

THE KITSUNE

Written by

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Hate is not conquered by hate; Hate is conquered by love.  
This is a law eternal.

— Buddha.

INT. OSAKA, JAPAN — PENTHOUSE — MORNING

A luxury speaker set BLASTS the cheerful tune of TERRY BUSH'S '*MAYBE TOMORROW*' as AIMI TAKAHASHI (64), Japanese, impeccably dressed, sits at an antique walnut writing desk.

Aimi's face screams conflict. The fountain pen in her left hand ROBOTICALLY, apparently autonomously, crafts Japanese calligraphy. Her right hand slams down, sweeping the document from the desk.

Her left hand calmly places down the pen and SMACKS her hard across the face. Grimacing, she picks the paper up, returning it to the desktop.

Teardrops hit the fresh ink, creating splodges on the uncoated paper. Again, the hand writes all on its own.

Once finished, she seals the letter in a MONOGRAMMED ENVELOPE, propping it against an OBJECT on her desk.

She crosses the stylish open-plan space, to the balcony.

EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY — CONTINUOUS

In HEELS, she climbs onto the wall. Standing perfectly still, she's framed on either side by two stunning red Acer trees.

As '*UNTIL TOMORROW, YOU KNOW I'M FREE TO ROAM*' plays, she does a short jig, stopping before the song comes to an end.

A breeze blends with the city sounds down below. She lets out an unusual, gravelled CHUCKLE, then steps off the ledge.

EXT. SIDEWALK — MOMENTS LATER

As the street comes alive with panic, paralysed onlookers stare at the woman's twisted body. Aimi's shattered face gurgles its last breath.

INT. PENTHOUSE — MOMENTS LATER

Propping up the envelope is an antique MANEKI NEKO (lucky cat). The calligraphy translates as '*MY DEAREST FUMIKO*'.

TITLE CARD:

"THE KITSUNE"

INT. LOS ANGELES, USA - HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

ALICE CAUDILLO (29), Cuban/American, scarred forehead, snorts a line of cocaine as thick as an eskimo's eyebrow. Smashing down three fingers of whisky, she stands up in the late-night shindig.

She mills through the apartment and through a thick cloud of weed smoke which she breathes in deeply. Her lascivious eye catches that of a CONFIDENT MAN (early thirties), not-so handsome, scruffy.

INTERCUT - INT. HOUSE PARTY BATHROOM - NIGHT / INT. FUNERAL - DAY - FLASHBACK

Alice washes her hands while facing the dirty sink mirror. There's a KNOCK on the door. Confident Man enters, picks her up and roughly plants her on the sink.

Heavy breathing as he kisses her neck and wildly GRABS at her breasts.

INT. FUNERAL WAKE - DAY - FLASHBACK

*People dressed in black stand around the lounge, carrying paper plates full of limp sandwiches, muttering quietly to one another.*

*Also in black, Alice sits on a sofa with her back to us, watching the heavy rain fall outside.*

INT. HOUSE PARTY BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER - BACK TO PRESENT

Alice produces a wrap of MDMA. Opening it, she dabs a wet finger in the crystals and licks it; snarling at the bitter taste. Another dab - finger in his mouth this time. He kisses her passionately.

INT. CHURCH - DAY - FLASHBACK

*A priest witters a disconnected eulogy about a woman he never met. The congregation does a poor job of filling three rows of the big church.*

*Sniffles and sobs from a woman behind Alice, who sits calmly in the front row. Clutching a set of keys, using a sharp-edged key-ring, she repeatedly cuts deep, red lines into the knuckle of her thumb.*

END FLASHBACK

INT. HOUSE PARTY BATHROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

He smirks then moves his hand under her skirt. Alice gasps with pleasure, as she stares blankly ahead.

*INT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK*

*A millisecond-memory, as Claire Burman (47), pale-faced, takes a deep, laboured in-breath.*

*END FLASHBACK*

INT. HOUSE PARTY BATHROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

SHAKING the memory from her head, Alice shoves him away, then slowly steps down from the sink.

He assumes the fun's over, then she turns, grips the edges of the sink, and to his surprise, ARCHES her back.

Ceasing the opportunity, he opens his jeans and yanks her underwear half-way down her thighs. He moans as he enters her.

As he RUTS, she looks at herself in the MIRROR; the reflection obscured by a screen of filth.

Wiping the glass with a sleeve, she speaks.

ALICE  
Who the fuck are you?

Pleased, he mistakes this as a compliment directed at him.

Through pink dead eyes, Alice watches herself being fucked.

INT. TOPANGA, USA, ERASMO & SARAH'S HOUSE - DAWN

Alice comes home wrecked. Stumbling up the stairs, she's intercepted by SARAH BURMAN (43), English, short, vegan slim.

SARAH  
Big night?

Alice stops and sighs.

ALICE  
No more than usual.  
(sniffs)  
Can do this tomorrow?

Sarah's unsure of what to say.

SARAH

Alice, I don't want to lecture you;  
but this isn't the way.

ALICE

It was just a few drinks.

Sarah holds up a bag of white powder.

SARAH

Really?

ALICE

(sighs)

I'm just letting off steam...  
You shown that to my dad?

SARAH

Not yet... Mate, I don't want to  
judge you, but—

ALICE

Then don't.

Sarah looks to her for some acknowledgement... Nothing.

SARAH

You're not being honest with  
yourself. Or us.

Alice looks impatiently up the stairs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(irritated)

You wanna wind up like your mum?

Alice scowls, before calmly carrying on upstairs. Sarah's left smarting over her regretful remark.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM - SOON AFTER

Alice is on the floor. A set of ear-cans blasts trance music. Opening the SILVER LOCKET around her neck, she inspects the photo of a woman inside.

She produces a bag of cocaine from her pocket. Staring at it, she cries – quickly upgrading to sobs – snotty nose and all.

INT. ERASMO & SARAH'S LOUNGE - DAY

Sarah and her friend AMALA GRAÇA (41), Brazilian, boho-chic, are in the lounge of a contemporary cottage in the forest-filled Topanga hills.

SARAH

Third time this week and she's Hell-bent on blotting it out.

Sarah drops the bag of powder on the coffee table.

SARAH (CONT'D)

She's using this too.

Amala calmly takes a sip of tea.

AMALA

If there's anything I can do, you know I would without question.

SARAH

Like?

AMALA

Perhaps help her focus on healing. Do some sessions with her... Also... We've an Ayahuasca ceremony coming up.

SARAH

Uh, I don't think giving drugs to someone with a drug problem is a bright idea, Amala.

AMALA

You know plant medicine is probably one of the best—

SARAH

She's not doing DMT!

ERASMO CAUDILLO (48), Cuban, kind eyes, walks in. After hugging Amala, he sits by Sarah. Putting an arm around her, they kiss.

ERASMO

DMT?

SARAH

Amala's suggesting Alice might do an Ayahuasca ceremony with her and—

ERASMO

Ha! Amala, surely you know better than to suggest psychedelics to Sarah. She's never even smoked a joint!

SARAH

That's not true, Ras—

ERASMO

She's more likely to have Alice  
exorcised than let her try plant  
medicine.

SARAH

You're not being very—

ERASMO

We've had this conversation, I've  
told her what you said about  
Ayahuasca being used to treat  
addiction, and—

SARAH

So you admit you think Alice is an  
addict?

ERASMO

Well, no, I'm, I'm just saying...

AMALA

Regardless, Ras is right. This...  
(picks up the coke bag)  
... Is a symptom of something  
deeper, which the medicine *can*  
heal.

SARAH

I'd rather she did therapy.

ERASMO

Alice can make her own decisions,  
Sarah.

SARAH

Can she?

Sensing an argument about to ensue, Amala interrupts.

AMALA

Guys, if Alice is open to talking,  
perhaps we could just take it from  
there? An Ayahuasca journey isn't  
something you just dive into. She  
needs to be clean before working  
with the medicine anyway.

Erasmo looks at Sarah, then to Amala.

ERASMO

That's absolutely fine, Amala.  
We really appreciate it.

AMALA

Great, I'll talk to her then.

They both look to Sarah for her approval.

SARAH

No... I'll do it.

INT. ERASMO & SARAH'S KITCHEN - DAY

Erasmo and Sarah cook. Alice sits at the kitchen island; nonchalantly flicking through a magazine.

SARAH

From what I'm hearing, this isn't drugs, and it might actually help... We just want you to be happy, Al.

Finding the conversation difficult, Alice nods, but doesn't respond.

Chef Erasmo walks around behind her, placing his hands on her shoulders. The kiss on the top of her head makes her smile.

ERASMO

So. What do you think?

Alice looks at Erasmo and Sarah's hopeful faces. She considers.

EXT. LA STREET - DAY

The street's alive with freshly shaved and made-up worker-bees, all on their morning commute.

A nondescript door opens by the side of a closed shop. Alice exits with THREE OTHERS; all worse-for-wear in last night's party garb. Squinting like vamps, they don sunglasses.

The group splits, leaving Alice to climb into her car.

INT. MOVING CAR - DAY

As a morning radio DJ PRATTERS on and Alice drives too fast, she fetches a cocaine vial from her pocket and haphazardly tips a load onto her hand. As she leans down to hoof it up her nose, a HORN BLARES.

In the nick of time, she sees the car turning left out of the junction. Brakes SCREECH as it slides towards her.

Slamming her own brakes, Alice yanks her car to the right; mounting the curb and instantly bashing the front fender into a large metal wheelie bin.

Horrified, Alice stares at the car, which has stopped on an angle in front of her.

The driver is a WOMAN in her 40s. In the front passenger seat, A GIRL in her early teens sits frozen – hands planted firmly on the dash.

Seething and shaking her head, the woman stares at Alice as she slowly drives off. Alice's hands are shaking on the wheel; there's coke dust on her face.

EXT. OUTSIDE ERASMO & SARAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Sarah's Volvo 4x4 pulls into the drive, stopping behind Alice's car. Dressed in yoga gear, she walks around it, seeing the fender dink. Shaking her head she enters the house.

INT. ANDRES' MOLOKA - NIGHT

12 PEOPLE sit on beds in a circle, around the low-lit ceremonial geodesic shamanic temple. ANDRES ZUÑIGA (40), a big, long-haired and bearded bear of a Chilean, sits on a larger bed.

To his left sits Amala.

Beaming, he makes EYE CONTACT with every member of the group.

ANDRES  
So who is meeting Grandmother  
Ayahuasca for the first time?

The group look around at one another. Three hold up hands – Alice being one.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
Beautiful... Blessings!

Calmly, he looks around the space again.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
So... Everyone's journey is  
completely different, you know?  
The medicine...  
(MORE)

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
 She gives you whatever you need —  
 whether you know you need it or  
 not.

(chuckles)  
 Sometimes it is stories from your  
 past...

Alice has a most unwelcome memory.

*INT. ALICE'S CHILDHOOD BATHROOM - MORNING - FLASHBACK*

*ALICE CAUDILLO (6), PJs and pigtails, carries a stuffed toy into the bathroom. CLAIRE CAUDILLO (24), caucasian, average height, beautiful, shit-faced drunk, lies naked on the floor, mumbling through tears. An almost empty bottle of JOHNNIE WALKER lies by her side.*

*Tiny Alice kneels to hug her mother.*

*ERASMO CAUDILLO (25), in a tee and boxers, steps over Alice to check on his wife.*

ERASMO  
 (sighs)  
*Goddammit Claire... Alice, it's  
 okay; go to bed now honey.*

*END FLASHBACK*

*INT. ANDRES' MOLOKA - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT*

Andres' gaze PIERCES Alice, as if he just read her mind.

ANDRES  
 Sometimes you see other beings.  
 Maybe visions like metaphors, uh-  
 huh? Just relax, close your eyes,  
 and let the medicine do its work...

More loving smiles from the group. Alice appears even more uncomfortable now.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
 And blessings for giving yourselves  
 this wonderful gift. Have a  
 beautiful journey, my brothers and  
 sisters.

Andres picks up a bottle of AYAHUASCA, and after a short pause, blows three times into the neck. He pours and drinks the medicine, before refilling and handing the cup to Amala. As she drinks, he gives a traditional South American cheer.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
Haux! Haux!

It's Alice's turn.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
Alice... Come, my sister.

Clearly nervous, Alice stays put on her bed.

ALICE  
No. Thanks... I-I don't think I'm  
ready.

Rapid looks between Amala, Alice and Andres. Others turn toward the nervous young woman.

AMALA  
Alice? What's the matter? You okay?

ALICE  
Yeah I'm—

With a soothing tone, Andres interjects.

ANDRES  
(to Amala)  
It is okay, my love.  
Alice, if you are not ready, then  
you are not ready, no problem.  
Stay with us in the circle though,  
okay?

Pleased with the accommodating shaman, Alice smiles.

ALICE  
Thanks Andres.

He offers Amala a smile of assurance. She nods in return.

INT. ANDRES' MOLOKA - LATER THAT NIGHT

The darkness is countered only by a single candle and the moonlight shining through the hexagonal ceiling window.

As the group lies peacefully, Andres SINGS Icaros (magical shaman songs).

Alice lies with her eyes open. She looks left as the woman next to her hugs herself, letting out a happy sigh.

CLOSE now on Amala, deep into her own medicine journey.

## EXT. ASTRAL PLANE - DAY - VISION SEQUENCE

*Blissful, bright, MULTICOLOURED images of SACRED GEOMETRY pass before Amala's POV, as she basks in feelings of love and oneness.*

*GRANDMOTHER AYAHUASCA, a light-bodied feminine entity, appears and points towards a far-off forest. In an instant, Amala is transported to the forest; her visions of bliss set aside, as her journey assumes a DARK direction.*

*Interwoven with more geometrical shapes, she sees MASKED PEOPLE standing in a torchlit circle. The circle surrounds a NEST made from woven tree branches.*

*Sitting in the nest are TWO NAKED WOMEN apparently being BREAST-FED by an indistinguishable CREATURE.*

*The hideous vision is then engulfed by more multi-coloured geometry.*

END VISION SEQUENCE

## INT. ANDRES' MOLOKA - BACK TO SCENE

Amala's eyes open with a start. She lies quietly, pensive, as Andres serenades the group.

## INT. ANDRES' MOLOKA - SOME TIME LATER

More candles light the space now. Some lie sleeping; others sit and listen to Andres and Amala SINGING.

ANDRES	AMALA
PACHAMAMA, PACHAMAMA, MADRE	PACHAMAMA, PACHAMAMA, MADRE
TIERRA,	TIERRA,
PACHAMAMA.	PACHAMAMA.

Andres is clearly taking the lead, as the distant look in Amala's eyes indicates she is distracted.

## EXT. ANDRES' GARDEN - DAWN

As the sun rises, the group sits around a fire, sharing heartfelt tales of transformation. "I'm blown away..."

Alice watches and listens, with Amala by her side.

ALICE
I missed out on something life-changing didn't I.

AMALA  
(nodding)  
There'll be other times.

ALICE  
When?

AMALA  
Not for a while. Andres is taking  
the medicine across the mid-west  
and I'm going to Bali.

Alice looks down, idly plucking lumps of grass. Pulling a  
blanket tight around her shoulders, she watches the fire.

AMALA (CONT'D)  
It's not your fault, you know.

Embarrassed, Alice continues to look down.

AMALA (CONT'D)  
Know how I met your mom?

Intrigued, Alice looks up. She shakes her head.

AMALA (CONT'D)  
An NA meeting.

ALICE  
Wait... You were an addict?

Amala smiles.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
I didn't know.

AMALA  
A lifetime ago... I've known your  
mom and dad for a long time. Lost  
touch with Claire though...  
(regretful)

Amala disappears into her memories as they watch the fire in  
silence.

INT. ERASMO & SARAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Exhausted and thoughtful, Alice plods through the front door,  
making a beeline for the stairs. Sarah catches her.

SARAH  
Hey, how was it?

Keen to get to her room, Alice gives a thumbs-up sign followed by a wave. She doesn't even slow her step.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM - SOON AFTER

Alice steps out of her jeans. Collapsing onto the welcoming bed, her phone PINGS TWICE inside the discarded pants. Retrieving it, she looks at the first VIDEO message, from 'TERAE'.

It's a group of smiling teens all waving at the camera.

KIDS  
Miss you, Miss B!

The camera flips around, putting TEREA PAPADOPoulos (38), short, brown curly hair, kind face, front & centre of the frame. She leaves the kids and heads for a quiet corridor.

TERAE  
Hey... I just wanted to see how you were doing. We're all thinking of you... Listen, I'm really sorry to ask, but will you be back next term? Sorry... Okay... Well, I hope you're alright. Speak soon, hon.

Next up is a VOICE MESSAGE FROM 'SAM'.

SAM (O.S.)  
Hiya! Sooo... How was your 'psychedelic drug-fest'?! Hey, there's a party at Doctor Wu's tonight. Come pleeeeeeeease.

Alice starts typing a message but pauses then deletes it.

Tossing the phone on the bed, she sighs and stares at the ceiling for a beat.

EXT. AMALA'S FRONT GARDEN - DAY

Amala's gardening.

ALICE (O.S.)  
What a coincidence seeing you here.

Alice leans playfully over the front gate. Amala smirks.

AMALA  
Hardly a coincidence when you know where I live. Besides, there's no such thing.

Amala walks over, still carrying a weeding tool.

AMALA (CONT'D)  
Wanna come in?

ALICE  
(awkwardly)  
Can't stay.

AMALA  
Oh?

Humbly and nervously, Alice plays with the gate.

ALICE  
Amala, I wasn't honest the other  
night. I didn't drink the medicine  
cos I wasn't clean.

AMALA  
Ah.

ALICE  
I feel like total shit for it.

AMALA  
Don't. You did the right thing  
turning it down.

ALICE  
The thing is... Well... I really  
wanna go to Bali with you.

AMALA  
What?

ALICE  
I know it's out of the blue, but I  
think your retreat would be really  
good for me. I need to get outta  
here.

AMALA  
I don't think that's a great idea  
given what you just told me, Alice.  
You're still using—

ALICE  
I know you've got no reason to  
trust me—

AMALA

It's not that. It's just... This retreat's not a tropical vacation. And...

ALICE

Yeah?

AMALA

It's not a place I can be worried about you getting up to no good.

ALICE

(dejected)

I get that, but I need to do something. Please Amala... If you give me this chance, I won't let you down. I promise.

AMALA

You could never let me down. But you've got to be sure you're ready to do the work.

ALICE

I'm ready.

Amala looks at her thoughtfully.

AMALA

Sorry Alice, but it's a "no".

Alice's half-smile fails to hide her disappointment. A long breath from her nose as she nods and walks away.

Amala stands on the other side of the gate, watching her.

INT. AMALA'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

YOGI MUSIC plays quietly in the cosy room. Amala sits on the couch with an open shoe on her lap. It's a box of memories; letters, keepsakes and photos.

She scans through old photos - one of her and a happy Claire, 10 years prior. There's another of Amala with Erasmo and Alice (aged 8).

The next is an old Polaroid of Amala in her early twenties. She's standing with a woman, maybe ten or so years older than her. The woman has her arm around Amala and they're both beaming. They're very happy.

Flipping the photo, she reads a handwritten message on the back. *'HEALING YOU IS HEALING ME, MY FRIEND. ALL MY LOVE, JULES xxx'*

Amala's pensive gaze moves from the photo, to the track mark scars on the inside of her wrist.

She lets out a huge sigh. With both hands she holds the Polaroid close to her chest, closes her eyes, then slowly nods her head.

INT.ERASMO & SARAH'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Erasmo and Sarah huddle on the sofa. Alice sits on an arm chair. They're all watching a movie.

The cell phone by Alice's side vibrates. The screen says *'AMALA CALLING'*. Hesitating for a beat, Alice picks up.

ALICE

Hi Amala.

Erasmo and Sarah look at her.

AMALA (O.S.)

Terima kasih.

ALICE

What?

AMALA

It means *"thank you"* in Indonesian.

Alice pauses before the pin finally drops.

ALICE

Wait... Are you...? Teri...

AMALA

Ma.

ALICE

Ma.

AMALA

Kasih.

ALICE

Kasih... Terima kasih.

AMALA

You're welcome. Dust off your passport, kiddo.

As Alice SHRIEKS with delight, her parents smile at one another.

ALICE  
(laughing)  
No fuckin' way!

EXT. ALICE'S TOPANGA BEDROOM - DAY

Alice packs the final items into a travel bag, when Andres' truck DOUBLE-HONKS outside. Ignoring it, she lifts and tilts her bedside unit, producing a hidden bag of pills.

Sarah shouts from downstairs.

SARAH (O.S.)  
They're here, Alice.

Alice quickly conceals the pills in a pair of socks. Stuffing them into the bag, she zips it shut.

SARAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Alice, come on! You're gonna be late.

Alice takes a quick look around the room, then picks up the bag and strides out, closing the door behind her.

Seconds later, the door opens as she re-enters. Frantically, she drops the bag and rummages inside. Sarah's FOOTSTEPS are coming up the stairs.

INT. ALICE'S TOPANGA BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alice rushes into the en-suite. She lifts the toilet seat and pauses a moment before flushing the pills. Picking up her bag again, she gets to the bedroom door just as Sarah half-opens it and pokes her head around the frame.

Alice puts on her backpack and picks up her holdall.

ALICE  
I'm coming.

Sarah opens the door fully and steps half into the room.

SARAH  
Promise you'll be careful, love.  
Try not to cause any trouble for Amala.

ALICE  
Here we go again...

Sarah throws herself at Alice, wrapping her arms around her.

SARAH  
Limpet huuuug!

ALICE  
(laughing)  
Out of the way, crazy limpet lady.

As the door closes behind them, their muffled banter carries on down the stairs.

EXT. LAX DEPARTURES - DAY

Alice and Amala stand on the curb as Andres unpacks the last bag, handing it to Amala. He stands to face her. As his arms open wide, a beaming smile fills his bearded face.

Without pause, she falls into his loving embrace. She looks up at him as he strokes the hair from her face.

Alice regards them with warm admiration.

ANDRES  
My queen, my love, my warrior  
woman. I love you soooo much, you  
know?

AMALA  
(chuckles)  
I know it for sure, amore mio.

He holds her face in both hands, then a long, loving kiss.  
She smiles and they part.

ANDRES  
Be safe.

AMALA  
Always.

Amala joins Alice, who winks and does a 'victory' sign at Andres.

Andres stands by the truck and watches the women walk away.

INT. PLANE IN MIDAIR - NIGHT

Passengers dwell in their cocoon-like worlds; sleeping, reading, binging on screen time.

Alice is having an active dream. As she twitches, she knocks her open backpack, scattering some of its contents into the aisle. She wakes up.

A cabin crew member starts picking it up, and we see the top sheet, which reads '*DIVINE FEMININE RETREAT, GREEN GANESHA SPA & RESORT*'.

The cabin crew member hands over the final item (a book) to Alice. Apparently surprised to see it, Alice inspects the cover: '*CHAKRA HEALING*'. On the inside is an inscription: '*FOR YOUR JOURNEY INWARDS. ALL OUR LOVE, S & S XOXO.*'

Smiling, Alice inspects the back of the book for a moment, then stashes it in the magazine pouch.

Across the aisle, in the row behind Amala and Alice, FUMIKO TAKAHASHI (30), Japanese, geek-cool, long (fringed) hair, sees the papers. She watches Alice with interest.

INT. BALI, INDONESIA - DENPASAR AIRPORT BATHROOM - DAY

Alice freshens up in front of a large mirror, when Fumiko approaches the sink next to her, puts her PASSPORT down, and washes her hands. Without acknowledging each other, they both regard their own reflection for a beat.

As Fumiko leaves, Alice sees the woman has left her PASSPORT.

INT. DENPASAR AIRPORT CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Alice steps out of the bathroom. Chirpily double-patting Amala on both shoulders, she sprints off toward the exit.

ALICE  
Be right back!

Before Amala can object, Alice exits the airport in search of Fumiko.

EXT. DENPASAR AIRPORT ARRIVALS - SOON LATER

Springing through the doors, Alice scans left-to-right, before spotting Fumiko. The absent-minded Japanese woman is looking at her phone while crossing the road, towards a TRAVEL-TIRED COUPLE (40s) on the sidewalk.

Her handmaid MISUKI (57), Japanese, short, formal, trails behind, delegating to a BAGGAGE HANDLER.

Realising Fumiko is about to step in front of a speeding TAXI, Alice sprints past Misuki, to the centre of the road. She SHOVES Fumiko out of harm's way, into the arguing couple.

As the car skids to a halt, Alice places her HANDS firmly on the bonnet, jump-stepping backwards. Her eyes meet those of the SHOCKED DRIVER. A short, sharp exhaled "PHEW", as she double-pats the bonnet.

Her skip to the sidewalk signals the brouhaha is over, and the taxi drives away. Alice approaches Fumiko.

FUMIKO

Thank you!

ALICE

Right place right time, I guess.

FUMIKO

You're American?

ALICE

Guilty as charged.

FUMIKO

(smirks)

Sentence first-verdict afterwards.

Bemused, Alice retrieves the passport from her back pocket.

ALICE

You left this in the bathroom.

FUMIKO

It would appear I now have two reasons to be grateful.

ALICE

Don't mention it, Fumiko. You okay?  
I'm Alice by the way.

FUMIKO

I'm fine, I should've looked where I was going.

As Alice hands over the passport, Misuki appears by her side.

MISUKI

(in Japanese)

You really should look where you are going.

FUMIKO  
(deadpan, in English)  
Yes, I was just saying that.

ALICE  
Sorry, what?

MISUKI  
(in Japanese)  
We should be going—

FUMIKO  
(Japanese, curt)  
Be quiet. This is interesting.

Misuki immediately lowers her eyes as Fumiko looks at Alice for a beat.

A black chauffeur-driven MERCEDES MAYBACH slides up beside them.

Fumiko bows to Alice, then climbs into the back of the luxury car.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)  
Well, thank you again.

ALICE  
No worries. Safe travels.

As the car drives away, Alice raises her eyebrows, muttering "Sweet ride..."

Amala appears by her side.

AMALA  
Well that's your good deed for the day.

ALICE  
(mock-Texan)  
Just doin' my job, m'am.

INTERCUT - EXT. BALI COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Alice and Amala's taxi heads through 50 shades of sun-soaked green, and countless breathtaking scenes, courtesy of Bali's richly diverse countryside.

INT. RESORT RECEPTION - DAY

Amala and Alice climb out of the cab as a porter grabs their bags. The bamboo building is an open-sided structure, with a vast restaurant behind the central reception.

Amala greets the Balinese receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

Selamat pagi, good morning and welcome.

AMALA

Hi there. I have a reservation in the name of 'Graça'.

The receptionist checks his computer, pauses, then looks confused.

RECEPTIONIST

Miss Amala?

AMALA

That's right.

RECEPTIONIST

The booking is for one-bed villa.

AMALA

No, I amended it a few weeks ago. I'm a speaker for the Divine Feminine event.

RECEPTIONIST

So sorry.

Amala looks set to negotiate, when Alice is suddenly looking in the opposite direction.

ALICE

Wow, hello!

Fumiko appears by their sides, speaking to the receptionist.

FUMIKO

Is there a problem?

The receptionist's face changes to one of awkward embarrassment.

RECEPTIONIST

There's been a mistake with the reservation, miss. Only have one-bed villa.

Fumiko squints thoughtfully then turns to the women.

FUMIKO

What a coincidence to see you here.

ALICE

No such thing as coincidence – right, Amala?

AMALA

So they say.

FUMIKO

(bowing)

Allow me to introduce myself properly. I am Fumiko Takahashi. My family owns the resort.

AMALA

Amala, nice to meet you.

Alice smiles and nods at Fumiko.

FUMIKO

If it would please you: I'm staying here in the family villa. I would be honoured if you would be my guests.

AMALA

We couldn't possibly put you out like that, we're total strangers to you.

FUMIKO

There's plenty of space, and Alice saving my life makes us friends I'd say. Besides, I fear your choices are rather limited.

ALICE

When you put it like that, how could we refuse?

Alice looks to Amala for a decision.

AMALA

I'm really not sure...

ALICE

Live a little!

AMALA

Mmm... I do ideally need to be on-site.

FUMIKO

Then it's settled. Please...

Instructing two porters to lead the way, Fumiko invites the women to follow. Last in line, Fumiko winks at the receptionist. He bows, then returns to his duties.

INT. BALI VILLA KITCHEN - DAY

Wide-eyed Alice walks around the stunning open-plan luxury villa, clearly impressed with their new accommodation.

ALICE

When you said 'spacious', I had no idea. This place is awesome.

FUMIKO

Thank you. My aunt bought the resort about ten years ago. She called it her "*Balinese hideaway*".

Fumiko approaches a sleek drinks cabinet, sliding two tumblers towards herself.

ALICE

Was that the lady with you at the airport?

Fumiko picks up a bottle of JOHNNIE WALKER and turns to face Alice for a beat. Alice is looking at the bottle.

FUMIKO

*I'm sorry? Oh – nooo...*

Fumiko puts it down. Picking up a bottle of LAGAVULIN 25, she pours three fingers in each glass. Walking to Alice now.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)

*Her name is Misuki. My handmaid.*

She puts a glass in Alice's hand without question.

Alice regards it hesitantly.

AMALA (O.S.)

Alice doesn't drink.

Amala's standing in the hallway, showered and changed.

ALICE

Yeah... I... Uh thanks Fumiko, but  
I don't drink... Anymore.

Raising an eyebrow, Fumiko seamlessly retrieves and returns the glass to the cabinet top.

FUMIKO

Is your room satisfactory, Amala?

AMALA

Very much so, thanks again for saving us... I have to go meet the organisers, Alice. How about you tag along?

ALICE

Actually, I was just gonna kick back here with Fumiko.

AMALA

Let's get a feel for the place.

Alice's face indicates reticent surrender.

ALICE

Okey-dokey then.

As Amala exits the front door, Alice turns to Fumiko – rolling her eyes behind Amala's back.

ALICE (CONT'D)

See you later?

Fumiko smirks. As the door closes behind them, she stares pensively.

INT. RESORT RESTAURANT – DUSK

Around 40 WOMEN (and ONE MAN) mingle, as the pre-retreat mixer is in full-swing. Live MUSIC fills the invigorated and beautifully-lit bamboo restaurant. A centrally decorated table is lined with fruit juices and vegan canapés.

Amala and Alice are talking.

AMALA

Looked a lot like you were going to drink that whisky.

ALICE

I wasn't. She didn't even give me a choice. I was being polite.

AMALA

Fair enough. Let's you and I have a proper 1-2-1 session in the next couple of days, yes?

ALICE

Yeah cool... How come you weren't keen to stay in the villa anyway?

AMALA

Probably just a whole lotta jet-lag. Speaking of, shall we duck out?

ALICE

You go, I'll be back soon.

Amala hesitates.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Not gonna get drunk on coconut juice, am I?

Amala's leaving – pointing a mock-bossy finger at Alice.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Oh hey, you haven't seen my locket have you?

AMALA

No sorry, hon.

Amala smiles and leaves.

EXT. RESORT GROUNDS – SOON AFTER

It's getting dark as Amala walks along the lantern-lit path.

Turning the corner towards Fumiko's villa, she nears a small, ELDERLY MAN in work-wear.

Bizarrely, he stands perfectly still, FACING AWAY from her. He appears to be staring at nothing.

AMALA

(in Indonesian)

Good evening sir.

No reaction. As she passes him, an UNPLEASANT ODOUR causes her to wrinkle her nose.

She continues, unnerved and picking up her pace.

Behind and unbeknown to her, the man jerks his head to look at her. He has NO FACE. He sprints rapidly towards her, though he makes absolutely no noise.

He's closing on her now. She looks behind her, but he's gone. She falters for a moment, then walks on.

INT. AMALA'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - SOON AFTER

Amala burns a PALO SANTO STICK. She CHANTS the Vajra Guru Mantra and fans the grey smoke, while walking the perimeter of the room.

INT. BALI VILLA LOUNGE - NIGHT

Misuki hands a mug of tea to Alice, who sits on a large sofa. She gives a second mug to Fumiko, sitting in a Stingray rocking chair by the window a little way behind Alice. Misuki leaves.

FUMIKO  
Your mother was an alcoholic.

Alice stops mid-sip.

ALICE  
How did you know *that*?

FUMIKO  
I asked Amala why you didn't drink.

ALICE  
And she told you my life story?

FUMIKO  
Not at all. I'm rather nosey. My mother drank also. I understand.

ALICE  
With respect, I doubt that.

FUMIKO  
I just mean I can imagine how difficult it was.

Alice is clearly reticent to share.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)  
How do you say? "A problem shared  
is a problem halved"?

Smirking, Alice relaxes and sips her tea.

ALICE  
(sighs)  
My mom died...

Alice's smile disappears as she stares a thousand yards.

FUMIKO  
How did it happen?

ALICE  
Car wreck... Amala's trying to help  
me. That's what this retreat's  
supposed to be all about.

FUMIKO  
"Supposed to be"?

ALICE  
I'm not really into this  
'spiritual' stuff. I just wanted a  
break from my shitty life.  
And Bali... Well, it's Bali!

FUMIKO  
Advice for the grieving comes all  
too easy.

ALICE  
Right? It's not that simple though.

Fumiko stares out of the window at the far-off jungle, then focusses on Alice's reflection.

FUMIKO  
My mother died when I was young.  
And more recently, my beloved  
auntie killed herself.

Shocked and disarmed, Alice quickly turns around.

ALICE  
God, I'm sorry, I-I had no idea!

FUMIKO  
How could you? Aimi was like a  
mother to me. Losing her was...

Alice respects Fumiko's pregnant pause. Clutching her mug, Alice looks ahead once more.

ALICE

Sometimes we get so caught up in  
our own stories, we forget  
everyone's fighting a battle.

FUMIKO (O.S.)

Then it is good for us to talk.

Fumiko's HAND suddenly appears on Alice's shoulder. She's now standing right behind the sofa.

ALICE

Thanks. I really appreciate it.

Fumiko looks down at the top of Alice's head for a disconcerting beat.

INT. AMALA'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Amala sleeps peacefully. Her digital CLOCK READS 03:33.

INT. ALICE'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Pillow-hugging Alice rolls from her back to her belly.

INT. OUTSIDE FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

On the other side of the door, muffled WHISPERING and a distinctly bizarre SNUFFLING can be heard.

INT. FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

At the foot of the bed stands a dark, long-clawed hairy ANIMAL, not much bigger than an adolescent boy. Crouching, it SCRAMBLES under Fumiko's sheet and over her body. Several HAIRY TAILS protrude, from under the sheet, slowly and independently wagging. They caress Fumiko's feet, before moving up her pale legs.

Fumiko pulls the sheet tight to her chin. She lets out little sobs as she trembles with terror.

INT. OUTSIDE FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - MORNING

Walking along the corridor, Alice hears faint WHISPERING coming from Fumiko's empty room.

Silence as soon as she opens the door. "Weird!" Without crossing the threshold, she peers inside.

She notices a very old wooden STATUE on a cabinet top; the 'lucky cat' (maneki neko) from our opening scene.

FUMIKO (O.S.)  
Alice?

Alice jumps. Fumiko is standing right next to her.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, did I scare you?

ALICE  
Uh yeah, sorry. No.  
(chuckles nervously)  
I just thought I heard something in  
here.

Fumiko smiles.

FUMIKO  
I'll be painting outside today,  
perhaps come see me?

ALICE  
Yeah cool.

Alice scoots down the hallway.

INT. RESORT RECEPTION - MORNING

Amala walks with PABLO (30), Cuban, breath-work teacher, kind eyes, when MR HAN (53), Japanese, rotund, obsequious, introduces himself. He bows.

MR HAN  
Excuse me, Miss Amala. Allow me to introduce myself; my name is Mr Han, I'm the resort manager.

AMALA  
Mind if I catch you later, Pablo?

PABLO  
No problem, sister.

Smiling at Mr Han, Pablo walks on.

AMALA  
Hello Mr Han. What can I do for you?

MR HAN

For your information, there is a  
vacant villa - should you wish to  
use it.

AMALA

Oh?

MR HAN

An inexplicable mishap, for which I  
must profusely apologise.

AMALA

No need... Though Fumiko's been  
very kind to us, I'm conscious I  
don't wish to offend her.

MR HAN

She is quite the character.  
A little odd, don't you think?

AMALA

(pauses)

Even if that were true, I don't  
believe I'd discuss our gracious  
host in such a way, Mr Han.

MR HAN

Of course. Forgive me... Well, the  
villa is yours if you want it.  
Please don't hesitate to ask for me  
should you need anything at all.

AMALA

I will, thank you.

Amala begins to walk away when she slows and stops.

AMALA (CONT'D)

Actually, there is one thing...  
The old maintenance guy working  
last night... He was—

MR HAN

Sorry?

AMALA

Actually, never mind.

Vexed, she walks away, leaving the obsequious manager bowing.

## EXT. RESORT GROUNDS - MORNING

A way off in the periphery of the grounds, Alice and Fumiko stand in the shade of some palm trees. Dressed in painting overalls, Fumiko faces a small easel as they laugh and talk. They smile at one another, and Alice leaves, walking our way.

As Alice gets closer, she's passed by DARYA SADOVSHICOV (31), Russian, blonde, feline, athletic, and her friend.

DARYA

See this crazy bitch talking to  
herself?

Surprised, Alice stops and turns. They're talking about Fumiko. The Russian and her friend carry on.

Bemused, Alice watches her enigmatic new friend, apparently having a debate with herself.

## INTERCUT - INT. YOGA SHALA / EXT. RESORT GROUNDS - MORNING

Delving into the DIVINE FEMININE RETREAT programme, the women attend various workshops, yoga and meditation classes.

## INT. YOGA SHALA - MORNING

WOMEN sit on cushions, with notebooks in hand, listening intently to Amala. Behind her, a wheeled plasma screen reads '*PAIN IS INEVITABLE, SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL.*'

AMALA

Pop quiz. Who's words are these?

RETREAT ATTENDEE #1  
Eckhart Tolle?

AMALA

Nope. A total legend though.

RETREAT ATTENDEE #2  
Jesus Christ?

AMALA

Less hair.

LIZ (32), Australian, dreads, stylish baggy yoga pants, sitting at the back, to Alice's right, shouts.

LIZ

Buddha!

AMALA

Correct.

Liz beams triumphantly as Amala's eyes meet hers.

AMALA (CONT'D)

Two of the core Buddhist teachings centre around 'Anicca' - impermanence and 'Dukkha' - suffering. What the Buddha means is that an event is an event. It doesn't happen to us; it simply happens. The important thing is how we choose to *feel* about it.

ALICE (O.S.)

That's very black and white.

Heads turn towards Alice to identify the source of this impudent challenge. Amala is unfazed.

AMALA

Is it? Granted, it's not an easy concept to learn.

(pauses)

Okay, I'll put it another way...

Hands up if you accept that change is inevitable.

Hands go up all around the room. Amala notes Alice defiantly sitting still.

AMALA (CONT'D)

So if we all know that nothing is permanent, then why do we struggle so much with loss and change...?

*This is attachment; which leads to suffering. And that is what we'll discuss in more detail today.*

INT. YOGA SHALA - SOON AFTER

The women are leaving the session. Alice scowls at her notebook.

RETREAT ATTENDEE #3

Hey, Claire...

Hearing the name, Alice looks up in an instant. The attendee catches up with her friend.

RETREAT ATTENDEE #3 (CONT'D)

... Wait up.

The women leave together.

Alice looks vacant – lost in her thoughts. She looks down at her notepad again and continues unconsciously double-lining a drawing of a red 12-point BUCK DEER'S HEAD.

Amala's feet and legs appear in front of her. She looks up.

AMALA  
(smiling)  
Let's go somewhere.

Returning the smile, Alice nods and closes the notebook.

EXT. TUKAD CEPUNG WATERFALL – DAY

Alice and Amala sit on the rocks, eyes closed, cross-legged and facing one another. The 30ft wall of water plunges down behind them. Sunlight streams into the cavern, casting pretty patterns as it blasts through the jungle foliage above.

Alice slowly opens her eyes.

ALICE  
Wow.

AMALA  
What did you feel?

Alice puts a hand on her heart.

ALICE  
Like a warm explosion. Here.

AMALA  
The more you feel gratitude – love  
– the more that energy will flow.

ALICE  
How do I do it all the time?

AMALA  
It's different for everyone. The  
best way to heal is self-love.  
Taking care of your body has a  
profound effect on your spirit. And  
mind. But then you already knew  
that.

ALICE  
Guess I forgot.

AMALA

Easily done. You're already back on the path though.

(a beat)

You know the word 'Alcohol' comes from the Arabic 'al-kuhl'? It means 'Body eating spirit'.

ALICE

Say what?

AMALA

So I call this

(taps shoulders)

my 'Earth Rover', because I'm not my body, I'm infinite love and light, using this body. Yes?

ALICE

Okay.

AMALA

Ever blacked out drunk?

Alice simply raises her eyebrows.

AMALA (CONT'D)

When body's drunk, it's a toxic place for spirit to be. So it might well choose to leave for a while.

ALICE

So when we black out, we're not—

AMALA

(nodding)

We're no longer here.

ALICE

So who's driving the Earth Rover?

AMALA

(chuckles)

Not you. And if there's a dark entity around you at that point in time, it might just take the Earth Rover for a joy ride.

ALICE

That actually makes sense.

AMALA

Good. Alcohol's a depressant. It punches energetic holes in your aura. It dulls your intuition.

Amala climbs into the cold waters, fully submerging herself, then rising to look back at Alice.

AMALA (CONT'D)

You know, there are entities around us all the time. Some to protect us, others to feed.

ALICE

"Feed"?!

AMALA

In extreme situations of stress, or fear, or depression. Rage even... We create a type of energy called 'Loosh'...  
(nods)  
Food.

Head full thanks to the lesson, Alice lets out a breath and lies on her back, to listen to the waterfall.

INT. BALI VILLA LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

Alice's chakra book's on her lap. Fumiko sits cosily next to her. They're both laughing at a joke.

FUMIKO

Ahhh, it's so nice having you around.  
(a beat)  
Do you think about her? Your mother I mean.

Alice looks set to share, when Amala enters.

AMALA

What're you up to, ladies?

ALICE

Sharing war stories.

Amala's on her way towards the door.

AMALA

(to Alice)

Want to get a coconut and a little solar energy?

ALICE  
I like this plan.

FUMIKO  
I was hoping you might keep me  
company a little longer.

Alice considers her options then relaxes again.

ALICE  
(to Amala)  
Rain check?

AMALA  
Sure.

On her way out, Amala notes the women's reflection in the window. For a nanosecond, Fumiko's face switches to a distorted, smiling animal. Double-taking, Amala turns to look at her.

ALICE  
Everything okay?

Amala looks discombobulated. Fumiko's face is perfectly normal.

AMALA  
Yeah.

Off she goes.

INT. AMALA'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Amala meditates. Sensing an UNPLEASANT ODOUR, she wrinkles her nose.

GOOSE PIMPLES and UPRIGHT HAIRS on her arms. Impossibly, the space around her is cold. Keeping her eyes closed, she gently rubs the TOURMALINE PENDANT around her neck.

TWO 'SHADOW' FIGURES appear either side of her, as if they were switched on like a light. BREATHING DEEPLY, their 'faces' are inches from hers.

There's a third figure. The KITSUNE (eons), dark, wiry, wet, fox-like, long finger/toe claws, nine tails. Insidiously suspended on the wall ahead, it oversees its familiars (low-level demons).

Total SILENCE in the room now - apart from Amala's conscious breathing, which condenses in the cold air.

As the Kitsune lets out a bizarre "PURRRRR", Amala steels herself, inhaling another conscious breath.

AMALA  
You cannot hurt me. I choose the light.

As she exhales, she BLASTS the space with loving WHITE LIGHT from her heart chakra energy centre.

Through the Kitsune's eyes (co-existing in two dimensions), this looks like a SHOCKWAVE OF LIGHT.

Amala's open eyes dart around the now empty room. She raises her shaking hand, once more clutching her pendant.

EXT. UBUD STREET - MORNING

Amala and Alice walk through the bustling market streets of Ubud (Bali's 200 year-old spiritual hub).

AMALA  
You've been spending a lot of time with Fumiko.

ALICE  
I really like her. She's weird, in a cool way.

AMALA  
I think it would be better if you stayed away from her.

ALICE  
Sorry?

Alice stops walking; awaiting a sensible explanation.

AMALA  
Okay...  
(sighs)  
There's a very negative entity in the villa, and I think it's connected to her.

ALICE  
What the fuck?

AMALA  
It must've been concealing itself from me, but last night I sort of found it during a meditation. I got a lot more than I bargained for.

Shaking her head, Alice begins walking; Amala follows.

ALICE  
What happened?

AMALA  
It doesn't matter. I cleared the space with white light. It's the best way to banish a demon—

ALICE  
*Demon?! Whoa, slow down.*

Alice stops walking again.

AMALA  
White light's pure love, high vibrations. Emanating kindness will always repulse it. That's what I did last night.

Alice is shaking her head with disbelief.

ALICE  
So let me get this right: You're sayin' Fumiko's possessed by a demon, and if I see it, I just need to give it a *cuddle!*?

Unnoticed by either woman, the OLD MAN passes them amongst the crowd. He briefly turns, and has NO FACE.

AMALA  
I'm not saying that at all.  
Look, I realise this is a lot to—

ALICE  
Okay, okay... Just give me a minute... Fuck...

Alice begins walking, her face indicating she's grasping the enormity of Amala's words. Amala follows.

AMALA  
On the bright side, I may have gotten rid of it... Trust me, I've got some experience with this kind of thing.

ALICE  
I trust you. I just don't think Fumi's involved... She seems fine to me.

AMALA

Well here's hoping I'm wrong. All  
I'm asking is that you be careful.

INT. RESORT GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

As Darya and her friend walk through the grounds, they notice Fumiko headed their way. Fidgeting, she talks to herself.

Seeing the women approach, she nervously looks at her feet.

DARYA

(in Russian)

What the fuck is this freak's  
story?

Fumiko immediately freezes, but the pair walk on. Fumiko responds with a curt and freakish, masculine voice that is not her own.

FUMIKO

(in Russian)

I see you still have nightmares  
about your Uncle Pyotr's filthy  
fingers...

Shocked, ashamed, and frightened, Darya stops dead in her tracks. Her confused friend does the same.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)

(in Russian)

We all have a story, don't we  
Little Katyusha?

(in English)

*Shall I tell her yours?*

Darya's expression screams disbelief. She mouths something, but stops. Turning quickly, she walks away. Her puzzled friend quickly follows, inquiring about the exchange.

Fumiko remains stationary for a beat. Walking at speed now, Darya briefly looks back over her shoulder to see Fumiko's COLD EYES still watching her. This continues until the Russian influencer and her friend are out of sight.

INTERCUT - LA ROOF GARDEN - NIGHT / BALI YOGA SHALA - DAY

A pensive Andres sits on the grass with a guitar on his lap. He watches the people seated nearby, all chatting and laughing.

Picking up his phone, he makes a call.

Amala sits alone in the shala, idly observing the grounds outside.

Her phone vibrates and she looks at the screen: '*MY LOVE CALLING*'. Picking up, his happy voice booms.

AMALA

I was just thinking about you.

ANDRES

(smiling)

Of course you were. I miss you, woman.

AMALA

Ditto. How are the ceremony plans?

ANDRES

Sooo good, my love. This new tribe is beaauuutiful! How's the retreat? How is Alice?

AMALA

Good. Alice is fine. Her new friend is eccentric to say the least...

Andres looks quizzical.

ANDRES

There is something wrong?

AMALA

Yes. No. Well... I had a run-in with something last night. A strong presence.

Andres' smile dissipates as he sits up.

AMALA (CONT'D)

Never felt an entity like it... Animalistic, but intelligent... It had tails... Lots of tails...

ANDRES

Do I need to be worried?

AMALA

No, I dealt with it.

A beat, then a couple of people enter the shala.

AMALA (CONT'D)

My love, I have to go. It's good to hear your voice.

ANDRES  
Likewise. Keep in touch, baby.

AMALA  
Love you.

She hangs up.

INT. DARYA'S VILLA BEDROOM - DUSK

Dressed in tiny yoga top and shorts, Darya's in her bedroom. The bath runs.

She admires herself in front of a full-length mirror, holding up her phone to make a social media 'story'. Pouting, she switches between stances that show off her perfectly toned body. She fixes the phone to a tripod, to film herself pretending to meditate.

Eyes closed, legs crossed, 'chin' mudra in each hand, she captures plenty of footage.

Behind her, suspended on the corner wall is the dark and wiry figure of the Kitsune.

She finishes her post. The phone begins to LIGHT UP and PING with a myriad of 'likes' and comments.

INT. DARYA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darya enters, now wearing a towel. She pulls a face, apparently SMELLING something off.

KITSUNE (O.S.)  
PURRRR.

The NOISE came from the bedroom. Investigating, she finds nothing. Returning to the sink, she regards herself in the MIRROR again. She wrinkles her nose once more, this time making an audible noise. "Urrrghh".

She runs to the toilet - projectile vomit spewing from her perfectly made-up face - once, twice, three and four times - violently and unexpectedly.

She flushes the toilet and struggles to the sink. She's keen to wipe the MASCARA from her cheeks. As she works the cloth over her face, she's horrified as the mirror reflects HER FEATURES WIPING OFF ENTIRELY.

Screaming, she covers her face for a beat. Uncovering now, her face has returned to normal. Closing her eyes again, she breathes.

Kitsune is now behind her in the shadows, reflected in the MIRROR.

Opening her eyes, she sees Kitsune's face in the reflection. To her absolute horror, he insidiously whispers "Loooossh...".

Screaming, she falls back - placing her hand on the open WINDOW LEDGE. The window slams down hard and fast - her snapped fingers making an audible CRUNCH.

EXT. RESORT DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Red lights flash as a small crowd gathers near an ambulance.

Alice is in joggers and a hoodie as she approaches Liz who's at the edge of the gawking group.

ALICE

What happened?

LIZ

Looks like Darya had an accident with a window. Karma's a bitch.

ALICE

Only if you are one.  
*I didn't mean that!*

Chuckles. Paramedics escort the mascara-streaked Russian towards the back of the ambulance. Arm in a sling; trembling and sobbing, she mumbles like a broken robot.

DARYA

Loosh... Loosh... Loosh...

Liz shakes her head.

LIZ

What the fuuuck?

Alice and Liz watch as Darya is helped into the ambulance.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Apparently she was well out of order with your Japanese mate earlier. Funny coincidence, eh?

With folded arms, Alice walks away, muttering to herself.

ALICE

There's no such thing...

INT. FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) ENTRANCE - MORNING

Dressed in yoga gear, Alice returns for something. She strides in the direction of her room.

INT. OUTSIDE ALICE'S (BALI) BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Exiting with her chakra book and water bottle, Alice hears the WHISPERING sound again. There's also a bizarre and low-level CHANT coming from the end of the hall (Fumiko's room).

INT. BALI VILLA - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alice slowly tiptoes up the hallway, towards Fumiko's half-open door.

Unseen by Alice, Fumiko sits on a stool with her back to us. Naked; her legs spread wide open; her hands planted firmly on her thighs. Misuki is prostrate on the floor in front of her; face-down and SINGING the entirely unnerving and guttural chant.

BLACK CANDLES burn either side of the MANEKI NEKO on the nearby cabinet.

As Alice tiptoes closer to the door, she causes a floorboard to CREAK.

SILENCE. Misuki stops chanting. Fumiko's head snaps right, in Alice's direction; her alert eyes hinting violence.

Misuki peers around Fumiko's shin. Bizarrely, she's wearing a red & white ANIMAL MASK.

SILENCE. All three women remain completely still for a beat.

Fumiko slowly turns, looking ahead once more. Misuki returns to her prostrate chanting.

Carefully, quietly, Alice walks backwards and out of sight.

INT. YOGA SHALA - SOON AFTER

The women sit on mats as Pablo prepares for the breath-work session.

Alice enters, looks around and finds her target. She makes a beeline for Amala, who's talking to Mr Han. He's leaving as she arrives. He bows at Alice before disappearing.

Pablo boldly addresses the group.

PABLO  
Okay ladies...

Alice tilts her head towards Amala and whispers.

ALICE  
What was that about?

AMALA  
Tell you later.

All focus now on Pablo as he begins.

PABLO  
This practise is at least 5,000 years old, and involves lengthened periods of breathing; connecting mind and body, to create a deeply meditative state. So let's lie down, get comfortable, and get started.

INTERCUT - INT. YOGA SHALA - DAY / INT. MOVING CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Pablo and his assistant quietly watch the women, all on their backs. Using a Holotropic connected breathing technique, they rapidly inhale and exhale through their mouths.

Alice's belly rises and falls with the rapid breaths. In through the mouth, out through the mouth. In, out, in, out...

INT. MOVING CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

*Alice drives the 1980s truck as CLAIRE BURMAN (47), once-beautiful, sits in the front passenger seat, taking a lug from a hip flask.*

INT. YOGA SHALA - DAY

Alice breathes hard and fast through her mouth.

INT. MOVING CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

*Claire takes another swig, but loses grip of the flask. It bounces off Alice's knee and into her foot-well.*

ALICE  
Leave it, mom.

*CLAIRE*

*I got it.*

*Claire's head lols as she lunges forward, shoving past Alice as she fumbles for the flask.*

*The truck swerves a little.*

*ALICE*

*Mom, come on, leave it alone.*

*Flask retrieved, Claire raises, distracting Alice just as the car turns around a bend.*

*ALICE (CONT'D)*

*Goddammit, mom, will y—*

*CLAIRE*

*Fuck baby—look out!*

*There's a large buck deer in the headlights. Claire yanks the wheel, Alice fights, pulling the wheel back.*

*A loud THUD and the CRACK of glass, as the truck skids across and off the road, before hitting a tree.*

INT. YOGA SHALA - DAY

Alice's breaths faster now.

INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK CONT'D

*Alice's face is covered in blood; a gash above her left eye leaks profusely. Her head lols as she slips in and out of consciousness. There's something moving inside the truck.*

*She looks to her right, to see Claire - head bowed to her chest - which has been impaled by a large antler.*

*The antler moves as the smashed animal kicks and groans in pain. It snorts frantically through its nostrils, between another saddening groan.*

INT. YOGA SHALA - DAY

Alice's breath is still hard and fast.

INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK CONT'D

*The buck's breath is slow and laboured now. Two more, but then nothing.*

*Alice watches in horror. Three loud and laboured GASPS of gargled breath from Claire. Then silence.*

INT. YOGA SHALA - DAY

The room is filled with the sound of women's connected breathing. Alice's breath becomes quieter, more calm.

EXT. CAR WRECK - NIGHT - VISION SEQUENCE

*Alice stands in the middle of the fateful country road of her memories. A way ahead, lit up by the glow of brake lights is the smoking wreck of the car.*

*She looks over her shoulder, then back to the car.*

*Claire has appeared. She's facing her, hands by her side, inert, uninjured. She looks fresh, happy. She smiles and opens her arms wide.*

CLAIRe  
(whispers)  
Forgive yourself...

END VISION SEQUENCE

INT. YOGA SHALA - DAY - BACK TO SCENE

Tears stream down Alice's face.

ALICE  
(Sobs, whispers)  
I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry...

Alice sobs heavily as Pablo's SOOTHING HANDS touch her head, offering Reiki healing.

Amala watches. Compassionate tears of joy stream down her face as her protégé cathartically releases her pain.

EXT. RESORT GROUNDS - SOON AFTER

Alice and Amala sit not far from the restaurant. Amala smiles proudly at Alice; a heavy weight clearly lifted.

AMALA  
Grief is love with nowhere to go.  
She can feel it though - no matter  
where or when she is.

Taking a deep breath, Alice exhales and smiles the kind of smile only a heart bursting with gratitude can create.

ALICE

Yeah. I know.

Shifting a little, Amala straightens up.

AMALA

I've something to tell you and I'm not sure how you're going to react...

ALICE

Shoot.

AMALA

Mr Han's arranged for our things to be moved to a new villa.

ALICE

When?

AMALA

It's probably happened already.

ALICE

Great.

Amala lets out a sigh of relief.

AMALA

I thought you'd be—

ALICE

Good idea to give Fumiko some space after all... There's something weird about that villa.

INT. RESORT RESTAURANT - DAY

The restaurant buzzes with women, all chatting and eating.

Fumiko sits alone. Her fierce and LIVID EYES stare ahead. She looks at her FRIED TOFU AND ADZUKI BEANS for a beat. She suddenly SHOVELS fork-loads of the food into her mouth.

Her eyes seem ambivalent as, ROBOTICALLY and rapidly, she stuffs her mouth full.

INT. RESORT GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Alice looks upward as if observing a thought that's popped into her head. Then she looks left, towards the open-sided bamboo restaurant.

ALICE  
Something's not right.

INT. RESORT RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

MURMURS and GASPS as people around Fumiko stop what they're doing. The food won't all fit in her mouth. Instead, the mess is on her face and clothes.

TEARS stream down her food-stuffed cheeks.

Alice's HAND appears, grabbing Fumiko's wrist. Her other hand pulls the barely-chewed food from her mouth. She's choking.

Amala and Liz appear by Alice's side. In one swift move, Alice wraps her arms around Fumiko, lifting and giving her a sudden squeeze.

The Heimlich Manoeuvre ejects the food like a mushy pinball, as a wave of SILENCE floods the room.

Sobbing and spluttering, wild-eyed Fumiko frantically turns to Alice.

FUMIKO  
Help me!

As she falls into Alice's arms, Alice expresses a grave look toward Amala, then back to Fumiko.

INT. MR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Dusk, as Mr Han and Amala are on a video-call with Fumiko's father, KICHI TAKAHASHI (57), widowed, tall, studious, kind.

KICHI  
I'm sorry—who are you exactly?

MR HAN  
(embarrassed)  
Uh this is Miss Amala Graça, she's been staying in your villa with Miss Fumiko and her friend, Alice.

KICHI  
Ah yes. Tell me please, what has happened to Fumiko?

AMALA  
Mr Takahashi—

KICHI  
Please, call me Kichi.

AMALA

Fumiko's safe. Alice is looking  
after her—

MR HAN

Miss Fumiko simply choked on her  
food. There is really nothing to—

KICHI

Please Mr Han.

AMALA

Respectfully, this is not the first  
concerning event.

KICHI

Is that so?

AMALA

Quite so.

Kichi looks down, briefly using his phone.

KICHI

I've ordered a jet. Please keep her  
inside until I arrive.

AMALA

Of course.

Before anyone else can speak, Kichi ends the call.

INT. LOS ANGELES, USA - PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Candles flicker in the plush apartment as Andres lies amongst a small circle of people - all deep in their Ayahuasca journeys. Andres' friend SEBASTIAN (28), Chilean, beanpole-slim, plays a hand-pan drum.

Andres is on his own plant medicine adventure.

EXT. ASTRAL PLANE - NIGHT - VISION SEQUENCE

*Tribal music plays as a smiling Andres squats by a roaring blue-flamed fire.*

*Alongside him, surrounding the fire-pit, are his SPIRIT GUIDES - a group of small, semi-clad beings with a look of South American indigenous folk, yet wearing seemingly high-tech headdresses and jewellery. Their eyes and skin glow brilliantly with the colours of the rainbow as they smile and dance in perfect unison.*

INT. BALI VILLA - HALLWAY - DUSK

Alice and Amala are outside Fumiko's room. Alice yawns as she stretches fully upright. They keep their voices low.

ALICE  
You speak to her dad?

AMALA  
He'll be here in a few hours.

ALICE  
Where's Misuki anyway?

AMALA  
No idea... She said anything?

ALICE  
(shakes head)  
She's sleeping... Was that an  
accident??

EXT. ASTRAL PLANE - NIGHT - VISION SEQUENCE CONT'D

*Ahead of Andres, the guides part as GRANDMOTHER AYAHUASCA appears, holding out her hand, bidding him to join her.*

*Rising, he's instantly transported to her side. In front of them, a cubic space appears, the walls of which comprise entirely of multi-coloured, interlaced circles (the 'flower of life').*

*He watches Alice as she meditates alone. Above her looms the large fox-like body of the Kitsune - though it's different and twice Alice's size. The creature has brilliantly-coloured fur - a mixture of blacks, red, orange, yellow and green. Its back is pinned to the ceiling of the large cube and it looks down directly over Alice.*

INT. BALI VILLA - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

AMALA  
How did you know what was  
happening?

ALICE  
I just felt it.

A CREAKING noise comes from inside Fumiko's room. They both freeze for a beat.

Scowling, Alice turns and walks into the room, leaving Amala watching from the hallway.

*EXT. ASTRAL PLANE - NIGHT - VISION SEQUENCE CONT'D*

*Kitsune's nine huge tails swirl around Alice, creating a kind of canopy. Still watching her, the creature pulls off its fox face, revealing the multi-coloured head of a snarling horned goat.*

*END VISION SEQUENCE*

INT. LOS ANGELES, USA - ROOF GARDEN - DAWN

Andres is still strong with the medicine. Disoriented, he slowly walks out to the huge roof garden terrace. Even slower, he fumbles with his phone as he calls Amala.

INTERCUT - INT. BALI VILLA HALLWAY / EXT. ROOF GARDEN

Eyes still on Alice, Amala answers the phone in a low voice.

AMALA

My love, can I call you back?

The phone line is really bad.

ANDRES

There's s-----ng w---hi-- -lice.

AMALA

What? I can't hear you, babe.

ANDRES

T----- some---- wat---- Al---.

The line goes dead.

INT. BALI VILLA - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Alice peers into the room, her eyes open wide. Now staring at something with disbelief, she's FROZEN on the spot.

Fearful, Amala watches Alice's expression change to one of unequivocal TERROR, as an insidious NOISE comes from the direction of her gaze.

KITSUNE (O.S.)

PURRRRR.

Amala springs toward the door, but it SLAMS in her face.

INT. FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alice stares at the incomprehensible scene of Fumiko, SUSPENDED in mid-air like a doll being held by an adoring child. From the shadows behind Fumiko's face, the Kitsune's head looms.

Amala's muffled SHOUTING and THUDDING can be heard on the other side of the door.

Alice watches Fumiko's levitating body as MULTIPLE SOGGY TAILS appear, slowly wrapping themselves around her.

Alice opens her mouth to scream, but cannot. A beat later, she forces herself to step towards Fumiko.

ALICE  
What the fff... Put her down now!

Kitsune morphs back into the shadows, as Fumiko's levitating body sinks slowly to the ground.

Alice takes two more steps towards her friend, then an INSIDIOUS WHISPERING noise gradually fills the room.

Taking another step closer, Fumiko's body lifts again, and is flung at the adjacent wall by the same invisible force.

She remains levitating.

Fumiko's head jerks, suddenly staring at Alice with a most unpleasant face. She speaks in a macabre dual-voice.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
(in Japanese)  
You stink of fear, child.

Rapidly, the bed slides across the room, blocking the door. More furniture flies in the same direction, completely covering the entrance. Amala's still shouting and banging outside.

Still suspended, rag-doll Fumiko is flung to the other side of the room; the impact knocking a painting off the wall. Fumiko then levitates back towards the centre of the room as the WHISPERING gets louder, now with multiple voices.

Fumiko appears to awaken; her face now full of blind panic. She screams.

FUMIKO  
Naze? Onegaishimasu! Nidoto nai!  
Gomen'nasai!

The NOISE gets louder; Alice has to shout.

ALICE  
I can't understand what you're  
saying, Fumi! What?!

INT. OUTSIDE FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amala beats the door, trying desperately to get in.

AMALA  
OPEN THE DAMNED DOOR, ALICE!

ALICE  
I can't! It's blocked!

INT. FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ignoring Amala, Alice runs towards Fumiko and with trembling hands, grabs at her feet. The whispering crescendos to a DEAFENING CHORUS.

FUMIKO  
(shouting)  
Onegaishimasu! Bangō!

Alice yanks a foot, but cannot bring her down.

With great force, she's pushed backwards. She hurtles towards a window and her head clatters against the wooden frame.

Dazed and barely conscious, she watches through blurred vision, as Fumiko remains suspended in the centre of the room.

The CACOCOPHONY OF WHISPERING surrounds them now, as though they were in the middle of a locust swarm.

INT. MISUKI'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

The lights are off, but the moon highlights Misuki's ambivalent face.

She's on a chair. Despite the commotion, she sits perfectly still, hands on her knees, quietly SINGING a Japanese lullaby.

EXT. FUMIKO'S BALI VILLA - OUTSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Buildings light up as women in night-wear step tentatively out of their villas. Security staff with walkie-talkies run towards the front door.

INT. FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alice's phone lights up ('AMALA'), playing an out of place HIP-HOP RINGTONE. Multiple people banging on the door now.

The whispering suddenly stops, and Fumiko, now unconscious, drops to the floor with a loud thud.

Alice passes out.

INT. FUMIKO'S (BALI VILLA) BEDROOM - SOON AFTER

Alice hugs her knees in the corner. A ladder CLANGS against the outside of the window, then torchlight beams into the room, eventually resting on her blood and tear-stained face. Her mouth trembles; her eyes are wide open.

A SECURITY GUARD'S face appears. Glass SMASHES as he strikes the window with the nightstick. She doesn't move. He peers into the room at the dishevelled, trembling American - her EYES PEELED for the slightest movement from the Japanese woman, unconscious in the centre of the ransacked room.

INT. BALI VILLA LOUNGE - MORNING

Mr Han is huddled in the corner with the guard and a PARAMEDIC, while Amala watches Alice, still hugging her knees on a sofa. Fresh steri-strips cover a cut above her eye, as she stares out of the window.

Kichi, dressed in a dark blue linen suit and white tailored shirt, sits on a small stool, facing Alice.

KICHI  
Thank you Alice.

ALICE  
You don't believe me, do you?

Kichi squints his eyes, forcing a smile.

KICHI  
I believe you've been through an ordeal.

Kichi approaches Amala.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
Might we have a word in private?

They move to the corner of the kitchen. He lowers his voice.

KICHI (CONT'D)

I'm not entirely sure what happened here, but I suspect it was some sort of mass hysteria.

Amala's surprised by his words.

AMALA

Did you just hear what Alice said?  
This was *not* mass hysteria.

KICHI

Did you witness the event?

AMALA

(pauses)

Well no, I couldn't get into the room. I could hear them though.

KICHI

Shouting and screaming?

Amala's frustration begins to show.

AMALA

And furniture being thrown around, yes. The whole room was trashed.

KICHI

So you did not see the '*creature*' that Alice speaks of?

AMALA

Respectfully Kichi, I've had some experience in this area, and I'm telling you that this event was paranormal. Whatever that entity was, I've also sensed it—

KICHI

Please. I realise you've become close to Fumiko, but you really don't know her as I do. She's wildly creative and often errs towards the theatrical. She has a way of influencing those around her. Clearly I cannot attest to Alice's state of mind, however—

AMALA

Now hang on.

Alice's sudden appearance causes Amala to hold her tongue.

ALICE

What'll happen to Fumi now?

KICHI

She will return to Osaka with me immediately, where I can continue her treatment.

ALICE

Sorry?

KICHI

You must understand... Fumiko recently experienced a great loss. She's deeply troubled. Perhaps she mentioned I'm a psychiatrist?

ALICE

And I'm a counsellor.

KICHI

Is that so?

Alice shrugs her shoulders.

ALICE

This is not a psychological issue.

KICHI

Alice, I really am in the best position to evaluate her state of mind. We'll return just as soon as I've dealt with things here.

Alice looks to Amala.

ALICE

For "treatment"?

Raising her eyebrows, Amala looks at her feet for a flash.

AMALA

Perhaps this is not something we should involve ourselves in.

ALICE

Oh it damn-well is.

AMALA

Alice...

KICHI

Thank you both for being such good friends to Fumiko. If you'll excuse me, I'd like to go and see her now.

Kichi is almost in the hallway, when Alice calls out to him.

ALICE

Let me come with you...  
To Osaka I mean.

AMALA

*What?!*

Kichi looks at Alice as he considers her words.

AMALA (CONT'D)

Hang on — that's *not* an option!

KICHI

For what purpose?

ALICE

Keep her company while you evaluate her.

KICHI

I suppose it would be okay, Fum—

AMALA

No, it's not as simple as that.

KICHI

Alice would be well looked after.  
We can return her here — or home.  
Whichever suits.

ALICE

Hear me out, Amala — *please*.

Alice looks towards Kichi. Sensing a showdown, he leaves.

AMALA

Alice, I get that you—

ALICE

How the hell is this '*not something we should involve ourselves in*'?  
*Everything* about you is selfless,  
so what's changed?

AMALA

I'm protecting you.

ALICE

Thanks, but I don't need  
protecting, I need your help.

Amala's conflicted.

AMALA

You hardly know Fumiko. Why do you  
want to do this?

ALICE

Because it's the right thing.  
And she needs us.

Accepting this, Amala calms.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Amala, you were right. She's in  
real trouble, and her dad thinks  
she's crazy.

(pauses)

She's got no one else in her  
corner.

AMALA

You don't know that.

ALICE

I do and I'm going. It's as simple  
as that.

Amala frowns.

AMALA

Putting yourself in grave danger.

ALICE

Come with me then! If anyone can  
help her, it's you.

Leaning back on the counter, Amala considers.

AMALA

This entity is powerful. If we were  
to do this, I'd need help.

ALICE

Yes, yes! Then let's get Andres.  
With the two of you, that thing  
doesn't stand a chance. Please  
Amala. We have to help her.

AMALA

There's your parents to consider.  
I'm supposed to be looking after  
you.

ALICE

The decision's mine. Tell them, but  
this is happening.

At that moment, Kichi returns with Misuki. He looks to Alice.  
Alice, in turn, looks hopefully towards Amala.

AMALA

Okay... We'll come for a few days.

A micro-glimpse between Kichi and Misuki.

KICHI

Oh? I'd assumed you would continue  
the retreat?

AMALA

I'm not the only teacher, I'll sort  
something out... Sorry, is that a  
problem?

Kichi pauses for a micro-moment, then breaks a smile.

KICHI

Not at all, you are most welcome.

Alice looks satisfied; Amala, wary and entirely pensive.

ALICE

Thanks Kichi.

AMALA

(sighs)

I need to make some calls.

INT. ANDRES' LA HOTEL ROOM - DAY

It's early morning and Andres is packing to leave the modest yet stylish room. Phone pinned between his shoulder and cheek, he packs a BOTTLE OF AYAHUASCA into a large duffel bag, zipping it shut. Picking it up, he leaves.

INTERCUT - INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR / EXT. RESORT GROUNDS - DAY

Andres strides down the corridor towards the lobby, continuing the phone conversation.

ANDRES  
You sure you wanna do this?

Amala sits in the shade of a pagoda, somewhere in the sunlit grounds.

AMALA  
If we don't help, no one else will.  
What we do when we get there is  
another question...

ANDRES  
Stay put and wait.

INTERCUT - EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HOTEL / EXT. RESORT GROUNDS

Andres exits the hotel, onto the street. The first cab he hails stops right in front of him.

AMALA  
For what?

ANDRES  
For me. Send the address; we'll be  
there as soon as we can.

AMALA  
(smiles)  
Ohhh, I love you, man!

Chuckling, Andres' steely eyes shine as he smiles ear to ear.

ANDRES  
Love you too, woman.

AMALA  
Wait, you said "we".

ANDRES  
I hope to be bringing some friends.  
Gotta go. Be careful.

Andres hangs up the phone. He lobs the well-travelled bag onto the back seat and jumps in next to it.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
(to taxi driver)  
LAX, brother. Fast as you can.

INTERCUT - INT. MOVING CAB - DAY / INT. YUME'S ACADEMY - DAY

Andres watches the freeway cars racing by. His phone rings.

ANDRES  
Sister.

YUME ISHIKAWA (38), athletic, calm, powerful, is in her TOKYO ACADEMY, watching students practise the art of KUNG FU.

YUME  
Your message got my attention, old friend.

ANDRES  
I might need your help.

YUME  
That's a certainty. Send me your flight details.

ANDRES  
Done.

Andres looks set to hang up.

YUME  
Andres.

ANDRES  
Yeah?

YUME  
This is serious. Like nothing you've ever seen before.

Yume's eyes squint as, still looking at the students, she listens to his silence for a beat.

ANDRES  
I know.

YUME  
No. You don't. This is pure evil.

ANDRES  
Good job I've got you on my side then.

He hangs up.

Putting the phone back in her pocket, Yume waves her hand again and the students continue.

## EXT. OSAKA, JAPAN - TAKAHASHI GROUNDS - DUSK

Two pristine gun-metal grey RANGE ROVER VELAR cars cruise down a long rural drive-way, through expansive grounds, towards a large contemporary two-storey house.

The architecture pays homage to traditional Japanese home design. A long single-storey annex protrudes from the main building, encasing a large koi pond. By the pond is an impeccably decorated 'zen garden', framed by stunning red Acer trees.

The convoy slows to a stop between the main house and a separate two-storey building with a quadruple garage space.

Amala and Alice exit one car, as Kichi, Misuki and Fumiko exit the other. The group walks towards the house.

A butler helps the drivers carry bags and a large WRAPPED CANVASS.

## INT. TAKAHASHI LIBRARY - NIGHT

Kichi reads in the low-lit, stylish room. Two of the walls are packed floor-to-ceiling with books. A large log burner occasionally spits and crackles; accompanying the MUSIC OF ERIK SATIE.

Kichi sits in a sleek vintage armchair of Scandinavian design, when Amala tentatively enters, wearing a hoodie and shorts, carrying a steaming mug of something.

Seeing her, he immediately stands, using a small remote to mute the music.

KICHI  
Please, do join me.

Amala sits on an adjacent L-shaped sofa, placing her mug on the minimalist coffee table.

Sitting down once more, Kichi rests his spectacles and book on his lap.

Watching the log burner spit, Amala shivers then wraps a blanket from the chair around her shoulders.

AMALA  
You have a beautiful home, Kichi.

Placing his book and spectacles on the table, he leans back.

Amala wants to say something, but instead looks around the vast walls of books for a beat.

AMALA (CONT'D)  
Impressive library...

KICHI

Books have always been a wonderful source of enrichment for me...  
The foundation stones of learning.  
(then)

*"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember. I do, and I understand."*

AMALA

*"He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn, is in great danger."*

Delighted, Kichi smiles and chuckles.

KICHI

Precisely! Are you a student of philosophy, Amala?

This ice-breaker causes her to smile.

AMALA

My mind's wide open to the wisdom of others.

KICHI

And Misuki informs me you are a teacher.

AMALA

Of sorts... Some might call me a 'light-worker'.

KICHI

And were you making *light work* of your retreat, before my daughter & Alice's fantastical episode?

AMALA

Before I had to cut it short, yes... Respectfully Kichi, you might want to keep your mind open to what happened.

KICHI

I confess, as a scientist, I struggle to take stories of ghosts and monsters all that seriously.

AMALA

Granted, metaphysics is a little tricky for some to comprehend.

KICHI

Ah, the philosophy of that which we cannot see...

AMALA

That which does not rely on the five senses. There is much more around us though – positive and negative. The latter prey on the impressionable; those at an energetic low point... Someone with mental health issues for example.

KICHI

(sighs)

You are referring to Fumiko.

AMALA

I believe she's under attack. Likely it's been toying with her for some time.

KICHI

Amala, with all due deference to your, shall we say, 'spiritual' beliefs, I'm confident there's a more simple explanation here... The girls are *both* more likely suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Lest we forget, Alice also recently experienced a grave tragedy.

Beaten and aware of the need for diplomacy, Amala takes a deep in-breath, mindfully exhaling.

AMALA

I respect your truth. All I ask is that you keep an open mind.

KICHI

We both want what's best for Fumiko and Alice. Please... Just allow me some time to speak to my daughter.

Kichi puts his spectacles back on, placing the book on his knee. Taking the hint, Amala stands.

Kichi stands, giving a slight bow of his head.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
Please do make yourself at home.

As Amala walks towards the doorway, she remembers something and holds up her mobile phone.

AMALA  
Actually... I've been trying to contact my partner—

KICHI  
Ah yes. There's no cell coverage. There's a landline in my study, and we do of course have a wireless network. Misuki can give you the details.

AMALA  
Thanks.

KICHI  
Good night, Amala.

Amala leaves as Kichi sits back in his chair, using the remote to reinstate SATIE'S melancholic tones.

His pensive eyes peer over the brim of his spectacles; through the window, into the black night.

Out of focus, reflecting in the floor-to-ceiling window, the Kitsune is suspended in the shadows high on the wall behind him. Quietly, inertly, it observes the thoughtful psychiatrist.

EXT. TAKAHASHI ZEN GARDEN - DAY

Enjoying a rare moment of peace, Amala sits on one of two outdoor seats in the garden between the annex and main house.

The 'zen garden' is a large landscape of carefully designed gravel, forming patterns around a mixture of protruding rocks and pruned bushes. The landscape borders with a huge pond, filled with koi carp.

Alice approaches, sitting nearby, at the edge of the pond.

AMALA  
The energy is thick here.

ALICE  
Yeah I know, right? Feels like...  
Sadness...

AMALA

Check you – sensing environmental  
energy!

Chuckles.

ALICE

Baby steps.

AMALA

Ready to talk more about what you  
saw?

ALICE

Not as much as I wanna talk about  
how we're gonna beat its ass!

AMALA

Well I'm glad you've got your  
fighting spirit back. One thing at  
a time though, remember what I  
taught you: The only way to beat  
this thing is with love. If you see  
it again, just remember you are an  
infinite source of love and light.  
It can only hurt you if you fear  
it.

Alice dabs a finger in the pond; a CARP races towards it to  
ascertain whether it's food.

ALICE

Roger that.

(pauses a beat)

Hey... I just wanna say sorry...  
I feel like a real jack-ass for  
doubting—

AMALA

You have absolutely nothing to  
apologise for, Alice. I totally  
under-estimated this situation.

Amala moves from her chair to sit by Alice's side, putting an  
arm around her, resting her head against Alice's.

AMALA (CONT'D)

The most important thing is that  
you're alright.

ALICE

I'm good, don't worry about me.  
It's Fumiko we've gotta look after.

AMALA

Okay my spiritual warrior. I'm all about that too. Though Kichi really isn't interested in the truth.

ALICE

Maybe you could talk to him?

AMALA

Already did. He thinks you're both suffering from PTSD.

ALICE

Well that's bullshit. I saw that thing in the shadows. It had *tails* for fuck's sake. I didn't imagine that...

AMALA

Well whatever it is, it needs Loosh, so try not to feed it.

ALICE

What are we gonna do?

AMALA

Kichi's a good guy. We give him the chance to do his thing, and hope he comes round to my way of thinking.

ALICE

Ahem! *Our* way of thinking! We're in this together... And what if he doesn't?

AMALA

We need to force the entity to give us its name and perform an exorcism.

(pauses)

Andres is on his way, but keep that under wraps for now. I don't want to offend our host if it can be avoided.

ALICE

*Great!* Well I saw Fumi in the house. Seems a lot better... She wants to paint my portrait.

Amala squints as she looks out over the pond.

AMALA

Being alone with her is definitely  
not a good idea.

ALICE

Thought about that, but I'll be  
fine as long as Misuki's around.  
I can keep an eye on Fumi and do a  
little snooping at the same time.

Amala removes her TOURMALINE PENDANT and slips it over  
Alice's head.

AMALA

I want you to wear this; it  
provides protection against  
negative influences. We just need  
to hold out until Andres gets here.

ALICE

Thanks. I'll be okay, don't worry.  
You work on Kichi, yeah?

Amala's mind races while she watches the water.  
Alice distracts herself by teasing the HUNGRY CARP.

INT. TAKAHASHI HOME HALLWAY - DAY

The wall is filled with various framed photos. Alice studies  
a slanted black & white portrait of a stoic and formal  
Japanese man. On the desk behind him is what appears to be  
Fumiko's maneki neko.

KICHI (O.S.)

My great grandfather, Katashi.

Alice jumps. Kichi has appeared by her side.

ALICE

Katashi Takahashi. Great name.

KICHI

A great man... And visionary  
industrialist.

ALICE

Is that Fumiko's lucky cat?

KICHI

(Nodding)

Gifted to Takashi in the 1930s. He  
swore the maneki neko was the  
reason for the family's good  
fortune.

Kichi raises a hand to straighten the photo. Alice notices  
the smallest indication of a wrist TATTOO, to which she nods.

ALICE

From your rebellious past?

Embarrassed, Kichi covers it with his sleeve.

KICHI

Oh! Hardly... Mere foolishness from  
my Oxford days...

Raising her eyebrows, Alice looks back to the photos.

INT. FUMIKO'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) STUDIO - DAY

Canvasses sporadically rest against the walls of the vacuous  
and minimally furnished studio.

Alice is on a stool in the centre, facing the window that  
looks out to the expansive grounds.

Ahead, Fumiko stands behind a LARGE CANVASS (3m h x 2m w).  
She's quietly painting as Misuki knits in an armchair behind  
Alice.

Looking around, Alice notices a sleek cabinet bearing spirit  
bottles and tumblers. She looks at the booze for a beat.

FUMIKO

Would you like a drink?

ALICE

No... Thanks.

FUMIKO

You must be ready for one by now.  
(winks)

Without a word, Misuki is already pouring two large glasses  
of Scotch. She hands one to Fumiko and the other to Alice.  
Misuki stands by with the bottle.

Alice inhales the strong peaty scent of the high quality  
alcohol. Fumiko swiftly leans across and tilts the glass,  
forcing her to drink.

Alice is taken aback, which Fumiko ignores, instead, raising her own glass.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)  
Cheers.

She knocks it back, hissing through her teeth.

Having had a taste, Alice finishes the glass in one go; her guilty flush face indicating enjoyment.

MISUKI  
Another.

Before Alice can object, Misuki provides a generous repeat serving.

Alice takes another gulp. Misuki returns to her knitting.

ALICE  
Big portrait... Can I see it?

FUMIKO  
I never let anyone see my work  
until it's complete. Besides, it  
would spoil your surprise.

Alice taps her foot, considering her words carefully.

ALICE  
You're looking a lot better.  
(pauses)  
Can we talk about what happened?

Misuki stops knitting, raising her eyes to Fumiko. Without breaking her brush stroke, Fumiko speaks.

FUMIKO  
I'd really rather we didn't talk  
during sittings. Besides, father is  
assessing me.

ALICE  
"Assessing" you? What's there to  
assess?

KICHI (O.S.)  
My daughter's mental health, Alice.

Kichi strides calmly into the room, eventually coming to a stop behind Fumiko. He places both hands on her shoulders and she stops painting. Misuki watches.

ALICE  
I didn't mean to be rude.

Kichi smiles. Raising an inquisitive eye, he examines the painting for a beat.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
Hey I thought no one was allowed to  
see it?

KICHI  
It will be a masterpiece...  
Well ladies, I'll leave you to it.

Kichi leaves as swiftly as he arrived.

Shuffling in her seat, Alice looks down at the remaining golden liquor in her glass. A surreptitious sip as Fumiko recommences painting, and Misuki knits.

INT. ALICE'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) BEDROOM - NIGHT

Half-drunk, Alice stumbles into her room. Clumsily climbing out of her jeans, she bounces gently off the wall, before falling face-down on the luxury bed.

INT. ALICE'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Next to her chakra book, the bedside DIGITAL CLOCK reads 03:33. Alice is on her back, sleeping like the dead.

Feeling something brush her foot, she nonchalantly kicks out. As she resettles, she feels another tickle, this time followed by an insidious WHISPER.

KITSUNE (O.S.)  
Alicccce...

We see the entire room - the bed in the centre. Horrifically, the dark, arched, wiry figure of the Kitsune squats over Alice. Its long, clawed toes grip-curl around the edges of her mattress. The creature's form is surrounded by a jagged, grey, ethereal glow.

Its nine tails wag and swirl independently; some of which caress the outline of her body. Its snarling snout almost touches her ear.

KITSUNE (CONT'D)  
Purrrr.

Alice's eyes POP open with dread-filled recognition. She stops herself from screaming.

Face to face, they watch each other for a beat.

She yanks the sheet up, over her head. Terrified, she breathes heavily, trying desperately to centre. On the other side of the bedding, the shadow of the Kitsune moves as he GRUNTS.

Clamping her eyes shut, Alice CLUTCHES the TOURMALINE PENDANT and takes another deep and CONSCIOUS BREATH.

ALICE

You—you can't hurt me.

Lashing out, she knocks her book off the unit; slamming down on the lamp-switch by her bed until it comes on.

Sitting upright against the bed head, she breathes frantically as her eyes dart around the empty room.

EXT. TAKAHASHI GROUNDS FOREST – DAY

Amala and Alice take a walk in the woods surrounding the country house.

AMALA

Go over it again.

ALICE

I haven't missed anything out, it was right on top of me—scared me shitless.

Walking along the wooded path, the women pass a FIGURE hidden deep amongst the trees. 'They' wear a black hoodie and painted white and red animal mask, resembling a fox.

AMALA

No doubt... Well done though. You did the right thing. This changes things...

INT. KICHI'S STUDY – DAY

Alice arrives at Kichi's study door as he exits. Her presence startles him. He drops two BOOKS – one of which lands OPEN on the floor.

Although partially covered, half a page is exposed. Albeit brief, Alice sees an ILLUSTRATION of what looks like tails.

She bends down, but Kichi rapidly snatches the books.

KICHI

You might wish to look where you're going.

She's surprised by the uncharacteristically curt tone.

KICHI (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

He's locking the door, putting the KEY in the RIGHT-HAND POCKET of his HOUSECOAT.

ALICE

N-No—I'm sorry Kichi, I just—

Off he strides.

INT. TAKAHASHI KITCHEN - LATER

A chef works as Alice reads her book at the large central kitchen island. Down the hallway, she notices Kichi locking his study, then walking upstairs.

She pretends to read. Moments later, he comes down the stairs, now wearing a tweed blazer. He leaves the house.

Alice patiently waits for the sound of the Range Rover ENGINE to disappear. Then she's up and walking towards the stairs.

INT. KICHI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alice quietly enters Kichi's bedroom. Behind the bed partition is an expansive walk-in wardrobe, where she finds the HOUSECOAT. Rummaging in the RIGHT-HAND POCKET, she quickly finds the KEY.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE KICHI'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

At the bottom of the stairs, Alice peaks down the hall, to ensure the chef is out of view. When the moment is right, she rushes to Kichi's study, nervously fumbling to unlock the door.

INT. KICHI'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Alice acclimatises her eyes to the darkened room. There's a selection of PHOTOS on the wall, featuring KICHI in various scenarios and swanky events, with people whom Alice clearly recognises.

ALICE

Whoah... Tech giants, celebrities, politicians... Royalty! Friends in high places, Kichi-San...

On the far side of the room is a large 1950s cabinet. Inside, she finds a very old ORNATE WOODEN BOX, which she places atop the cabinet for inspection.

The box has carvings of an occult symbol bearing a pentagram and fox head, along with Japanese lettering. Opening it, she discovers a gold chalice, a decorative dagger, and a small gold bowl, containing what looks like toenail clippings.

There's also a SILVER LOCKET. She snatches and opens it.

ALICE (CONT'D)

*What the fuck...*

Claire's photo inside. It's her missing locket.

ALICE (CONT'D)

*... Is this doing here?*

Still holding the locket, she moves behind the immaculate desk. The two books Kichi dropped are there. The one she saw open is ancient and perfect-bound. Inscribed on the leather cover are the words 'YOKAI KITSUNE'.

Using her phone, she quickly photographs the cover.

Rapidly, she skims through the book, which is filled with hand-drawn illustrations and Japanese calligraphy.

She stops on a page that catches her attention. There's an illustration of a pentagram marque which *might* just be the same as Kichi's tattoo...

Another photograph. Before she can properly scrutinise it, she hears the RANGE ROVER returning.

Hurriedly, she replaces the books. She can hear FOOTSTEPS at the entrance to the house.

She rushes across the study, pausing, then returning the locket to the ornate box, which she places back inside the cabinet.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE KICHI'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Stepping out of the room now; she almost forgets to lock the door.

Footsteps closer. She fumbles with the key, failing to meet the lock... CLICK, it's done and she's off.

FOOTSTEPS at the front door, as she rushes up the stairs, narrowly avoiding Kichi entering the house.

INT. KICHI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She slips into his bedroom and hurriedly throws the key into the LEFT-HAND POCKET of the housecoat.

FOOTSTEPS up the stairs. Taking a wild chance, she dives out of the bedroom.

INT. TAKAHASHI HOME LANDING - CONTINUOUS

As Alice walks briskly toward the stairwell, Kichi turns the corner.

ALICE  
(flushed)  
Kichi!

He stops in his tracks, looking intently at her.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
About earlier...

Kichi calmly smiles warmly.

KICHI  
Please Alice. It is I who should apologise.

Alice tries to relax a little and smile, though not all that convincingly.

ALICE  
You're back so soon.

KICHI  
Yes, apparently my memory's not what it was.

Awkward silence for a beat.

ALICE  
Well... Don't let me keep you.

Thoughtfully, Kichi watches her disappear down the stairs.

## INT. KICHI'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Kichi stands at his lamp-lit desk. He's on the phone while gently tapping the desktop with the KEY.

Finishing the call, he reaches into the ornate box on the desk. He picks up Alice's locket. Pensively, he turns around, crouches, and opens a small, innocuous wall cabinet.

Inside is a triple-stack of flashing internet switches. ALL LIGHTS DIE as, one-by-one, he turns the units off.

## INT. TAKAHASHI KITCHEN - SOON AFTER

Amala enters the kitchen, looking for Alice, when in she strides, carrying her phone.

AMALA  
Been looking for you.

Alice appears anxious and rushed.

ALICE  
Likewise. We need to talk.

KICHI (O.S.)  
(cheerful)  
Ah there you are Amala - I've been looking for you everywhere!

He's standing in the doorway. Both women look at him.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
I found an incredibly rare book in the library, by a Confucian scholar. May I show it to you now?

ALICE  
I was just about to have a talk with her actually.

Amala looks at Alice with peaked interest.

FUMIKO (O.S.)  
Here's my muse!

Dressed in painting dungarees, Fumiko now stands in the adjacent entrance. The Takahashis apparently have their guests boxed in.

Striding towards Alice, Fumiko takes her hand.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)  
This portrait won't paint itself.

Fumiko drags Alice away from Amala and toward the doorway.

ALICE  
I really did want—

KICHI  
(chipper)  
Best not to disappoint the artist,  
Alice! I'm sure you two can catch  
up afterwards.

AMALA  
That okay with you Alice?

Alice looks around at everyone, then back at Amala for a beat; trying desperately, and almost sadly, to conceal her worry.

ALICE  
Yeah. Yeah sure... I'll find you  
straight after.

Bemused, Amala smiles as they look at one another. Alice forces a smile in return.

AMALA  
(to Kichi)  
Lead the way.

INT. FUMIKO'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) STUDIO - DAY

Anxious Alice sits for Fumiko. Her foot nervously taps as Fumiko intently switches glances between Alice's face and the canvass. After a couple of silent beats, Misuki enters.

ALICE  
How much longer is this gonna take,  
Fumi?

FUMIKO  
Oh not long now. Let's take a short break.

Misuki stands by the cabinet, ready to serve.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)  
How about a Scotch?

ALICE

(firm)

No alcohol for me thanks.

FUMIKO

You won't join me for one whisky?

ALICE

I said no. A soda'll be fine.

Thanks.

Rather than being surprised by this defiance, Fumiko seems bemused. Nodding, she places her paintbrush on the small work station at her side.

Misuki hands a large tumbler of Scotch to Fumiko, and one containing soda to Alice. Misuki then sits in her chair, resuming her knitting.

Alice knocks back a good lug of the fizzy pop, clearly keen to dash on.

ALICE (CONT'D)

We almost done then?

Fumiko smiles and nods again; calmly sipping her drink as she looks directly at Alice.

FUMIKO

Drink up and we can let you go soon enough.

Alice gulps down more pop; Fumiko breathes in deeply, pausing for a beat before exhaling.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)

There's really nothing to be afraid of, you know.

Alice becomes immediately alert and nervous.

ALICE

W-what do you mean?

FUMIKO

You need not fear him.

Alice scrunches her face, swaying a little. She blinks repeatedly.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)

He loves me.

As Alice struggles to focus on Fumiko, a PROTUSIVE LUMP about the size of a marble suddenly slides under the skin of Fumiko's neck, then around to her cheek.

It stops momentarily, before moving again, this time up her temple and into her hairline. Alice's swaying is more accentuated now.

ALICE

What the f--? Uhhh... I think... I'm really hot... I-I don't feel right.

Fumiko ignores the complaint and instead, smiles.

FUMIKO

He loves you too, Alice.  
(frowns)  
Amala, not so much.

Fumiko's face momentarily switches to that of a hideous animal, before returning to normal – apart from her out-of-place smile.

FUMIKO (CONT'D)

Oh well!

She CLAPS her hands together, mentally moving on. Alice's head lols to her chin.

ALICE

Seriously, I feel—

There's a SMASH as Alice's tumbler hits the wooden floor. She slumps and topples, THUDDING HARD as she hits the deck.

Silence for a beat as Misuki finishes her line of loops. She raises her head slowly, to look directly at Fumiko.

INT. (TAKAHASHI HOME) KITCHEN – DUSK

Amala walks into the kitchen and finds Misuki drying a tumbler by the sink.

AMALA

Are they still working?

MISUKI

No, they finished.  
Miss Alice became unwell though.

AMALA

Oh?

Putting down the now dry glass, Misuki steps to the island between her and Amala – smiling unusually.

MISUKI

I'm sure she'll be fine, but she requested some privacy.

Half-offering a wave of thanks, Amala paces out of the room.

INT. OUTSIDE ALICE'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER  
Amala taps gently on Alice's door, speaking in a low voice.

AMALA

Alice? You okay, hon?

No response. She tries the door but it's locked. She pauses, then walks to her own room, which is next door.

INT. AMALA'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER  
The door is still half open behind Amala, as she inspects her phone. No new messages.

She types a message to Andres: "Where are you???"

A female figure dressed in white silently sprints past the door.

She presses 'SEND' but it doesn't work. She opens a web browser, but the page won't load.

The figure silently sprints past the door again – in the other direction – towards Fumiko's studio.

Amala checks her connection... NO WIFI.

A bedroom door THUDS shut. Peering around her door frame, Amala sees nothing.

INT. OUTSIDE AMALA'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

In the hallway now, as she tries Alice's bedroom door. It's still locked. Then she hears a voice.

ALICE (O.S.)

Amala.

It came from Fumiko's studio at the end of the long hall.

AMALA

Alice?

Total SILENCE. Amala tentatively walks up the hallway, towards the partially-opened door of Fumiko's studio.

INT. FUMIKO'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Entering the vacuous studio space, Amala sees the back of the HUGE CANVASS. Fumiko is sitting on the other side; facing the artwork. Obscured by the huge wooden frame, only her left shoulder and back are visible to Amala.

Dressed in a brilliant WHITE SILK KIMONO, Fumiko WHISPERS to something in her hands.

Alert now, Amala tentatively walks around to her side. Our view alters, and we see the dark, shadowy figure of the Kitsune, suspended high on the corner wall behind Amala.

She whispers a mantra and instinctively tries to clutch the pendant around her neck, but remembers the gift to Alice.

Closer now, Amala catches a glimpse of what's in Fumiko's hands. She's cradling the maneki neko, whispering rapidly.

FUMIKO

It was all very well to say "*Drink me*," but the wise little Alice was not going to do that in a hurry.  
 "No, I'll look first," she said...

As Fumiko suddenly looks directly at Amala, her face contorts as her voice changes to a terrifying dual-version of her own and that of a masculine and gravelled tone.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE

(loud)

She didn't though.

As Amala recoils, Fumiko staccato-tilts her head. With an insidious glare, she speaks again in the dual voice.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE (CONT'D)

Do you like my painting?

Amala's focus shifts to the artwork.

Horrified, she runs out of the room and up the hallway. Behind her, Fumiko stands in the studio doorway.

AMALA

(shouts)

Alice! Wake up Alice!

Amala reaches Alice's door, BANGING heavily with both fists. No answer. Looking to her left, Fumiko is slowly walking up the corridor towards her.

AMALA (CONT'D)  
ALICE!

Nothing. Quickly, she runs to her own room, opening the door.

INT. AMALA'S (TAKAHASHI) BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Entering, she closes and locks the door behind her. Outside, the sun's already gone down, depleting the room of light.

With her back to the locked entrance, she fumbles for the phone inside her pocket. The welcome screen light illuminates her face.

Behind her, Misuki stands perfectly still, against the wall. She's apparently looking at her feet.

As Amala's trembling hands fumble with the phone, Misuki lifts her head. A flash of the red & white fox mask as she lunges towards Amala.

Simultaneously, Amala senses something and turns. There's a hideous CRUNCH as Amala's neck is effortlessly snapped.

Her lifeless body slumps and THUDS on the wooden floor. The phone clatters to the ground by her side; the screen lighting up the static feet of the Japanese handmaid.

INT. FUMIKO'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The large, fresh oil painting is magnificent. The variation on Amala's Ayahuasca NEST RITUAL vision is painted in a most vivid and unique style.

It's in the grounds of the Japanese house. People wearing fox masks and black kimonos stand in a circle, holding lanterns.

In this version, a stripped tree that looks a lot like an inverted crucifix stands proud by the nest. Attached to it is a headless, naked female body, which bleeds into the grass; its pale and lifeless feet pointing to the stars.

Sitting proud in the nest is the Kitsune.

On its left knee sits Fumiko - naked and SUCKLING ONE OF THE BEAST'S BREASTS. Kitsune holds up the SEVERED HEAD of the other woman.

It's ALICE'S head.

INT. TAKAHASHI HOME GARAGE SPACE - NIGHT

Alice awakens. She's facing a breeze-blocked wall and is seated in a wooden armchair. There's gaffer tape covering her mouth.

Attempting to move, she realises her limbs are bound to the chair with the same tape.

As she begins to rock violently, she senses someone in the room and turns to see Kichi.

KICHI  
(calm, cheerful)  
Well now Alice. What a pickle...

Shirt sleeves rolled, he takes a fresh syringe from a packet.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
The Master had hoped you would join us.

He produces a small vial whilst removing the needle cap with his teeth - spitting it on the floor.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
You showed such early promise, you see.

Alice sees the entirety of his wrist TATTOO; the exact same emblem from the ancient book.

Her panicked face tries to move; mouthing inaudibles through the thick silver tape. Kichi shakes his head.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
And now here you are... About to become another piping hot soup of guilt, grief, and loss. It's positively delicious...

She looks quizzically at him.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
I must say there's a certain irony.

Breathing heavier through her nose, she stares at him.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
You brought her though. Your light-worker bitch friend, I mean. That one's on you I'm afraid.

Alice's eyes are now WILD with confusion and fear.

He spikes the vial; pushes and retracts the plunger, carefully measuring the dose.

KICHI (CONT'D)

We've arranged a small gathering and you shall be the guest of honour.

(pauses)

Your friend was an hors d'oeuvre.

Alice's eyes rollercoaster through shock, terror, grief, then pure hatred, as she screams silent profanities through the tape.

Kichi mercilessly sticks a syringe into her neck.

EXT. KANSAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARRIVALS - NIGHT

With rapid and determined strides, Andres exits the sliding doors of Osaka's airport, carrying his duffel bag.

As his steely eyes scan left to right, a SILVER TOYOTA MINIVAN slides smoothly to the curb in front of him.

HARU (35), male, Japanese, lean, white kung fu tunic, baggy black trousers, exits the car, opening the trunk before bowing to Andres.

As Andres returns the bow, Haru opens the back door of the van, to reveal a space next to Yume.

YUME

Get in, brother.

He's in. And in seconds, Haru has packed the holdall in the trunk and reentered the van. It SPEEDS away.

INT. MINIVAN(MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Haru sits in the front passenger seat whilst REN (27), female, Japanese, long ponytail, white kung fu tunic, drives the car at speed along the highway.

YUME

Let's talk, the mansion is not far.

Andres straightens and scowls as he inspects his phone. No new messages.

YUME (CONT'D)

I believe I know this entity.

ANDRES  
Wecufe. A demon.

YUME  
Our word is 'Yokai'. This is a  
Kitsune - a dark fox demon.

Andres switches his focus between Yume and the cigarette he's rolling. Yume watches his fingers intently.

YUME (CONT'D)  
It is a shape-shifter; appearing as  
the fox, or as a faceless man or  
woman. This is called 'Nopperabō'.

Andres lights the cigarette. He's oblivious to Yume's disapproving eyebrow.

ANDRES  
You mind?

She opens the electric rear windows. He remains oblivious.

YUME  
The Loosh this haunting generates,  
nourishes the yokai, and so it  
moves from target to target...

ANDRES  
How does it choose them?

YUME  
It's an infinite being, using this  
realm as a playground. It might  
become bored with one victim, or  
attracted to another's suffering.  
It gravitates toward low-  
vibrational people.

Andres raises an eyebrow.

YUME (CONT'D)  
The more tails a Kitsune has, the  
older it is. I suspect this dates  
back eons.

ANDRES  
I have an idea there is more to  
this creature...

He smokes, looking pensively out of the window for a beat.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
 We will perform Shinto and Shipibo  
 exorcism rituals together.

One last toke, he blows out the smoke, and flicks the stub out of the window.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
 And send this fox bastard back to  
 wherever it came from.

EXT. WOODED CLEARING - NIGHT

Alice's head nods thanks to the sedative. Slumped in a wooden chair, she wears a brilliant WHITE SILK KIMONO. Blurry lights from the Takahashi mansion can be seen through the trees.

NINE PEOPLE, wearing painted RED & WHITE FOX MASKS and BLACK SILK KIMONO stand in a circle. In a peripheral circle, another 20 or so hold large flaming lanterns.

The masked figures all CHANT a bass and insidious hymn.

CHOIR  
 IN NOMINE DE LUCIFERI... IN NOMINE  
 DE LUCIFERI... IN NOMINE DE  
 LUCIFERI...

Central to the inner circle is a tree with only two low branches, resembling an inverted crucifix.

Close is a large NEST in which the abhorrent Kitsune sits; legs crossed in a meditation seat; both of its long-clawed hands are in the 'Prana' mudra position.

Fumiko (naked) huddles its chest. The creature's soggy tails are wrapped around her body; one twitches furtively between her pale thighs.

TWO MASKED FIGURES forcibly lift Alice to her feet. Having removed her kimono, she's completely naked.

ALICE  
 Let go of me, you fucking  
 psychopaths!

She fights but is punched hard in the face as they march her towards A TALL MALE and SHORT FEMALE, standing between the tree and a small altar.

Both wear masks and black kimono, with red piping.

Atop the altar are the neatly arranged contents of Kichi's ornate box. BLACK CANDLES flicker either side.

EXT. TAKAHASHI HOUSE FRONT - SAME TIME

The minivan's headlights illuminate a large selection of luxury cars as it gravel-skids to a halt outside the front door.

Andres is first, then Yume, Ren, then Haru.

Andres POUNDS on the front door, but no one answers. Trying the handle, it's open. Cautiously they enter.

INT. TAKAHASHI ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

The four stand together in the hallway; poised for anything that might spring their way.

Andres looks to Ren and Haru, gesturing downstairs.

Efficient nods from both as they fan out.

Nodding at Yume, Andres takes the lead as he and she continue into the main hallway, then up the stairs.

INT. (TAKAHASHI) KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ren quietly creeps through the low-lit, empty room.

INT. TAKAHASHI HOME LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Haru peers into the vast and empty library.

INT. ALICE'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. Yume cautiously steps inside.

From elsewhere, ANDRES CRIES LOUDLY. She runs toward the noise.

INT. FUMIKO'S (TAKAHASHI HOME) STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Heavy footsteps as Yume arrives at the doorway, followed shortly by the others.

Andres is on his knees in the centre of the room; the hallway light illuminating his crumpled body.

The Kung Fu three look on helplessly at Amala's lifeless body hanging upside down from the ceiling beam.

Her head is hideously twisted; her cut throat was evidently drained into a now empty bucket beneath.

Sobbing and moaning through the tousled hair covering his face, Andres uses a pocket knife to cut her down – pulling her towards him.

Through the window, he sees a flickering yellow-orange glow, in the distance outside. Gently placing Amala down, he folds her arms across her chest; patting her hands as he rises.

Andres and the others approach the window, from which they can see lanterns in a clearing not far from the house.

INT. TAKAHASHI KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS

Andres' large hands yank a gas pipe from behind the cooker unit. He severs the pipe with his pocket knife.

Walking to the far door, he throws two fists full of screwed up aluminium foil into the microwave, presses the 'start' button, and leaves.

EXT. WOODED CLEARING – MOMENTS LATER

Projecting his voice, the masked male figure speaks.

KICHI  
Angel of Light. Dawn-bearer, Light-bringer... Offer us your wisdom and knowledge, for we hunger to know it...

Marginally more alert, Alice tries to focus on the Kitsune; its fur flickering with multi-coloured luminescent specks, apparently energised by Kichi's words of reverence.

KICHI (CONT'D)  
We who reject oblivion of self  
adore and praise thee. Grant us thy  
dark gifts and we, in turn, offer  
loosh and blood sacrifice in your  
unholy name. Our Lor-

Andres appears from the peripheral darkness. He sings an Icaro as he enters the lantern-lit circle. The insidious BASS CHOIR stops.

ANDRES  
(singing in Noke Kuin)  
AYA HEYA AYA HEY. AYA HEY AYA HEY.  
NOKE ALICE E BO BO.  
(MORE)

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
NOKE ALICE E BO BO. AYA HEY AYA  
HEY, AYA HEY, AYA HEYYY.

EXT. PERIPHERAL WOODLAND - CONTINUOUS

Stooping low and out of sight, Yume and Ren close in on the rear of the ritual scene, sweeping from tree to tree, with stealth.

EXT. WOODED CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

All eyes are on Andres as he stops in front of the altar.

ANDRES  
(smiling)  
Sorry I'm late.

Kichi nods towards a small group of cultists, who draw nearer to Andres' back.

KICHI  
A gravely unwise choice coming here alone, shaman.

ANDRES  
No... The unwise choice was yours, brother. Besides... Who said I came alone?

The eery silence is shattered as a huge EXPLOSION booms from the mansion.

Sounds of shock and awe from the cultists, as many duck, run, or shield their eyes from the bright light of the gas explosion.

In an instant, the minivan BOUNCES over a hill; Haru careers into the glowing ritual circle.

*All Hell breaks loose* as the minivan side-skids into the space, taking out a small number of SCREAMING CULT MEMBERS as if they were skittles.

Lanterns fall to the ground as many of the masked devotees scream, scatter and flee.

Simultaneously, Yume and Ren break through the escaping rear ranks, making a beeline for Alice.

Andres is grabbed by a cultist. Snapping his head back, he butts the man square in the face.

Already out of the car, Haru joins Andres.

Yume and Ren approach the two masked figures holding Alice. One swings for Yume. Side-stepping, she grabs his lead arm and kicks his knee. As he SCREAMS she snaps his arm, finishing with a throat-strike.

The second masked man parries toward Ren with a flaming lantern. She steps back. Another parry.

She snap-kicks the lantern from his hand and chain-punches his chest and face. An open-palm smack to the ear drops him.

Andres strides towards Kichi and Misuki – their masks now pulled up. They're dragging Fumiko from the nest, but she stumbles and falls to the ground.

In one move, he lifts Fumiko into the cradle of his huge arms, turns and runs towards the van.

Yume and Ren now have Alice, but three more devotees come at them with flaming lanterns.

The skilled fighters make light work; Ren once again grabs Alice as Yume wraps the discarded white kimono around her.

They're almost at the van when another devotee grabs Alice's leg. A kick to the throat from Yume swiftly disabling him.

They place Alice in the van and assume fighting stances around the vehicle.

Andres is on his way to the vehicle, but Kichi comes after him with a flaming lantern stick, landing a HEFTY blow on the back of his head.

Still holding Fumiko, the shaman falls to his knees. From nowhere, Haru appears, and with a single move, push-kicks Kichi; causing him to fall back against the nest.

As Misuki runs to her master's aid, Andres hands Fumiko to Haru.

Andres picks up a burning lantern and LOBS it directly at the nesting Kitsune; shouting ancient banishing words at the beast.

Kichi and Misuki SCREAM as they are engulfed in flames, along with the nest.

Everyone's in the van as Andres climbs into the driving seat. The vehicle chicanes at high speed, leaving flaming carnage behind.

INT. MINIVAN (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Andres and Ren are in the front row, Yume and Fumiko the second, and Haru and Alice in the back.

Silence as Andres PLOUGHES the van through the vast estate grounds before finding the road.

CLOSE on his steely eyes in the rear-view mirror.

EXT. ANDRES' GARDEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

*Amala basks in the bright sunlight. Birds sing above the tall grass as Andres rolls on top of her; his shadow allowing her to open her eyes. She smiles a loving smile and they kiss.*

YUME (O.S.)  
(far off)  
Andres?

END FLASHBACK

INT. MINIVAN (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER - BACK TO PRESENT

YUME  
(raised voice)  
Andres! Are you alright?

Shaking the memory from his bleeding head, he refocusses.

ANDRES  
I'm fine... Alice? Are you okay, my  
sister? Are you hurt?

On the road now, ploughing into the dark countryside.

Alice is once more lucid.

ALICE  
(mumbling)  
What... wheream... W-who're these  
people?

ANDRES  
Friends. You're safe.

ALICE  
Andres... Amala... She's...

ANDRES  
(pauses)  
I know, sister. My love is gone.

Alice lets out a long, sobbing sigh.

Wrapped in a blanket, Fumiko squints, smiles insidiously, then speaks with the dual voice.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE

Poor, poor Alice... Got your mentor killed, didn't you.

(whispers)

Again, again, again.

All eyes on the Japanese girl. Andres watches through the rear-view mirror.

Alice's face changes as the acidic words settle in her head and heart. Andres squints painfully.

ANDRES

You must not allow this beast to taunt you, Alice. It feeds off such exchanges.

Beyond destroyed, Alice's anger-filled breath speeds up.

Covering her mouth, she breathes frantically through her teeth.

ANDRES (CONT'D)

Alice... Our time for grieving will come, but it is not now.

Fumiko (Kitsune) laughs maniacally. She swiftly turns her head towards Yume and tries to head-butt her.

Yume gives Fumiko an efficient elbow in the face, knocking her out cold. Andres looks around at Yume, who calmly shrugs.

YUME

Sorry.

The car continues along the dark road.

ANDRES

(to Yume)

We must find somewhere. I need you to help me protect the space, then we begin.

A moment after Yume nods, Ren points to some stable buildings ahead. "There!"

Andres throws the minivan up the short driveway, skidding to a halt right outside the building.

## INT. STABLE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The group enters the disused building. Moonlight streams into the large space via skylights in the high ceiling. The wooden floors are carpeted with dust and straw.

Various items of equine and farming equipment are strewn around the space, as well as a number of old wooden chairs.

Andres leads, placing a chair in the room's centre. Yume plonks unconscious Fumiko onto it, Haru helps secure her limbs with rope.

Ren makes a fire in an old log-burner, which Alice crumples beside.

YUME

(to Ren and Haru)

No matter what you hear: under no circumstances should you enter the room.

Bowing obediently to their master, Ren and Haru leave.

Andres begins removing shamanic kit from his bag.

Collecting her own Shinto shaman bag and Hama Yumi ("evil destroying") bow, Yume powers towards Fumiko.

Using the bow she draws a TRIANGLE in the dirt around Fumiko.

Untying a small leather pouch, she pours A THICK LINE OF SALT, creating a brilliant WHITE TRIANGLE around the unconscious woman. She looks towards Alice.

YUME (CONT'D)

The salt creates a border, which the entity cannot cross.

She pours more salt around the room's PERIMETER, then assumes a meditation seat at the triangle face directly behind Fumiko. Meditating, Yume utters ancient Shinto incantations.

Andres lays an embroidered mesa (altar), upon which he carefully arranges paraphernalia and percussion instruments. The final items are his SILVER CUP and a bottle of AYAHUASCA.

Fumiko's coming round. Her long black hair sticks to her face thanks to sweat and a bloody nose. Once again, the insidious voice returns.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE

Ooh goody... Love me an exorcism...

She looks down, hissing at Yume.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE (CONT'D)  
 Chew me Yume, chew me Yume, chew  
 meeee Yumeeeeeee...

Andres continues to prepare, as Alice observes the distorted face of her possessed friend – switching between insidious animal and tortured human. A marble-sized lump once again slides under the skin of her neck.

As the demon inside becomes clearly more irritable, her body begins to contort and twitch; her head staccato-cocking; glancing around all points of the room.

Sensing the Kitsune's rising strength, Andres dons his Noke Kuin headdress and necklace, stepping towards the triangle.

He holds out a hand to Alice.

ANDRES  
 Come Alice.

ALICE  
 What? N-no... I can't.

ANDRES  
 We need your help to complete the trinity.

ALICE  
 (sighs)  
 I-I can't... I'm not strong enough for this.

ANDRES  
 Yes you are, my sister. Amala saw it – as do I... Come. Join us.

A myriad of memories flash through her mind.

*EXT. AMALA'S FRONT GATE - DAY - FLASHBACK*

*Alice and Amala talk at the garden gate.*

AMALA  
*You could never let me down, but you have to be sure you're ready to go inward.*

ALICE  
*I'm ready.*

INT. TAKAHASHI ZEN GARDEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

*Amala and Alice sit by the koi pond; their heads touch.*

**AMALA**

*The most important thing is that  
you're alright.*

**ALICE**

*I'm good, don't worry about me.  
It's Fumiko we've got to look  
after.*

END FLASHBACK

INT. STABLE BUILDING - BACK TO PRESENT

Alice straightens up, adopting a meditation seat.

She breathes deeply and consciously.

**AMALA (V.O.)**

*White light's pure love, high  
vibrations. Emanating kindness will  
always repulse it. That's what I  
did last night.*

Alice stands.

Taking the shaman's hand, she walks to Yume's left. Assuming her face of the trinity, she sits. Yume smiles; nodding, never breaking from her CHANT.

**YUME**

*OM MANI PEME HUNG. OM MANI PEME  
HUNG. OM MANI PEME HUNG. OM MANI  
PEME HUNG.*

Andres begins SINGING an Icaro. He hands Alice a shaker, inviting her to keep time. He sits in the remaining space.

Whispering blessings into the Ayahuasca bottle in his hands, he blows into it three times. He pours some of the thick brown liquid into the small silver cup.

Eyes closed, he waits a moment, then drinks. Both women celebrate with traditional words.

**YUME (CONT'D)**

Haux! Haux!

**ALICE**

Haux! Haux!

Andres refills and blesses the cup, handing it to Yume. After holding it to her bowed head, she drinks.

ANDRES ALICE (CONT'D)  
Aho! Haux! Haux!

Andres then pours and hands the cup to Alice.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
We drink the medicine here, to help  
us in this metaphysical battle...  
It will give us power to see  
through the Veil. To bring this  
abomination to its knees and give  
us its name.

Alice nods; closes her eyes and holds the cup to her chest. She gulps down the brew and returns the cup to Andres.

ANDRES (CONT'D) YUME  
(louder) (louder)  
HAUX! HAUX! HAUX HAUX!

The trinity is complete. All three stand as Andres begins a TRIBAL BEAT with his hand-drum.

As Yume and Alice meditate, Fumiko rhythmically nods her head. Moving her shoulders in an exaggerated way, she chair-dances.

Smiling, she SINGS a blasphemous riff from the chorus of Agua de Estrellas in time with the drum.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
PACHAMAMA, PACHAMAMA.  
KILLED YER MAMA, KILLED AMALA.  
Hahaha! See what I did there?

ALICE  
This is fuckin' crazy-

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
Oh we're all mad here Alice. We're  
all mad here...  
(chuckles)

ANDRES  
Silence, beast! Alice, stay  
present. We must find and channel  
love.

Alice looks at Andres then Yume, who nods.

Placing the drum on the mesa, Andres WHISTLES another Icaro as he walks around the room, burning a stick of Palo Santo.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
 (to Alice)  
 We burn Palo Santo to cleanse the  
 air of negative energy.

He leaf-fans the perfumed smoke with a Chakapa (tied leaf bundle).

Fumiko (Kitsune) becomes visibly irritated. OBJECTS around the stable begin to RATTLE violently. She hisses at Andres.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
 Missing your crystal-loving bitch  
 yet, Chilean?  
 (then in Spanish)  
 She soiled herself as her neck  
 broke.

Alice becomes angry. Growling, she swings for Fumiko's face, but Andres GRABS her wrist, inches from contact.

YUME  
 (shouting)  
 Alice!

ANDRES  
 Alice, this is not the way... Let  
 it go... Be love.

Distraught, Alice falls to her knees as Fumiko laughs maniacally.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
 Wahahahaha! Easy-peasy, easy-peasy...

Andres kneels by Alice's side, hands on her shoulders.

Fumiko suddenly stops, her head twisting over her shoulder toward the darkened rear of the building.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE (CONT'D)  
*Hello daddy.*

Kichi, severely burnt and wailing, sprints from the shadows. Ceremonial dagger above his head, he launches at Alice. She manages to stand, grabs his wrists, while accidentally knocking Andres over.

CACOPHONOUS WHISPERING fills the room as a chair flies across the space, striking Yume, knocking her to the ground.

Fumiko's hand breaks free and with great strength, grips Andres' throat. She throttles him.

Dagger perilously close to Alice's chest, she wrestles Kichi, who forces her backwards, towards a pillar.

She's trying desperately to shift the knife away from her chest when the back of her head hits the pillar.

Kichi uses both hands to force the dagger in.

ALICE  
NOOOOO!

She yelps as the blade plunges into the shoulder space under her collar bone.

Back to Andres – his eyes POPPING as Fumiko chokes the life from him.

Back to Alice as she head-butts Kichi, splitting his nose and causing him to squeal.

She butts him again – and again – his face now covered in blood as she 180-flips their position and bashes his head against the pillar. He slumps to the ground.

Meanwhile, Fumiko chuckles with delight, watching Andres slip away. Smiling, she SINGS another tune.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
*BYE-BYE SOUTH AMERICAN GUY! DROVE  
THE SHAMAN TO THE EDGE AND NOW HE  
WILL DIE! AND GOOD—*

ALICE  
NO.

Alice has placed a HAND on Fumiko's shoulder – her body shuddering at Alice's touch. Alice looks down on her, completely calm.

As Fumiko loosens her grip on Andres, he slumps, coughing and spluttering.

Fumiko twists in her chair. Talking to Alice in her dead mother's voice, she gasps for air.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
Alice baby... It hurts... Please,  
my beautiful baby-girl...

ALICE  
Mom?!

Fumiko gasps faster; her face switching to raw, evil aggression.

The Kitsune's voice returns.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
 I can't breathe, you fuckin' bitch!  
 Killer killer killer killer...

Alice stands fast, pausing for a beat.

ALICE  
 (calm)  
 I didn't kill my mother, you sorry  
 piece of shit.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
 (chuckles)  
 Don't hate the player, Alice. Hate  
 the game, hate the game...

ALICE  
 I see you now, demon.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
 You see nothing! You know nothing.  
 I own this bitch's family...  
 Jump, Aimi, jump!  
 (chuckles)

Alice is dead calm; there's compassion in her voice.

ALICE  
 I'm not afraid of you anymore.  
 I won't hate you either. I want my  
 friend back... I choose the light.

The tortured artist shudders violently; her face slowly  
 changing. She inhales a deep HISS, apparently temporarily  
 disabled by the energy of Alice's loving kindness.

Then, apparently seeing something behind Alice, Fumiko smiles  
 maniacally.

Out of nowhere, crispy Kichi runs at Alice with the knife.  
 Just as he's about to bury it in her back, an arrowhead exits  
 the front of his throat and he drops like a stone.

Alice turns to see Yume, still holding the bow by her face.  
 As Alice looks at her in disbelief, Yume calmly puts down the  
 bow and returns to the triangle.

Alice bends down towards a rather wheezy Andres.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
 You okay?

ANDRES  
I'll live.

She helps him resume his place in the trinity.

She picks up the discarded Chakapa and smoking Palo Santo, and begins WHISTLING the Icaro. She walks around the white triangle, fanning the scented smoke at Andres, then Yume, then Fumiko.

Aroused once more, Fumiko begins to rock and shake in the chair; she HOCKS and SPITS at Alice, who does not break a stride.

Andres adds croaky song to Alice's whistling, as Yume chants.

Fearfully, the demon shouts and rants; Fumiko's face contorting to terrifying half-faces.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE  
Insignificant ants.  
(in Japanese)  
Lost in your victim illusion...  
Blind to all that is.  
(Indonesian)  
Ignorant to the true nature of  
creation.

The trinity ignores every shout, spit and snarl from the foul creature. Andres BEATS his drum to Yume's chant.

FUMIKO/KITSUNE (CONT'D)  
(Aramaic)  
You can never beat this game.  
(English)  
I am infinite light... I am the  
Adversary!

Alice walks head-on towards us.

From the absolute darkness of the adjacent room, we watch the ritual space through the open door that is stoically guarded by REN and HARU.

Suddenly calm and clear, the demon addresses Alice's back:

FUMIKO/KITSUNE (CONT'D)  
Do you really think songs and rocks  
will hurt me, bitch? You have no  
hope... Countless priests have  
tried and failed.

Alice fills the shot. As she slowly closes the door, Andres appears at her side, whispering something in her ear.

Her eyes twinkle as she takes a deep breath and SMILES.

ALICE

Well we're not priests are we.  
(pauses a beat)  
So, Lucifer... You ready?

In hearing his name, the demon lets out a DEAFENING and CACOPHONOUS SHRIEK of anguish. Alice's smile remains as she closes the door.

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON, USA - ANDRES' GARDEN - DAY

Alice meditates in Andres' sun-bleached and colourful garden. Her chest rises and falls as she breathes calmly and deeply.

A white rabbit playfully hops by the hedgerow.

In the distance, Andres, Sarah and Erasmo are talking happily while laying food on a farmhouse table.

We transition into her meditation vision.

EXT. ASTRAL GARDEN - DAY - VISION

*The environment is BRILLIANT WHITE, with twinkling and MULTI-COLOURED hues. Alice is still cross-legged in her meditation seat in the (now astral) garden. Her eyes are open.*

*Amala faces her - also in a meditation seat. We hear the birds and the waterfall in the valley, as they sit together; their eyes meeting as they smile tenderly at one another.*

*The vibrational energy of the love between them is palpable.*

*As joyful tears stream down Alice's cheeks, a stunning RAINBOW appears around Amala.*

*Still smiling with compassion and love, she transforms to a LIGHT BODY of pure energy, before slowly fading into the environment around her.*

*Serene, Alice smiles, letting out a long breath of contentment as she whispers.*

ALICE

Good-bye.

END VISION

EXT. ANDRES' GARDEN - DAY - BACK TO SCENE

Alice's eyes are opened by the booming voice.

ANDRES (O.S.)  
(cheerful)  
Aho sister!

Andres looks around at the beautiful valley.

ANDRES (CONT'D)  
Did you find peace?

Alice looks up to see Andres and Fumiko looking down at her, and a wide smile breaks across her face.

Andres stretches out his arm. Beaming, she takes his hand and stands up, nodding.

ALICE  
(nodding)  
Peace and so much more.

Alice wraps both arms around her friends as they talk and walk towards the bountiful feast awaiting them.