlie doesn't answer right away. He looks back out over the hills.

CHARLIE
I don't know. Maybe. But it wouldn't
feel the same.

She sits on the stone bench. Quiet. Still

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Charlie says standing, hands in pocket, valley light fades behind them.

They don't speak again.

Just two figures - paused in the stillness - with the weight of unspoken things between them.

32 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE RYOKAN - NIGHT

A small traditional inn, built into the side of a hill. Soft lanterns glow under the leaves. Crickets hum in the tall grass. Claire and Charlie walk up the path, tired, quiet.

A sliding door opens with a chime. An ELDERLY INNKEEPER greets them with a box.

33 INT. RYOKAN - ENTRY - NIGHT

They remove their shoes.

Claire speaks gently in Japanese.

CLAIRE
(In Japanese/sub)
We had a reservation for two.

The innkeeper nods, bows, and hands over a wooden key tag. He gestures politely toward the hallway, then disappears.

Charlie glances at her, a little impressed.

CHARLIE
You booked all of this?

CLAIRE
Kind of figured you'd say yes.

34 INT. RYOKAN - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

A simple tatami room. Two futons laid out neatly on the floor. Shoji doors partially open to a garden view lit by moonlight.

Charlie stands awkwardly in the center of the room.

CHARLIE
Feels like a painting I'm not supposed to touch.

Claire sets down her small overnight bag. Pulls her hair

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CONTINUED:

back.

CLAIRE

Just don't walk on the futons

Charlie nods, kicks off his socks.

A beat. The room settles. Just ticking of something unseen - maybe an old fan.

CHARLIE

I haven't been this quiet in years.

CLAIRE

That's not true.

She doesn't say it harshly. Just... honestly.

Charlie looks over, half a smile forming.

CHARLIE

You're not wrong.

Claire sits on her futon, scrolling something on her phone. Charlie lowers himself onto his. He lays back, starting at the ceiling.

A pause.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I tried to write something this morning. It didn't come out.

CLAIRE

What were you trying to write?

CHARLIE

Something about being a good father. It sounded dishonest.

Claire doesn't answer.

The wind rustles faintly outside. A garden light buzzes.

She lies back slowly, eyes on the ceiling.

CLAIRE

Tomorrow, maybe go slow. Don't write it. Just... be it.

Charlie turns his head toward her. She doesn't look at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just two outlines in separate futons, lit by soft blue light.

35 INT. RYOKAN - GUEST ROOM - MORNING

Soft morning light filters through the shoji screen.

Charlie stirs on his futon. The room is quiet. Still. He sits up slowly, rubbing his eyes.

He looks over.

Claire's futon is empty. her bag is gone.

Charlie glances around the room - the slippers neatly aligned by the door, the gentle creak of the old wooden frame.

He's alone.

36 EXT. RYOKAN - HALLWAY/GARDEN DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie slides open the back shoji door. A soft breeze moves through.

He steps out onto the narrow wooden platform that overlooks the garden.

37 EXT. RYOKAN GARDEN OVERLOOK - CONTINUOUS

The same view Claire wanted to show him the night before - rolling hills, faint morning mist, cicadas in the distance.

Charlie stands still, taking it in.

The wind rustles the trees.

His face softens.

For once, he doesn't check his phone. He doesn't speak. He just breathes - present, in the moment, in this place she shared with him.

The camera lingers.

Then fades to black.

38 INT. SHINKANSEN TRAIN - DAY

Charlie sits by the window, alone.

He watches the countryside slip by - rice fields, low hills, utility lines slicing the sky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His reflection shimmers faintly in the glass. He doesn't move much.

A family sits several rows up - a young girl presses her hands to the window, pointing at something.

Charlie notices, barely smiles.

He unlocks his phone. Scrolls. Stops.

INSERT - PHONE::

Unread text from Natasha:

"Just checking in. Haven't heard from you in a while. Let me know you're okay."

He stares at it.

Doesn't reply. Locks the screen. Slips the phone into his coat pocket.

A beat.

He looks back at the view, resting his forehead lightly against the window.

CUT TO BLACK:

39 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sunlight spills across the small space. Books stacked neatly. A jacket draped over a chair. Claire enters, keys in hand, headphone on.

She pulls her shoes off. Sets a bento box on the table. Drops onto the couch.

40 INT. TOKYO STREETS - EARLIER

A brief flashback - Claire walking with two friends through a small arcade. Laughter. Drinks in hand. She smiles, but her gaze drifts, distracted.

41 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - BACK TO PRESENT

Now alone, she slips off her headphones. The silence feels larger than the room.

She opens her phone. Scrolls through recent photos - a blurry one of Charlie looking out from the inn's balcony.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She pauses. Her thumb hovers over the "delete" option. She doesn't press it.

She sets the phone face down.

The city hums outside. Somewhere, a train whistles faintly in the distance.

She sits back thinking.

CUT TO BLACK:

42 EXT. BACK STREET OF TOKYO - EARLY EVENING

Golden Hour.

Charlie walks alone through the narrow side streets. The glow of vending machines and paper lanterns start to color the sidewalks.

He passes a bookstore window - stops.

Inside, he sees a display table. A familiar cover.

His book. Japanese translation. Quietly nestled among the others.

Charlie just looks at it. He doesn't go in.

43 EXT. SMALL SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

He moves again. The streets are alive, but not crowded.

He passes a park bench, a mother helping her child with a juice box.

He watches for a beat, then walks on.

44 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

He returns. The room is dim. The city buzzes outside the window, muffled.

He sets his coat down, opens the mini fridge, stares at it for a second - closes it.

He sits on the edge of the bed. Rubs his hands together. Restless.

His phone buzzes. He looks at the screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

:

text from A text from Claire: "You free tomorrow night? I want to show you something."

Charlie looks at the text. Then types. Deletes. Types again.

HIS REPLY:

"Yeah. Let me know where."

He sends it.

The city glows beyond the windows. A hint of a smile - not full, just lighter - touches his face.

CUT TO BLACK:

45 EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - ROOFTOP ELEVATOR - EVENING

The elevator dings. The door slides open.

Charlie steps out alone.

He squints in the amber light of early evening. The rooftop garden is tucked between buildings - half oasis, half secret.

Small trees rustle gently in the breeze. A few benches. A soft hum from the vending machines in the corner.

He spots Claire, leaning on a railing. Her back is to him. She doesn't turn.

Charlie walks towards her.

CLAIRE
(quiet, without looking)
You found it.

CHARLIE
Barely.

They both look out at the sprawl of Tokyo - endless rooftops and slow-moving trains. Neon starting to blink on in the distance.

CLAIRE
Nobody really comes up here. Just the old men who eat lunch on Tuesday's.

A soft pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
You've really made this city yours.

CLAIRE
I had to. You weren't around.

Charlie glances at her. Doesn't flinch.

CHARLIE
You were nine the last time I saw you
up this high.

CLAIRE
The shrine. That trip.

CHARLIE
You had that massive green hoodie. It
practically ate you.

Claire smirks - just a little.

CLAIRE
You took a picture. Then left the next
day.

A beat.

CHARLIE
I didn't know how to stay.

The breeze picks up. They both stand quietly in it

CLAIRE
(softer now)
Come on. I'll show you where the
vending machines are. The melon soda's
weird, but you'll probably like it.

46 EXT. ROOFTOP VENDING MACHINES - MOMENTS LATER

Claire hits a button on the glowing row of machines.

A melon soda can drop with a heavy *thunk*.

She hands it to Charlie.

CLAIRE
There. Neon green mystery in a can.

CHARLIE
What's the worst that could happen?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He cracks it open and sips.

Wince. He looks at her.

CHARLIE
That's... definitely something.

CLAIRE
Taste like melted candy and regret.

He takes another sip.

CHARLIE
Strangely growing on me.

She watches him - not warmly, not coldly. Just... seeing him.

Then:

CLAIRE
You hungry?

CHARLIE
Yeah?

CLAIRE
There's a place I like. Feels like it
hasn't changed in 30 years.

CHARLIE
Perfect. I haven't either.

She gives a tired smile.

The elevator doors open. They slide inside.

47 INT. IZAKAYA - NIGHT

A warm, narrow space. Lanterns sway slightly above the grill.

The place hum quietly - locals, couples, the sound of
clicking dishes and soft sizzle of meat.

Charlie and Claire sit tucked away in the back corner, low
table. The mood is easy but not relaxed. Something hangs
between them.

Plates of Yakitori, grilled eggplant, pickled sides between
them. Claire nurses a highball. Charlie sips on sake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE

Didn't expect you to be so... normal.

Charlie raises a brow.

CHARLIE

That's an insult, right?

CLAIRE

Kind of.

He waits.

CLAIRE

You always felt like this myth when I was a kid. A screenwriter. The one who lived for away. Then you vanished, so I had to keep you larger-than-life. Now you're just... a guy in Tokyo who drinks weird soda.

Charlie sets his drink down.

CHARLIE

Guess that's better than being the guy who didn't show up at all.

A long pause.

CLAIRE

I stopped waiting.

Beat.

CHARLIE

I know.

CHARLIE

I made a life. You weren't in it.

CHARLIE

And you're doing okay.

She shrugs.

CLAIRE

Some days.

A moment. No follow-up. No explanation.

Just truth between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
Want more sake?

CLAIRE
Sure.

He waves gently to the staff. A quiet refill.

The conversation drops - but the silence isn't empty. It's just real.

48 EXT. IZAKAYA - NIGHT (LATER)

Inside, the clatter of dishes has softened. The izakaya is quieter now, the dinner rush long gone.

Charlie and Claire sit across from each other, finishing the last of the beer. Empty skewers and plates between them. The earlier tension has dissolved into something quieter, harder to name.

Claire glances at the time but doesn't say anything. She pulls out her wallet and puts a few yen on the table.

CHARLIE
(softly)
Let me-

CLAIRE
(quietly)
It's fine.

A small smile between them. Not warm, not cold - just real.

They step out into the night. A cool breeze. Tokyo hums gently around them.

They walk together for a block. Then, at a narrow crossing near the station, Claire slows.

CLAIRE
Well... goodnight.

Charlie nods.

CHARLIE
Yeah. Thanks for the weird melon soda.

She gives a small smile, then turns away.

Charlie watches her go for a moment, then walks off in the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

opposite direction.

49 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A faint hum of the city.

MATCH CUT from the glow of the izakaya lanterns to the soft golden lights of Charlie's hotel window.

We're inside now. Quiet. The door clicks shut behind him.

Charlie sets his phone on the desk. His coat on the chair. His shoulders ease - not relaxed but not loosened.

He stands still for a moment in the middle of the room, like he doesn't quite know what to do with the silence.

Then, he walks to the window.

POV THROUGH GLASS -

Tokyo pulses gently in the distance. Neon blurs. The occasional train glides past, almost inaudible from this height.

Charlie watches. Then slowly -

He pulls a folded napkin from his coat pocket. The one Claire handed him earlier. A small doodle in the corner. He smiles. Briefly. Genuinely.

The phone buzzes.

INSERT - PHONE: SCREEN::

A text from Natasha: "Still in Tokyo, I assume. Don't disappear completely, okay?"

Charlie looks at it. Reads it again. Then... sets the phone face down.

Back to the window. He lights a cigarette. Just stands there.

MATCH CUT TO:

50 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A similar golden hue, but quieter. More lived-in.

Claire sets her keys down gently. Kicks her shoes off. She carries herself with intention - not tired, but a little

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

emotionally spent.

She enters her small kitchen. She pours a glass of water.

Then she sits. Alone.

Pulls her phone from her pocket. Looks at it.

No texts.

She scrolls through a few photos - one of her with friends. One, older... with Charlie. She lingers on that one just a little too long.

Locks the phone. Exhales softly.

We hold on her face. Quiet. Still.

She closes her eyes.

51 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - NIGHT

Charlie walks alone through a quieter part of Tokyo.

Dim alleyways. Neon reflections ripple in puddles.

His footsteps are slow - not aimless, but hesitant.

A vending machine hum quietly on a corner. He stops, presses a button.

CLOSE UP - A melon soda drops with a thud.

He cracks it open, the fizz echoing slightly in the silence. Takes a sip.

Looks around.

A couple walks past holding hands, laughing softly. They disappear into a side street.

Charlie lingers in their absence, almost smiling.

He keeps walking - eyes drawn up to the flickering kanji signs, the window-lit apartments overhead, laundry swaying gently on a balcony.

A cart dart across the path. Charlie watches it disappear.

No dialogue. Just the low hum of Tokyo at night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Eventually, he stops outside a small bookstore.

Through the glass: people browsing quietly. A mother and daughter at the register. A long salaryman reading near the window.

Charlie stays outside, watching.

For a moment, he looks almost like he belongs there.

But he doesn't enter.

He walks on.

CUT TO:

52 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A tiny kitchen table. Dim overhead light hums. Claire sits, alone, dressed in an oversized tee, phone in hand. Chopsticks idle in a carton of cold noodles. A half-drunk beer beside her.

She scrolls. Stops on a text thread labeled:

DAD - Charlie

No reply.

She locks the screen. Leans back in the chair and sighs. The silence in her apartment is different now - not lonely, just full.

Through the balcony window, Tokyo glow pulses - distant sirens, the hum of life continuing.

She stares, not at anything.

Then - a buzz.

She checks the phone. Not him. Just a text from her friend.

INSERT - PHONE: SCREEN:

A text from YUKI: "Still on for tomorrow?"

Claire replies:

"Yeah. Just a long night. I'll see you then."

She smirks faintly, sets the phone aside, and walks to the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

window. Lights a cigarette.

The same wind from the mountain brushes her hair.

We stay on her silhouette, framed against Tokyo.

FADE TO BLACK:

53 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Charlie sits at his desk. His laptop open, blank screen glowing. A cigarette burns low in the ashtray.

He stares at the screen. Types a few words. Deletes it. Sighs.

Leans back. Silence.

He picks up his notebook instead. Flips through pages. Sketches a sentence by hand.

CHARLIE (V.O)
(tentative, internal)
She was never waiting. I just...
stopped looking.

The words linger on the page. He closes the notebook.

54 INT. TOKYO CAFE - AFTERNOON

Claire sits at a small table with two Japanese friends YUKI (22), quiet, but magnetic, dresses with a casual Tokyo street style, Claire's best friend, and REN (early 20's), quick, dry with. Dresses with confidence, maybe a beanie cafe is lively - laughter, clinking glasses, the low hum of city energy.

Claire tries to follow the conversation. Smiles when expected. Laughs a second too late.

Her eye drift to the window.

One of her friends nudges her playfully, saying something in Japanese. Claire responds politely, but we sense it - her mind is elsewhere.

JAPANESE FRIEND (O.S.)
(subtitled)
You're spacing out again. Earth to
Claire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE
(Japanese/sub)
Sorry. Just tired.

She forces a smile.

55 EXT. TOKYO - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - NIGHT

A quiet visual montage of the city after hours:

- A nearly empty train platform. One lone figure waiting.
- A high-rise building with office lights still glowing.
- A convenience store worker wiping down the glass door in silence.
- A billboard flickering with an AI voice ad no one's listening to.
- Claire walking home alone, passing couples and bikes and vending machines.
- Charlie inside the 41st-floor Peak Lounge (no party, just quiet lounge). He stands near the window with a drink or electronic cigarette. Lights flicker across the glass, the city sprawling below.

No music. Just ambient city hum. Distant train. Buzzing lights.

The city continues. They are both within it - but apart.

FADE OUT:

56 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dim lights filter through the blackout curtains. Charlie sits at the small desk, laptop open but untouched. A blinking cursor waits on a blank document.

He stares at it for a moment, then exhales, rubbing his eyes.

His phone buzzes.

He picks it up.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN:

A text from Claire : "Hey. Want to grab lunch? Some friends are coming too. It's nothing formal. Just food."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reads it a couple times. No emojis. No punctuation beyond the period. It's casual - but not cold.

Charlie sets his phone down face-up. Then face-down.

He leans back in the chair, thinking. A long beat.

He stands, crosses to the window, and draws the curtain slightly.

Tokyo glimmers outside. Late morning haze softens the skyline.

Charlie exhales. Then picks up the phone again.

A beat.

He types:

"Sure. Just send me the place."

He doesn't hit send right away.

Fingers hover.

Then: send.

A faint buzz as the text goes through.

He looks at the city again-distant, humming, unknowable.

57 EXT. RESTAURANT - TOKYO - AFTERNOON

Charlie approaches the restaurant slowly, tucking his phone away. He pauses at the window.

From the outside, he sees Claire at a table near the back - animated, laughing, alive. Her friends sit around her. Ren, Rei, and a few others, chatting comfortably in Japanese.

Charlie watches a moment, unnoticed.

They're mid-conversation, chopsticks moving, drinks half full. Claire glances up briefly, but not at the window - not at him.

He doesn't wave. Just stands there still. This her life now. Separate from him.

He exhales. Adjusts his jacket. Enters.

58 INT. RESTUARANT - CONTINUOUS

The ambient hum of lunchtime Tokyo surrounds him as Charlie steps inside. He scans the space., briefly self-conscious.

Claire notices him first and stands, lifting a hand.

CLAIRE
(over the buzz, muffled)
Hey, Dad.

Her friends turn - some smile, some bow politely.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
This is my dad. Charlie.

REN
Ah, nice to meet you. I'm Ren.

REI
Rei. Welcome.

CHARLIE
Thanks for letting me crash.

They nod, motioning for him to sit.

The table is full - but someone slides over to make room. A small plate is set for him.

CLAIRE
(Japanese/sub)
This is my dad. He's a writer, just
visiting Tokyo for a bit.

The group nods, curious but kind.

Charlie sits, quietly taking it in. He doesn't try too hard. He doesn't need to. The moment settles.

A waiter refills a glass of green tea. Someone offers him a piece of sashimi. Charlie fumbles a bit with his chopsticks - Claire helps him without comment.

He smiles faintly.

CHARLIE
(softly)
You all know each other from school?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE

Yeah. From uni. And... life.

Ren and Rei laugh, chiming in.

The scene plays small beats - lights gesture, little mistranslations, quiet joy.

Charlie doesn't belong. But he's there. And that matters.

59 INT. RESTUARANT - LATER

Charlie sits with Claire and her friends. Plates mostly empty, drinks half-finished. The energy is warm - Claire mid-conversation with Ren, Rei checking something on her phone.

Charlie's quiet, watching them, absorbing everything.

Claire turns to him.

CLAIRE

Hey - Rei knows this rooftop bar near Shibuya. You okay to come?

Charlie nods.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Sure.

Claire slings her bag over her shoulder. Her friends begin filling out, casually chatting in Japanese. Charlie lingers a step behind, watching her move to naturally in this world.

They exit together.

60 EXT. TOKYO - ROOFTOP BAR - NIGHT

The city glimmers below. Soft ambient music hums beneath quiet conversations and the occasional clink of glasses. The air is cool. Modern. Removed.

Claire and Charlie sit at a small high-top table. A few of her friends mingle nearby - Ren, Rei, and another friend speaking in Japanese. Claire occasionally joins in, but her attention keeps drifting back to her father.

For a moment, there's laughter at another table. Charlie looks out at the skyline.

(CONTINUED)

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CHARLIE
(softly)
This city a lot... quieter from up
here.

CLAIRE
You like that?

CHARLIE
Yeah. But it also makes you feel...
like it's not yours.

Claire studies him, then shrugs - not dismissively, but as if unsure how to respond. A pause.

Then - a friend comes over, invites Claire to take a photo with the group. She hesitates, then goes.

Charlie is left alone at the table. Again.

As Claire poses with her friends, she sneaks a glance back at him. Their worlds are only a few feet apart - but it feels farther.

Claire returns after a moment, but something shifted. Her smile fades a little.

CLAIRE
You, okay?

CHARLIE
(smile)
Don't worry about me. Go be with your
people.

CLAIRE
(quiet)
You're my people.

They sit there, the noise around them fading slightly.

CHARLIE
You've changed. Not in a bad way. I'm
just... still catching up.

Claire looks down at her drink. Then -

CLAIRE
Let's go somewhere. Just us.

Charlie hesitates. Looks surprised - a flicker of something

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

deeper in his eyes.

CHARLIE
Yeah? Where?

CLAIRE
You'll see.

She stands. Claire turns to her friends.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
(in Japanese/sub)
I'll see you guys later, okay?

REI
(smiling)
Text us when you get home.

REN
(raising his glass)
Take care, Charlie-san.

Charlie offers a polite smile, slightly awkward.

Claire leads him towards the stairwell.

Behind them, the group continues laughing, their world resuming - one Claire just stepped out of.

61 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - NIGHT

Charlie and Claire walk side by side through the quiet streets of Shibuya, just far enough from the crowds to feel apart from them. Neon reflects in puddles from an earlier rain. A soft wind rustles signage and overhead wires.

Neither speak for a while.

Claire glances over.

Charlie looks up at the buildings.

A digital billboard blinks in soft, muted colors. It's an AI voice is turned low, repeating an ad for something forgettable.

They pass a row of vending machines - glowing like futuristic totems. Claire slows her pace, eyes scanning the buttons, the labels.

Charlie steps beside her. Without a word, he slides yen into

(CONTINUED)

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the machine and tapes a button.

CLUNK. A can of melon soda drops into the tray.

He grabs it. Hands it to her.

CLAIRE
(quietly)
You remembered.

Charlie doesn't reply. He just offers the smallest smile and walks a few steps ahead.

Claire lingers a beat. Watches him - not with sadness, but something softer. A flicker of warmth. The she follows.

They continue walking.

62 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Claire walk in silence, the city unfolding around them in fragments - narrow alleys, soft lantern light, people heading home.

A breeze moves past them, fluttering Claire's hair. She doesn't fix it.

CHARLIE
I used to think places like this would
fix something in me. Or help me write
better.

CLAIRE
Did it?

He takes a moment.

CHARLIE
Maybe it helped me disappear.

Claire looks at him. Then away.

CLAIRE
That's not what I meant when I said
you should come here.

They pass an open shop with an old CRT television glowing inside - rerun of vintage Japanese drama playing. Neither of them stop to look, but they both noticed it.

Charlie exhales slowly. His steps are slower now. Heavy,

(CONTINUED)

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maybe. Or careful.

CHARLIE
You really walk everywhere?

CLAIRE
Pretty much. Tokyo's good for that.
(small smile)
It gives you space... but not too
much.

Charlie's quiet.

They keep walking.

Claire suddenly slows, then stops. They're standing beneath a small, nondescript sign:

(In Japanese) Kuromatsu Shrine

It barely noticeable - wedged between apartment buildings, modest weathered.

CLAIRE
(soft)
Come on. I want to show you something.

She steps up towards the shrine gate.

Charlie hesitates just a second, then follows.

63 EXT. KUROMATSU SHRINE - NIGHT

Charlie follows Claire through the narrow entrance. The city noise fades as they step into the tucked-away shrine grounds. Gravel crunches underfoot.

Dim lanterns line the path. Stone foxes sit in silence sentries. The shrine is modest. Quiet. Forgotten.

Claire stops just before the main alter.

CLAIRE
I used to come here when things got
loud.
(pause)
It's strange how silence can feel like
company sometimes.

Charlie looks around. The place is old but cared for. Moss hugs the stones. Paper fortunes flick in the breeze.

(CONTINUED)

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CHARLIE
You come here alone?

She nods.

CLAIRE
At first. Then with friends. But
mostly alone.

Charlie takes a few steps forward. He looks up - the tree
above them part just enough to show a slice of the night sky.

Claire steps beside him, silent.

Then quietly-

CLAIRE
I thought maybe you'd like it.

Charlie doesn't respond right away. He takes it in. The
stillness. The distance between them that's slowly shifting.

CHARLIE
I do.

A pause.

The Claire moves. Not apart-just... stepping back.

CLAIRE
I'm heading home.

Charlie turns to her, surprised. Not upset. Just unsure.

CHARLIE
You don't want to stay?

Claire shrugs gently. It's not cold, but something flickers
beneath the surface.

CLAIRE
You should have a moment here.
(beat)
I've had mine.

She gives him a soft, tired smile. Not distant - just
somewhere else emotionally.

Then she walks off, her footsteps light on the gravel.

Charlie remains. Alone.

(CONTINUED)

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He turns back toward the shrine. Stares into like it holds something he can't name.

A wind rustles through the trees.

He stands still... finally present.

Charlie looks up at the lantern light above him. It sways slightly.

He closes his eyes.

Hold on him.

MATCH CUT TO:

64 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie eyes open.

Same look. Same weight.

He's on the edge of his hotel bed, lights low, shoes still on. The room glows with the cool neon spill from the city beyond the windows.

He runs his hand through his hair. Rests his elbows on his knees. Breath escapes him.

He picks up his phone from the nightstand.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text from Natasha: "Still thinking of you. just let me know you're okay."

Charlie stares at it. The screen glows against his face.

He types something. Stops. Deletes it. Locks the phone.

Charlie slowly reaches for his bag. Unzips it.

Pulls out his weathered notebook. He flips it open. Blank page. Then pulls out a pen from the spine loop.

He pauses... and writes one sentence. We don't see it.

He sits back, blinking. Almost surprised at himself.

For once, just sits in the silence.

65 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - AFTERNOON

Charlie walks through a smaller, quieter part of the city. Shops closed for the day. Laundry sways from balconies. He checks his phone.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text from Claire: "Hey, can you meet me in Shimokitazawa station later? There's this cafe I want to show you."

Charlie types back:

"Sure. Just text me when you're there."

He pockets the phone, looks around. Keeps walking.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. SHIMOKITAZAWA STATION - LATER

Charlie leans against a railing near the station. Watching people pass. He checks his phone.

INSERT - PHONE:

No new texts.

Time passes.

He glances at his phone again.

INSERT - PHONE: "Sorry. Something came up. Rain check?"

Charlie reads it. His jaw shifts slightly. No anger. Just quiet.

He puts his phone away. Watches a couple laughing nearby.

Then he turns. Starts walking. Not towards any destination in particular - just moving.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. RECORD STORE WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie stops. Looks through the glass. Vintage vinyl sleeves. Old bowie. Japanese presents.

A reflection of his own face in the glass - distant, slightly

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

tired. He doesn't go in. He just watches.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. PEDESTRIAN STREET - SUN SETTING

The buzz of scooters A group of high schoolers pass. Charlie walks among them, a quiet figure out of place but trying.

He looks up. The sky shifts color.

Just city noise. And Charlie. Still walking.

69 INT. CHARLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie sits at the edge of the bed, shirt half buttoned, one sock still in his hand. The city beyond the glass is alive, but quiet.

He picks up his phone.

No new texts.

He scrolls to Claire's last text:

"Sorry. Something came up. Rain check?"

He stares at it. Reads it again.

His thumb hovers to reply. Stops.

Instead, he locks the screen and sets the phone down, face-down. He exhales through his nose. Not frustration - just weariness.

A long beat.

Charlie reaches for his notebook. Opens it.

He turns past the first few pages - his handwriting sparse, unfinished thoughts scattered.

He finds the line he wrote the night before.

Stares at it.

Then slowly closes the notebook, as if protecting it.

He leans back on the bed.

A deep breath. Eyes open, fixed on the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Outside, faint train sounds. Wind against glass. Someone laughing far below.

Stillness.

70 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Soft streetlight filters through the blinds. Claire sits on her bed, cross-legged, laptop open but untouched. Her phone is beside her. Unread texts stacked in the corner.

She glances at the screen. One text from Charlie - hours hold.

She picks up the phone, starts typing something. Stops.

Deletes it.

She stares forward. The soft hum of Tokyo at night outside.

A faint laughter drifts in from the hallway. A neighbor. A reminder that life is still going on, just not here.

Claire gets up, walks to the window. She watches the lights in the nearby buildings - a quiet city in motion.

She types again.

"Hey, sorry. Got caught up. Hope you're doing okay."

She hovers. Doesn't send.

Backspaces.

"Hope today was okay."

She sends it.

Immediately locks the phone, sets it face-down.

She crawls back into bed, stares at the ceiling.

Silence.

The phone buzzes softly - once. She doesn't check it.

71 INT. CHARLIE HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie lying in bed, fully clothed, the TV off curtains open. The glow of Tokyo spills in through the glass - distant and untouchable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His phone is on the nightstand. For a long beat, he doesn't touch it.

Then - a buzz. Screen lights up.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text from Claire: "Hope today was okay."

Charlie stares at it. His eyes soften. He picks up the phone. Thumbs hovers over the keyboard.

He types:

"You didn't have to..."

Pauses. Deletes it.

He types again:

"Yeah. It was."

Pauses. Deletes that too.

He tuns off the phone. Sets it screen-down on the table.

Lies back, eyes open. Thinking. Not sad - just hollowed out.

A beat.

He closes his eyes. Not sleep. Just... stillness.

BUZZ. His cellphone vibrates on the nightstand.

INSERT - CALLER ID: NATASHA

He hesitates. Then answers.

CHARLIE
(low, dry)
Hey.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Finally. Thought maybe you fell off a
roof.

Charlie half-smiles. Says nothing.

NATASHA (V.O.)
You, okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A long pause.

CHARLIE
I think so.

Natasha doesn't push. Silence on both ends.

NATASHA (V.O.)
You sound different.

Charlie sits up, rubbing his eyes.

CHARLIE
Just a different place.

NATASHA (V.O.)
You haven't sent anything. Your draft
even just notes - the board's getting
antsy.

Charlie stares at the page he tore out earlier, still sitting
by the lamp.

CHARLIE
I wrote a sentence.

NATASHA (V.O.)
That's... something.

Beat.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Are you with her?

Charlie doesn't answer.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Okay. I'll stop asking.

A long silence.

CHARLIE
It's hard to explain.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Try me.

Charlie watches the city. The lights. The stillness.

CHARLIE
I'm not used to things not being
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
transactional anymore.

Natasha exhales - caught off guard.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Well... that's not nothing either.

She softens.

NATASHA (V.O.)
Get some sleep. And Charlie?

CHARLIE
Yeah?

NATASHA (V.O.)
Send me that sentence.

Click.

He sits in silence. Then reaches for his notebook again.

72 EXT. TOKYO - TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - EARLY AFTERNOON

The crowd hums with quiet urgency - commuters returning home, the sun barely clinging to the skyline.

Charlie stands alone near a vending machine. He checks his phone.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text from Claire: "If you're still around...I'll be at the bookstore we passed. Around six."

He doesn't smile. Doesn't type back.

He slips the phone into his coat pocket and turns, moving towards the exit. There's no rush - just quiet.

73 EXT. BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Warm light glows from the windows. A small secondhand place tucked off a quiet street.

Charlie steps into frame. Pauses. Looks inside.

He sees Claire through the glass, sitting cross-legged on the floor in the philosophy section. Alone - flipping through a book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She doesn't know he's there.

He watches her a beat longer. Then moves to the door.

74 INT. BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Muted jazz plays softly from a speaker. The scent of paper and dust lingers in the warm air.

Charlie enters quietly, his footsteps soft against the wooden floor.

Claire looks up from her book. A flicker of surprise - not wide eyes, but enough. She closes the book slowly, placing it back on the shelf beside her.

They regard each other across the short distance. No hug, no tension. Just presence.

CLAIRE
(softly)
Hey.

CHARLIE
(quiet smile)
Hey.

He gestures toward the floor, asking without asking. Claire nods.

He lowers himself next to her, cross-legged like she was. A pause.

CHARLIE
Find something good?

CLAIRE
(small shrug)
I always check the used shelves.
Sometime they hide things people
forgot they needed.

Charlie lets that sit a moment. The air is still.

CHARLIE
Didn't think you'd show up.

A beat.

She glances at him, then back at the shelf. He's not searching for anything. Just sitting with her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE
I wasn't trying to disappear.
Yesterday just... got away from me.

CHARLIE
It's okay. I was just wondering. Seems
to be my specialty lately.

Claire gives a quiet smile. Then silence that's not uncomfortable.

CLAIRE
You ever do this back home?

CHARLIE
What, bookstore?

CLAIRE
Sit. Not talk.

CHARLIE
(pauses)
Not until recently.

Another pause. She rests her head lightly against the shelf behind her.

CLAIRE
You don't have to say anything clever
all the time.

CHARLIE
Good. I'm out of clever.

They sit in that - the books, the hush, the quiet forgiveness that doesn't need a name.

75 EXT. SMALL CAFE - NIGHT

Claire and Charlie sit outside a quiet cafe, barely lit by overhead string lights. The street is hushed - only sound of passing bicycles and occasional train rumbles in the distance.

Two cups of tea between them, nearly untouched.

Claire watches people pass by - a couple laughing, a man walking his dog.

Charlie studies her for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
I forgot how fast time moves here.

CLAIRE
Here, or in general?

CHARLIE
(pauses)
Here. But maybe that's just me getting older.

Claire sips her tea.

CLAIRE
You're not that old.

CHARLIE
Thank you for the lie.

She almost smiles. The moment is comfortable, but something's slightly askew.

CLAIRE
You're really trying.

CHARLIE
It's obvious?

She nods gently. A long pause.

CLAIRE
Sometimes I don't know what to do with that.

Charlie doesn't respond right away.

CHARLIE
I get it.

He looks down at his tea, wraps both hands around the cup.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
But I'm still her.

She nods again. Doesn't say anything for a while.

CLAIRE
I used to imagine what it'd be like -
having you show up.
(pauses)
I'd play out the conversation in my
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
head. What I'd say. What you'd say.
But now that you're here...

She trails off. Charlie doesn't press.

CHARLIE
It's not the same?

She shrugs.

CHARLIE
Maybe I changed the script too many
times.

Charlie looks at her, then out towards the emptying street.

CHARLIE
Yeah. I think I lost my copy of it
years ago.

They sit in that strange, shared space - not closure, not
confrontation, just the edge of something fragile.

The string lights flicker. Neither of them notices.

TIME PASSES

76 INT. SMALL CAFE - LATE NIGHT (LATER)

Claire leans on her elbows now, fingers tracing a faded ring
on a tabletop.

Charlie's gaze is distant, settled somewhere beyond the
windows. Their mugs have cooled.

A soft *buzz* breaks the quiet.

Charlie glances at his phone. The screen lights up.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text from Natasha: "Let me know when you're free to talk.
No rush."

He stares at it. Then flips the phone-face down.

Claire notices. Doesn't speak.

CLAIRE
You okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
Yeah. Just a text.

She nods. Looks away.

CLAIRE
I used to come here after class.
Pretend to write something important.

CHARLIE
Were you?

CLAIRE
Mostly I was just waiting to feel like
I belonged.

Charlie watches her, not unkindly.

CHARLIE
Maybe you still are.

Claire nods, thoughtful.

CLAIRE
Yeah. Maybe.

A quiet settle between them again - not awkward. Just real.

Outside, a motorbike glides past. Inside, the barista wipes down a counter, humming softly to herself.

They stay like that. Unfinished, but not unspoken.

77 INT. TRAIN - LATE NIGHT

A nearly empty train glides through the outskirts of Tokyo. The windows reflect streaks of passing light - gray sky, warehouse rooftops, distant trees.

Charlie and Claire sit side by side, not touching. Both look opposite windows. The rhythm of the train fills the space.

A soft overhead chime. The doors hush open, then close.

Charlie shifts slightly in his seat. Clears his throat.

CHARLIE
You think about going back? Stateside?

Claire doesn't answer right away. Her reflection flickers in the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE
Sometimes. Not really sure what I'd be
going to.

Charlie nods, almost to himself. Watches a row of vending
machines flash by outside.

CHARLIE
I think I always assumed you'd leave.
Try outrun it.

CLAIRE
I did. I just outran it in a different
direction.

A pause. She glances down at her phone. A text lights up.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text from Ren: "Heading to the rooftop spot. Bring
whoever."

Claire taps the screen once. Then slips the phone back into
her coat pocket.

Charlie notices but doesn't ask.

CHARLIE
Plans tonight?

CLAIRE
(distracted)
Maybe.

She looks at him. Not cold - just uncertain how much space to
give.

The train dips into a tunnel. Reflections vanish. Only the
two of them remain, lit by the soft interior glow.

Charlie watches the dark blur outside. Claire exhales, long
and quiet.

Neathier. The silence is different this time - no tense but
edged.

78 EXT. SKY TERRACE - LATE NIGHT

The rooftop terrace glows under low, warm light. Same glass
railing. Same skyline breeze Charlie once stood in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now it's Claire here - surrounded, but apart.

Rei leans against the railing nearby, nursing a canned cocktail, quietly, scrolling through something on her phone.

Ren sits on a low bench behind them, legs stretched out open a conbini beer. He says something to Rei - a soft comment. Rei replies without looking up. The sound of their voices is casual, distant.

Claire stands at the edge of the terrace, looking out. A drink in her hand. She hasn't touched it.

Her hair slightly in the breeze. Her face unreadable.

She glances over her shoulder - not directly at Rei or Ren, but toward the space they occupy. A flicker of presence. Then back to the skyline.

Her phone buzzes in her coat pocket. She pulls it out.

A text from Ren - earlier, before they met:

"Heading to the rooftop spot. Bring whoever."

She taps the screen once, locking it again. Lets the phone rest against her thigh.

Behind her, Ren lets out a soft laugh at something on his own screen. Rei bumps his shoulder, smirking.

Claire doesn't join. But she doesn't leave.

She finally lifts up the drink, takes a slow sip. Winces slightly at the flavor.

Then sets it down on the edge beside her.

Her reflection blends into the city lights beyond the glass. She exhales. Quiet. Measured.

Everything behind her keeps moving. She stays still.

79 EXT. TOKYO SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Charlie walks alone through a narrow backstreet - low light, shuttered windows, vending machines casting pale halos onto the pavement.

His pace is slow. Not aimless, just... untethered. Like he's still hearing the rhythm of the train beneath his feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He passes a bar closing down - stools flipped, lights off, just the hum of a sign still glowing red.

He stops at a crosswalk.

The red man blinks.

He doesn't move.

Pulls out his phone.

The screen lights his face.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text text from Natasha: "Missed talking to you."

He reads it.

No reaction at first.

Then a shift - subtle. Not sadness, not regret. Something quieter. Something harder to name.

His thumb hovers over the reply field. But there's nothing to say. Not yet.

He locks his phone. Puts it back in his coat.

The light turns green.

He doesn't look. Just walks.

The city lets him pass.

80 EXT. SHINJUKU STATION AREA - NIGHT

Charlie steps out from a narrow street into a wider - pedestrian corridor - late-night stretch of shops and commuters, pulsing with cold light.

But it's quiet. No conversations. No voices.

A couple walks side by side, each in separate holo-chat overlays, smiling - but not at each other.

A man at a vending machine whisper to a floating translation orb, nodding silently at invisible responses.

Two teenagers walk in sync, not speaking - their sleeves blink with shared location syncs, a soft pulse between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Charlie slows. Watches.

No one's looking at anyone. Only at screens. Only themselves.

His phone buzzes.

INSERT - PHONE:

A text from Claire:

just a location pin.

No words. No emojis. Just coordinates.

He stares at it. Maps open. It's across the city. Not far.
But specific.

He lifts his head up. Breathes in once - shallow, like
bracing for weather.

Then he starts walking.

81 EXT. KISHIMOJIN SHRINE - PRE-DAWN

A quiet residential slope. Old stone steps rise between
small apartment buildings and low walls, still slick from the
night air.

Charlie climbs slowly, his breath visible in the cold.

At the top: the shrine. Wooden beams dark with age. Lanterns
unlit. A faded red torii gate frames the entrance like it's
holding something in.

He looks around. No one.

A vending machine buzzes in the corner, casting blue light
across a gravel path.

He checks his phone. The pin matches. Still no follow-up. No
Claire.

Charlie puts the phone away. Steps beneath the torii gate.

He walks the perimeter once - not reverent, just searching
for stillness.

Silence.

The sounds of the city are far off - distant train wheels,
maybe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks up.

The sky is changing - barely. A wash of pale blue pushing against the black. No sun. Just suggestion.

He leans forward. Rubs his hands together. Waits.

Not nervously. Not hopefully. Just waits.

A breeze moves through the trees.

In the background, the first hint of light begins to color the edge of the roof tiles.

82 EXT. KISHIMOJIN SHRINE - PRE-DAWN

Charlie sits on the bench beneath a bare tree. The gravel path in front of him is still. A breeze passes, dried leaves along the ground.

A soft creak.

He looks up.

Claire stands at the edge of the shrine grounds, framed by the torii gate.

She's wearing a long coat. No makeup. Hair tied up like she didn't think about it - or thought too much.

She hesitates - one hand in her pocket, the other gripping her phone like she might use it to disappear again.

Charlie doesn't move.

She steps forward. Slowly. The gravel crunches under her shoes.

She doesn't say anything.

She doesn't need to.

She sits beside him on the bench. Not close, not far.

The air between them is charged, but careful.

A bird lands on the offering box in front of them, then hops off again. A distant train hums through the unseen tracks.

Neither of them speaks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Charlie looks forward. Claire does too.

The sky is lightened - a soft slate blue now. Their breath is still visible.

Time passes. Quietly.

The Claire, barely audible -

CLAIRE

I used to come here when I skipped school.

Charlie nods once. Doesn't push.

The silence returns. But something's different now.

They're in it together.

83 EXT. KISHIMOJIN SHRINE - EARLY MORNING

The sky is pale now. A soft blue-gray settles across the trees and shrine roof. The air is still.

Charlie and Claire sit side by side on the bench. A few feet between them. Their breath still faint in the air.

Silence.

Then Charlie -

CHARLIE

I think I knew you were going to show up.

(beat)

I just didn't know what that would mean.

Claire doesn't look at him right away.

CLAIRE

I almost didn't.

(beat)

I tapped send and thought of deleting it before you saw it.

Charlie nods once, like he understands more than he says.

CHARLIE

You used to hide when things got heavy. Back in L.A., when you were

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
little. Behind the couch. Always the
same spot.

Claire lets out a softest of a laugh.

CLAIRE
Yeah. You and Mom would forget I was
there. Until one of you cursed too
loud.

Charlie smiles - brief, sad, real.

A crow calls in the distance. Leaves shift above them.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I wasn't sure you'd come. Or maybe I
was hoping you wouldn't.

Charlie glances toward her. Gently-

CHARLIE
Why?

CLAIRE
Because I didn't know what I wanted
you to say. Or what I'd say back.

They sit with that. It lands but doesn't break anything.

CHARLIE
We don't have to say it right now.

CLAIRE
I know.
(beat)
But were here.

Charlie nods.

CHARLIE
Yeah. We are.

The light is getting stronger now - not full sunlight yet,
but close.

Claire shifts her weight slightly toward him. Still not
touching. But closer than before.

Neither of them speaks. But they don't need to - not yet.

84 EXT. ZOSHIGAYA NEIGHBORHOOD - EARLY MORNING

Claire and Charlie walk side by side down a narrow residential street.

Their footsteps echo softly. The sky is brighter now - soft gold catching the rooftops. Bicycles are locked to low gates. A laundry line sways above a first-floor window.

Claire walks ahead a few paces, hands in her coat pockets.

CHARLIE

This place is....

(searches.)

Quiet.

CLAIRE

I like it better than the city-center.

You can hear your thoughts here.

(beat)

Or ignore them. Depending.

Charlie lets that sit.

CHARLIE

You ever think about leaving?

CLAIRE

I think about disappearing more than I think about leaving.

CHARLIE

That sounds like something I would've said at your age.

CLAIRE

You did.

She glances over her shoulder - not accusing, just stating.

They pass a small park - a sandbox, two swings. A cat stretches along the top of a concrete wall, yawning.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

When I first moved here, I didn't talk to anyone for weeks. Like, really talk.

CHARLIE

Was that the plan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE
No. It's just sort of... happened. And then I liked how quiet it was. How still.

CHARLIE
You've always been good at quiet.

CLAIRE
So have you.

She stops at a vending machine tucked between two old buildings. Presses a few buttons.

CLAIRE
You want one?

CHARLIE
Surprise me.

She taps a choice without asking again.

The can drops. She grabs it, then one for herself.

They start walking again. Claire hands him the can without looking.

CHARLIE
(reading the label)
Melon soda.

CLAIRE
You bought it for me once. You didn't say anything. Just handed it to me. I never forgot that.

Charlie opens the can. Takes a sip.

CHARLIE
It's awful.

CLAIRE
Yeah. But I still like it.

A shared smile.

They keep walking.

The conversation isn't over - but something has softened.

For now - let the silence fill in the rest.

85 EXT. OVERLOOK NEAR ZOSHIGAYA - EARLY MORNING

Claire walks slightly ahead. The streets are narrowing, quieter. A row of low houses. Stone lanterns. The city feels like it's holding its breath.

They reach a narrow path between two fences - overgrown, half-paved, soft with moss. Claire steps onto it without a word. Charlie follows.

At the top: a small, weathered overlook. A rusted railing. A single bench with peeling paint. Through a gap in the trees, the city unfolds - rooftops, wires, the glass line of Ikebukuro catching light.

Claire walks to the edge. Charlie slows beside her, still holding the melon soda.

CLAIRE

I used to come here when I didn't want to go home. After class. Late at night. Sometimes for no reason.

Charlie says nothing. Just takes it in.

CHARLIE

It's beautiful.

CLAIRE

It's not.
(beat)
But it's mine.

She sits on the bench. Charlie stays standing, watching the view with her.

CLAIRE

I never brought anyone here. Not friends. Not people I've dated. It's not really a secret. It's just wouldn't be the same if I shared it.

Still, she doesn't look at him.

CHARLIE

You didn't have to bring me now.

CLAIRE

I know.

That sits between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The breeze picks up gently. Below the city begins to murmur - early trains, a truck in the distance.

Claire exhales. Not heavy. Not light. Just a quiet release.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I don't know what we're doing. But I
didn't want to leave it like it was.

CHARLIE

Me either.

Silence.

No gestures. No answers. Just the sound of Tokyo waking up behind them.

They stay where they are.

Together.

86 EXT. OVERLOOK NEAR ZOSHIGAYA - MORNING

They're still at the railing. Claire finishes the last sip of her drink. A breeze moves across the treetops.

She glances towards Charlie - not quite facing him.

CLAIRE

Do you still talk to her?

CHARLIE

Sometimes.

CLAIRE

She used to write postcards. Weird,
poetic ones. Even after she moved out.

CHARLIE

I kept them.

CLAIRE

I didn't.

Charlie exhales through his nose, barely audible. Not hurt - just absorbing it.

CHARLIE

You don't have to talk about her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE

I know.

(beat)

But if we don't, it's just another thing we both avoid. Like everything else.

Charlie looks down at the can in his hand.

CHARLIE

You sound like someone who knows how to stay gone.

CLAIRE

You sound like someone who knows how to come back late.

The wind quiets for a moment.

Not a fight - just truth.

She stands. Not angry. Just moving.

CLAIRE

There's a coffee place a few minutes from here. Still opens early. Still takes cash. You coming?

Charlie hesitates for a breath.

Then stands too.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Lead the way.

They start walking.

87 INT. SMALL CAFE - MORNING

A narrow shop tucked into the base of an old apartment building. No music. Just the soft click of a ceiling fan and the hiss of milk frothing.

A handwritten sign says in Japanese and English:

"Cash only. No photos."

Claire and Charlie sit at a small corner table. A pair of hot drinks between them - coffee for him, matcha for her.

The window beside them is fogged near the bottom. Outside,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

the day is warming up.

They sit for a moment without speaking. Not uncomfortable - just still in it

CLAIRE

This place never changes. I think the guy behind the counter might be a ghost.

CHARLIE

I'd take a ghost over tourists.

She almost smiles.

CLAIRE

You came all this way. Did you expect something from me?

Charlie stirs his coffee. Doesn't look up right away.

CHARLIE

No.

(beat)

But I think I hoped for something. Even if I didn't know what it was.

CLAIRE

Did you ever want to come sooner?

CHARLIE

(quietly)

I wanted to. I didn't know how to be the version of me you'd still want to see.

Claire leans back slightly. The fan hums overhead.

CLAIRE

I stopped wanting you to be anything. I just wanted to know if you were real.

Charlie finally looks at her.

CHARLIE

I'm here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE

I know.

She takes a slow sip of her drink.

Outside, a cyclist passes by. Someone opens a shutter across the street. The morning is fully awake now.

They sit in it.

Not healed. Not broken.

Just present.

88 INT. SMALL CAFE - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

The same table. The same two drinks. Claire leans back now, her fingers tracing the of her cup.

Charlie watches a soft stream of steam rise from his coffee. It's curls, fades.

CHARLIE

I forgot how long Tokyo mornings take to show up. They sneak in like they don't want to wake anyone.

Claire nods, faint smile tugging at her mouth.

CLAIRE

You used to say mornings were fake. That everything before 11 a.m. was just a rehearsal for real life.

CHARLIE

(smirks)

I stand by that.

Claire sips her matcha A long pause. Then-

CLAIRE

I used to come here before the job interviews. There's something about the smell - old books and hot milk - it made me feel like things would be okay.

CHARLIE

Did it work?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE

Sometimes.

(beat)

Sometimes I came after. When they
didn't call back.

Charlie nods. he doesn't fill the silence. Just listens.

CHARLIE

You've made something here. Not just a
life. Something that's... yours.

Claire studies him a second long than usual. Then looks down.

CLAIRE

I didn't know if I wanted to share it.

CHARLIE

That's fair.

The cafe door opens. A man in work clothes steps in, nods at
the counterwoman, sits alone at the window.

Outside, a truck rolls past. Someone's dog barks once, then
quiets.

CLAIRE

Are you staying long?

CHARLIE

I don't know yet. I didn't book a
return ticket.

CLAIRE

That doesn't sound like you.

CHARLIE

It wasn't.

She exhales slowly.

CLAIRE

Then maybe this isn't nothing.

Charlie looks at her. Not smiling. Just steady.

CHARLIE

Maybe not.

They sit in it. This strange quiet almost-connection. Not
new. Not old. Just... possible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The coffee between them steams.

89 INT. SMALL CAFE - LATER THAT MORNING

The drinks are mostly gone. Claire's matcha is just foam now. Charlie's coffee has gone cold.

A small plate sits between them - a half-finished pastry neither of them touches.

The cafe is still mostly empty. A young woman behind the counter wipes down glasses in the slow circles.

CHARLIE

You remember that summer we tried to go to Catalina?

Claire tilts her head slightly.

CLAIRE

The boat got canceled. We ended up driving north instead.

CHARLIE

I thought you loved that trip.

CLAIRE

You were on the phone half the time.

Charlie blinks. Not hurt - but caught.

CHARLIE

I don't remember that part.

CLAIRE

I do. I kept trying to ask about the seals. You kept saying "just a sec."

Charlie's smiles fades. He nods once, then looks away.

CHARLIE

I thought I was trying. Back then.

CLAIRE

(gently)

I think you were. But I was trying too. And I was a kid. So, it didn't show the same way.

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Not heavy. Just honest.

Claire leans forward a little, resting her elbows on the table.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I don't bring that up to make you feel bad.

CHARLIE
I know.

CLAIRE
It's just... I think we remember different versions of things. And I'm tired of pretending they're the same.

Charlie meets her eyes.

CHARLIE
That's fair.

She breathes in gently. Then-

CLAIRE
I should probably go.

CHARLIE
Yeah. me too.

They both stand. Claire buttons her coat. Charlie lays a few coins on the table.

90 EXT. SMALL CAFE - CONTINUOUS

They step out onto the street. The sun is higher now - shadows sharp, pavement warm. The block stirring. A delivery scooter hums past.

They pause just outside the door.

CLAIRE
I told Rei I'd meet her.

CHARLIE
I've got a few things at the hotel.

CLAIRE
Thanks for... this morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE
You don't have to thank me.

CLAIRE
I know.
(beat)
But I wanted to.

She starts to turn, then looks back.

CLAIRE
You okay finding your way?

CHARLIE
(lightly)
I'll follow the vending machine.

She laughs - the smallest one yet.

CLAIRE
See you later.

CHARLIE
I'd like that.

She gives a quiet nod, then heads off down the street.

Charlie watches her go. Not long. Just enough. Then he turns and walks the other way.

91 INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MIDDAY

A) INT. TRAIN - MOVING

Claire sits by the window. Sunlight stutters through passing buildings - flickers across her coat sleeve, her cheek.

Her phone rests in her lap. Face down.

Outside, rooftops drift past - wires, balconies, wind-blown curtains. A man tends to potted plants on a railing. A cat stretches on a tiled roof.

Claire watches, still. Eyes soft, unfocused.

She closes them for a moment. Not to sleep. Just stillness.

B) EXT. SIDE STREET - NEAR HOTEL

Charlie walks a quiet backstreet. Shadows slip across closed shutters. He passes a vending machine. Keeps going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At a corner, he stops beside a bookstore. A metal postcard rack spins slightly in the breeze.

He turns a card: Mount Fuji. Faded. Clean.

Flips it over. Blank.

He holds it. The slides it back into the rack.

Walks on.

C) INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT

Claire steps inside. Sets her keys down without a sound. The light through the window pools across the floor.

She stands for a while. Then sits on the edge of her bed.

Her phone rests on the table beside her. She touches it once, checks the screen.

Nothing.

She locks it. Leaves it screen-up this time.

Looks out the window. Just light. And air.

D) INT. Charlie's HOTEL ROOM - PARK HYATT

Charlie stands at the window. The city unfolds below - moving but distant.

He sets his bag down. Sits on the edge of the bed.

Pull out his phone. Checks it.

A new text from Natasha: "Still in Tokyo?" I keep thinking about our last call. No pressure. Just wanted to say I miss talking to you."

He reads it. Thumb hovering, still.

Then sets the phone down - screen facing the table.

He stays there. Looking out. Breathing.

92 INT. CHARLIE HOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie still sits by the window.

The light has shifted - warmer now, long across the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His phone rests face down on the side of the table. He turns it over. Stares at the screen a moment.

No new texts.

He opens maps.

Zooms out. Finds a pin.

INSERT - PHONE:

Kishimojin Shrine. Same location Claire sent him before. No texts attached.

Just the location. Sent back.

He hesitates - thumbs over send. Then taps it.

It goes.

He sets the phone down. Gets up slowly.

Puts on his coat. Exits the frame.

93 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Claire sits by the window. Her phone lights up beside her.

She picks it up.

INSERT - PHONE:

A pin location. Kishimoji Shrine. No words.

Just the place.

She stares at it. No reaction - then a breath. Not sharp. Not sudden. Just... enough.

She stands.

We don't see what she does next.

94 EXT. KISHIMOJIN SHRINE - EARLY EVENING

The shrine is still. Blue hour settles gently across the trees. Lanterns flicker on, dim and warm.

Charlie sits alone on the bench. Hands in his pockets.

He looks out - not at anything, really. Then down at what he

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

holds in one hand:

A folded piece of paper.

And in the other:

A melon soda

He places the note gently on the bench, then sets the soda can on top of it - just enough to keep it from blowing away.

Not hidden. Not dramatic. Just there...

He checks his phone. Still nothing.

He stands. Takes one last look around - at the bench, at the shrine, at the sky.

Then he walks away.

We stay on the bench.

The soda rests over the note. Still waiting.

95 EXT. SHRINE ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Claire climbs the steps.

Not rushed. Not expecting. Just arriving.

She reaches the top.

Her eyes scan the space.

She sees the bench.

She sees the soda.

She stops.

96 EXT. KISHIMOJIN SHRINE - CONTINUOUS

Claire approaches the bench.

No one there. Just the can. And beneath it, the corner of something folded.

She sits. Gently lifts the soda.

Finds the note beneath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She unfolds it. Reads.

We don't see the writing.

Just Claire - quiet - still.

She reads it once. Then again.

No big reaction. No visible shift.

But maybe - just maybe - faint breath. A flicker at the edge of her mouth. Or maybe not.

She looks up.

The city stretches below, dusk melting into lights - trains gliding, rooftops fading. Tokyo alive in the distance.

She stays.

Still holding the note.

FADE TO BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

81.

CONTINUED:

82.