

“V”

Chapter 1

WINDY - 74 DEGREES - DAYTIME. On an empty playground in the suburbs.

4-year-old Vivian and her Dad are running on the playground. Vivian runs at full speed and Dad just a slow pretend jog—joyfully running, playfully laughing— loving. The Sun is shining through a sky of clouds in tiny pieces, bit by bit; it's as if God himself is shining a flashlight down to earth from the heavens above. As the sunlight pierces the clouds, it illuminates over the playground; shining down on their connected beauty. The true beginning of a beautiful relationship between father and daughter is highlighted. Lights from the sun are perfectly striking both Dad and Vivian, creating a bright aura around both of them. The momentous core memory where the father knows he would give his life for her... everything he has done, everything he has become — he wouldn't think twice to give it all up for her...and it all shines through.

Vivian: (yelling joyfully) I'm going to get you!

Dad: (yelling joyfully) Oh NO!

Dad runs the the edge of the playground, kicking up pieces of mulch until he reaches the wooden boundary and slows to halt; allowing Vivian to catch up to him and hug the back of his leg with all her tiny might.

Dad: Oh you got me! You're so fast! (He and Vivian laugh. He turns around, leans over and hugs Vivian) Now...I'm—gonna—GET YOU!

V joyfully screams as she turns to run in the opposite direction with a smile — Her little legs wobbling almost penguin-like. Dad makes loud dinosaur noises as he slowly catches up to her in the middle of the playground. He picks her up from behind and begins swinging her in a circle.

Dad: (RAWR) I got you! (He growls mid circle)

Dad swings Vivian around 3 times as they fall to the ground with Vivian on top of him. They laugh hysterically. Their bond and love is strong, creating such a “blessed” atmosphere.

(FADE TO BLACK)

(AS SOON AS LIGHT FADES TO BLACK IT IMMEDIATELY ILLUMINATES)

VIVIAN'S FAMILY HOUSE — SUNSET. Soft-white lights can be seen on inside Vivian's family house and the bold shadow of a womanly figure can be seen in the left of 2 windows, looking at her phone. The front door is open and 2 front windows are closed with the curtains drawn. A familiar song is playing inside and be heard just loud enough to make out the tune. 8-year-old Vivian is swinging on a handmade rope swing from a tree branch in front of the house.

(Sounds of a car coming to a stop are heard, the driver car door opens and closes followed by the jingle of car keys and 2 quick “BEEPS” from Dad’s remote door lock).

(BEEP BEEP)

Dad arrives home from a long day of work and looks exhausted. Vivian slows her swinging down to an almost stop; she and the swing waver over a dirt patch in the grass while her feet hold her in place. He walks over to Vivian holding his briefcase and puts his opposite hand on her head, holding her in place.

Dad: Hey my love (Kisses his hand on top of her head), how was your day?

Vivian: GoooOOD! (She says dragging the word out almost into a tune)

Dad: That’s what I love to hear (He says with a smile, slightly forced). How’s mom? I’m about to head in there.

Vivian: Good. (She says plainly)

Dad walks by her slowly stroking her hair until his momentum allows his hand to fall to his side. As the door closes and he walks into the house, Vivian pushes off and continues to swing. The womanly shadow wastes no time, standing up immediately.

(Muffled Voices can be heard, but unclear as to what is being said)

The male shadow stands in the left window and mom’s womanly shadow stands in the right window; Mom’s shadow pointing at Dad’s forcefully—clearly she is yelling. Dad’s shadow just stands there with his briefcase until finally putting it on the table (table is unseen by the house division between the windows). Mom’s shadow puts her face in her hand and cries. Dad slowly makes his way through the barrier in between both windows and embraces the woman in the right window, embracing for a brief moment. The shadows then kiss. Vivian continues to swing in a very care-free manner.

(FADE TO BLACK)

(AS SOON AS LIGHT FADES TO BLACK IT IMMEDIATELY ILLUMINATES)

THE FAMILY HOUSE – NIGHT –

(Door Knocks)

A 14-year-old Vivian is running through the hall to the front door. A young boy is seen outside the door standing anxiously. She opens the door to introduce Keller, a young boy her age who lives next door.

Keller: You GOT IT?! (He says with convicting curiosity.)

Keller stands in the doorway dressed in a karate outfit with a yellow belt tied firmly around his waist.

Vivian: YUP. (She says yanking Keller's arm through the doorway.)

They both run down the hall passing Vivian's mom.

Mom: (Laughingly) Woah haha, hey Keller. You're late!

Keller smiles at her in passing as both kids rush into a room filled with a tv, a red sofa, and a gaming system.

Vivian: DADDDD (Vivian yells toward the door) HE'S HERE!

Dad: (GASPS and hollers from the next room) FINALLY! KELLER WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR 1 HOUR, 3 MINUTES AND 42 SECONDS FOR YOU TO WALK OVER HERE!

Loud, fast footsteps can be heard toward the game room. There is a game system icon loading on screen as Keller and Vivian are discussing **the new video game's origin or plotline**. Dad walks into the room holding popcorn and milk-duds.

Keller: Sorry I had karate today and it took forever to get out of there, then my Mom made eat before I could come (he says rolling his eyes). I can't wait to see what all these new worlds look like! The graphics on this are supposed to be epic!

Dad & Vivian (together): We know... (They say sarcastically)

Keller smiles as he holds the controller and **the title screen for the game** comes up. Keller hands the gaming remote to Vivian's Dad.

Keller: You paid for it so ya'll get first game Mr. **(Dad's NAME)**

Dad smiles as he takes the controller and looks at Vivian.

Dad: Ab-SO-lutely. You ready, V?

V picks up the second controller with a huge grin.

V: YUP.

All 3 are seen having a blast as the only light on is the game screen. Their shadows can be seen laughing, throwing popcorn at each other, standing up quickly, stomping, and dancing as the video game is played.

THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO FLICKER OVER EACH OF THE 3 SCENARIOS INDIVIDUALLY. SCATTERED CHAOTICALLY FLASHING. FASTER AND FASTER UNTIL IT BECOMES AN UNHINGED STROBE OVER THE 3 SCENES.

(SUDDENLY, LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK FOR DOUBLE TIME WITH A LOUD BASS BOOM)

(solemn piano music plays)

Chapter 2

V'S ROOM – NIGHT – The moon shines through the window on a 16-year-old V's bed from the right, and a nightlight shines on her from the left. V opens her eyes in a panic, and realizes she was dreaming. She sits up quickly – sweat pouring from her wet hair and soaked shirt as she lets out a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM. THEN ANOTHER. Mom rushes in and turns on the light just as V starts uncontrollably sobbing; lighting up the entire area for the first time. Mom has dark circles under her eyes and clearly hasn't had a good night's sleep in awhile.

V: I miss him so much (She says looking at her mother at the door. She sobs, gasping for air.)

Mom: (Realizes the situation and starts Crying) I do too my love (She says with tears streaming down her face, walking towards the bed)

Mom and V hug as tight as possible. Just as powerful of a moment of sadness as the point of joy a mere 5 minutes ago in V's dreams of her past with her father.

V: I wish they'd stop. I can never remember the whole dream, just the end where I know I don't want to wake up. I'm yelling at him 'LET. ME. STAY.' Over and over and over. (She says through tears) Why won't he just let me stay? (V says quietly. Painfully.)

(SUDDEN CHANGE TO BLACK – NO FADE)

(Somber piano music plays.)

THE FAMILY HOUSE – OVERCAST – WEEKDAY AFTERNOON – V is laying on her bed in her room listening to music over her bluetooth speaker. A red power light can be seen illuminated on the musical device. Keller arrives at the front door wearing his school uniform and knocks...

(Knock knock)

V hears the knock and ignores it. Mom walks up to the door and opens it.

Keller: Hey (Mom's Name), do you think V wants some company today?

V slowly scoots off her bed and makes her way to her bedroom door; cracking it ever-so gently as to not raise any suspicion of her curiosity.

Mom: (Looks towards V's room, then back at Keller) I'm so sorry, Keller—It's been another bad week. I wish I had better news for you this time, but... you know... it's just been really, really hard for us – especially her. I'm doing my best to...to just give her time... and I think you should too.

V tiptoes to her bed to pick up her phone and turn the music down a notch, then puts it in her pocket and tiptoes back to the door. She opens the door a little wider to listen more intently.

Keller: Oh ...ok, sorry. (Keller starts to turn to walk away with a somber look on his face, and turns back) I really miss her—And I know she’s sad, but I bought her the new “(video game title)” that came out last weekend. I spent my own money on it I’ve been saving — and was hoping she would want to play with me...and that maybe it would help.

V tears up. Emotions begin fueling through her, running wild. She gently opens her bedroom door just enough for her body to get out and quietly closes the door behind her. She pauses for a minute and listens, making sure she didn’t disrupt the conversation coming from the front door. Keller and Mom’s conversation continues uninterrupted.

V slowly moves down the hall (opposite from the front door) to her parent's room, making sure to be as quiet as possible. She slowly turns the handle, opens the door, and slides her body in; then gently pushes the door closed behind her. Mom and Keller’s conversation can still be heard from a distance, and is muffled to a point beyond understanding.

Beyond the door to her mothers room, her Dad’s old work clothes can be seen laid out on the side of the bed where he used to sleep. A white shirt, and pair of light grey, plaid suit pants. The shirt is crumpled into wrinkles and make-up stains are smeared in different spots of the shirt. 3 pairs of Dad’s shoes can be seen still under his side of the bed — a work pair, casual pair, and house shoes. The nightstand adjacent to his side of the bed remains unchanged — His lamp, watches, chargers, and all his little knick-knacks still remain there. Her moms side of the bed is un-made and wrinkled, with Mom’s clothes filling the floor on her side of the room along with an empty vodka bottle. Whether the clothes are dirty or clean is unknown. Her nightstand has 3 empty ice cream cartons with spoons stacked up, an empty liter of vodka, and a full pill bottle. An open closet can be seen with the light on. All of Dad’s old clothes can be seen hanging there — still present; untouched. A dresser drawer sits next to the closet with every drawer pulled out and different types of clothes hanging out of the top and middle drawers. V, still in tears, slowly sits on the bed. She gently feels her Dad’s clothes, realizing her mother is still holding them every night. V closes her eyes and lays on them on her back, with both eyes closed. She grabs the sleeve of the shirt and pulls it over her as she turns onto her side; tears continuing to stream down her face as her Dad’s familiar smell surrounds her. She opens her eyes to face her mother’s nightstand...and zeros in on the pill bottle.

(Dramatic music plays)

V stares at the bottle for longer than she should. Memories of the recent past flowing through her brain as voices of the loving, laughing experiences she shared with her father can be heard.

V reaches over and grabs the pill bottle... turning it to the label and holding it up to her face. “Take 1 every night for sleeping”

V: I’ll definitely sleep longer with these (she says to herself as she lowers her hands and opens the bottle of pills)

Just then, the muffled, distant conversation stops. A sense of shock comes over V's face as the front door can be heard shutting in the distance. In a panic, she jumps off the bed, causing her to drop the pill bottle with the pills spilling all over the floor of her Dad's side of the bed. V immediately drops to her knees and frantically picks up the pills one by one as fast as she can. Footsteps can be heard coming in her direction as she quickly shoves the remaining pills on the floor into her pocket, puts the lid back on the bottle, and sets it back on the nightstand. As she moves towards the door, she stops suddenly as she hears a knock at her own bedroom door.

(Knock Knock).

Mom: V? (She says delicately toward V's empty room)

V freezes. She looks down in thought as she reaches into her pocket and turns the volume up 2 notches on her bluetooth speaker from her phone—then gently presses the side of her face against the door. As the volume rises, Mom puts her hand on the doorknob. Her hand remains there as scenarios and consequences flutter through Mom's head of her next move.

Mom (continues): (Sigh) Keller came by for you. He said he had the new “**video game title**” and was hoping you wanted to play. (She says more forcibly, hoping to be heard over the raised volume of the music).

V remains silent as she stands in her parents room with her ear to the door. She lifts her phone and raises the volume of the speaker again to its maximum volume, assuring Mom that all further words will be drowned out completely. Mom, understanding there will be no communication coming from behind the door, sighs and removes her hand from the doorknob.

Mom: (Sigh) I love so much you, hunny...I don't know what to do. I just don't know what to do. I'm...I... (She says, her words going from loud to quiet, the back end of her words intending to not be heard over the loud music coming from behind the door).

Mom hangs her head, lifts her hand, and kisses it — then presses it against the door of V's room. If V would've been in her room, she wouldn't have heard her mother's words. V hangs her head and puts her hand on the backside of her parents room door. A brief second passes as neither Mom nor V know the other is doing the same gesture. It's clear they are both lost in the darkness of their loss; they are both so mentally fatigued from grief and both experiencing something of this magnitude for the first time.

Mom walks back down the hall toward the front door and into the living room. An old record player sits next to the couch with a record on the turntable. She presses the power button as a static noise comes over the speaker, followed by a familiar song. Mom sits on her couch and puts one hand over her eyes.

V hears the start of the music from the record player, and cracks open the door of Mom's bedroom. She slides out just as gracefully as she slid in, tiptoes to her room, opens the door, and gently shuts it behind her. V sits on her bed and sticks her hand in her pocket, revealing the exact amount of pills she's taken from her mothers pill bottle — and its a

lot. She shoves them back in her pocket as she lays on her back, pulls out her phone, and turns the volume down 2 notches; then she closes her eyes.

TIME CHANGES FROM AFTERNOON TO NIGHT – V is still in her bed tossing and turning. She wakes up with a jolt, sweating profusely; again showing she is having dreams of her father again. The speaker is still playing, now onto a different, more solemn song. Hours have passed since Keller had come by. All the sudden the speaker makes a noise...

Speaker: (BEEP BEEP) Low – Battery (Spoken in a robotic female voice)

V turns to lay on her side and uncomfortably shifts from the protrusion in her pocket. She sticks her hand in her pocket and pulls the pills out that she all-the-sudden remembered taking from the pill bottle earlier that day. She sets them on her bed next to her face and lies there staring at them as the song on her speaker continues to play. She stares at the pills as if they were a tiny infant not wanting to wake them. She slowly picks up a small amount and puts them into her mouth.

Speaker: (BEEP BEEP) Low – Battery.

Again, the speaker makes the noise trying to alert V of its dying battery—seemingly begging to have a say. Ignoring it, she grabs the remaining pills on the bed and shoves them into her mouth. V is seen swallowing the last of the remaining pills and gently puts her head back on her pillow. The current song ends as the next song begins, still somber, yet mellow and beautiful. After a few seconds of the new song, the speaker dies.

Speaker: (BEEP ... BOOP ... BOOP)

The power light can be seen fading from red into dark on the speaker as V closes her eyes.

(FADE TO BLACK, WITH ONLY THE RED DOT FROM THE SPEAKER REMAINING, UNTIL IT TOO SLOWLY FADES OUT)

Chapter 3

V'S ROOM – NIGHT – A red light can be seen blinking through the darkness. The setting is lit with a red light, focusing on the speaker as it turns itself back on and the same song starts playing. The light slowly pans out as the room slowly turns upside down. V's room is now upside down, with her speaker, bed, and all the contents of her room now on the ceiling as if held there by glue.

TUNNEL TO YOMI - NIGHT - V sits up, looking straight into nothing but darkness. She looks up at the ceiling for a moment, then back out into darkness. All that is visible is red above. As her eyes begin to adjust, she see's a faint outline of a makeshift tunnel of dark roots and branches coming up from the ground forming a circular tunnel leading into the darkness. She looks up at her red-lit, upside down room; and then again into the darkness of the tunnel. Confusion and panic can be seen coursing through her.

(Intense music plays)

(Rustling leaves can be heard as the Song playing from the speaker fades out). As V's eyes adjust, the outline of a feathery tail can be seen waving as the shadow of something digging in a pile of black leaves reveals itself in front of V. The creature's front half is hidden beneath the leaves and only a large, feathered tail and back paws can faintly be seen sticking out of the leaves. The only light that can be seen is the red light from the speaker in the now upside-down room, and a buried, blue light illuminating from the leaves.

V: Hell...Hello? (She says quietly choking on her words, tiptoeing closer to the creature)

The Creature continues rummaging through the leaves. V slowly advances toward it unsure of her whereabouts or whether or not the creature is even friendly.

V: "Hello?" (She says again with a clear tone)

The creature looks up quickly as the black leaves fall off its head back into the pile, revealing the head of a Hippo. V is startled by the sudden movement and steps back, tripping over a root sticking up out of the ground.

Creature: Oh hello there, V! I didn't mean to frighten you! Wait right here while I find...."

V: Where am...wait did you just talk to...and you know my...? (She says changing thoughts quickly)

Creature: All interesting questions! (The creature says joyfully looking back down into his leaf pile once again)

He sticks his snout down deep within the leaves to pull out a glowing, shiny, blue diamond-like object.

Creature: Ah here we are! (It exclaims as the object begins to gently float out of the leaves and in front of its face.)

The creature closes its eyes and the glowing light from the diamond-like object reveals a dormant jewel on the creature's forehead. The diamond object then majestically absorbs into the creature's gem, illuminating a wider area around the creature and V as it is being absorbed. The creature's jewel begins to illuminate a vibrant blue color constantly. The creature looks back up at V.

Creature (continues): Now — to answer your first half-question: you are currently in a ripple — a world within the frequency of your own — or, to speak more plainly, a plane between universes. There are an infinite amount of planes between space and time, and this — is Yomi.

V: Yomi. How interesting! (She says sarcastically.) Yea—I'm dreaming. (She tells herself assuredly looking behind her.)

Creature: (Ignoring her sarcasm) As for your last question: I am your guide, Kubu, and indeed I do know you! Well we just met but I know everything about you! Everyone who passes through the veil gets a guide; and even though this is my first time I must say you lucked out with me! Come along, come along! (Kubu sings joyfully)

Kubu rises quickly into the air and floats away from the leaves in the opposite direction of V; the blue light illuminating from his gem in front of him lighting his way down the dark tunnel. V doesn't move – still unsure if the events taking place are even happening. She remains standing under her upside-down room being illuminated by the red light from the speaker. V looks up and speaks...

V: Yea—I don't think so (She says to herself). I'm definitely dreaming. Just need to wake up...Just need to wake up. (V turns, and takes a step in the opposite direction).

Kubu turns his head so just his gem can be seen slowly bobbing up and down, looking in V's direction in the distance.

Kubu: (Speaking Loudly after her) Unfortunately, the time for dreaming is over. As all who have come before you, your choices and your actions are what brought you to Yomi. What is lost must be found!

V stops and turns toward Kubu.

V: What does that even mean? (V closes her eyes) Just. Wake. Up... WAKE UP!!! (She frustratingly tells herself.)

Kubu: Take all the time you need. (He says gingerly as he lays back on a bed of air and begins licking his front paw; very cat-like)

V stands for a moment with her eyes closed tight – then she opens one eye – and then her other, expecting to wake up from this confusing nightmare. But to her dismay, she remains standing a short ways away looking at Kubu licking it's paw, humming joyfully. In a panic, V turns and runs the opposite direction, only to reappear as if she walked through a portal to her exact location she was running away from. She does this 3 more times until, out of breath, she bends over with her hands on her knees.

V: How do I get out of here? I need to get back home, my mom will be worried.

Kubu: (Once again ignoring the question and floating in a “infinite sign” pattern) There are things to be said beyond words. Visions to be seen beyond sight. And Experiences to be lived beyond time. Come along! Come along!

Kubu begins floating down the branch-covered tunnel in the opposite direction. The only light once again going with him. Reluctantly, V shuffles her feet slowly behind him.

Kubu: Come along! Come along! (He says laughingly. His voice fading as he gains distance)

V's shuffling feet turn into a stride as she tries to keep up. She turns to look behind her and the red light from her room is now gone, leaving behind pure darkness. Fear strikes her face as she realizes she would be stuck in this dark place all alone if she lost Kubu.

V: Wait!

(Panic Music plays)

Kubu can be heard humming and chuckling in the distance as the blue light fades away. V is running full speed after him now; watching the blue light vanish in the distance.

V: Wait Up! (She says out of breath) Don't leave me here!

V continues her sprint after Kubu through the darkness until she slams into a wall of branches at the end of the tunnel; her body falling back as it absorbs the shock from impact. Kubu can no longer be heard — just silence. V leans up not being able to see a thing, and feelings of loneliness and panic start to set in. Suddenly, Kubu floats down from above. His elbows bent and front paws under his chin (very humanlike); his back paws are kicking in the sky. His tail is fluttering back and forth as he slowly floats down on his belly.

Kubu: You're not going to lose me that easily!

(Song - Kubu feature - "Come Along")

As Kubu begins his song, the ground shakes beneath V and a circular platform begins to rise up from beneath her. As she rises, Kubu's light exposes the root system fused into a dirt-like substance surrounding them circularly as they rise faster and faster upward on some type of underground elevator. Then, as if tearing through a sheet of paper, they rip upward into a place unlike anything V had ever seen. A gigantic, illuminated tree stands next to her as they are freed from the roots beneath the ground. The sky is full of galaxies, planets, faint stars, and solar systems — too many to count; but no sun. Kubu continues to sing as V walks through the new reality, experiencing the world and all its strange features. Many trees can be seen walking on their own; some just beginning to illuminate and some losing their light.

Butterfly-like creatures can be seen surrounding the trees, landing on them with their dark bodies, and illuminating themselves as they fly away from the trees. As more and more dark butterflies reach an illuminated tree, they begin to glow brighter and brighter as the tree grows dimmer and dimmer. Once the tree is completely dark, the butterflies all leave in a swarm as they reach another dark tree and reverse the process. The grass and strange flowers glow in unison as they continue to reveal the Yomi landscape. Throughout the entirety, V can be seen still skeptical about her true whereabouts.

(Song ends)

Kubu is flying in a circular pattern around V as the song comes to a close.

V: I don't want to be here, none of this is real! Get away from me! (She says angrily swinging her hand at Kubu)

Kubu: What is lost — MUST be found!

V: WHY do you keep saying THAT!? (She yells angrily) WHY am I HERE? WHY won't you let me OUT OF HERE?

V frustratingly sits down on a strange looking object she thought was a rock.

Rock: Hey, watch it!

V: Ah! Oh...sorry (She says standing, rubbing her arm in embarrassment)

The rock grows hundreds of tiny, pink feet beneath it that glow as it scurries away in the opposite direction. Kubu's floating slowly comes to a stop and he lands gently in front of her, securing all 4 paws on the ground.

Kubu: What is the last thing you remember before you came here, V? (His voice suddenly stiff for the first time since they met)

V lifts her head to focus on the creature as she notices the change in tone.

V: I was in my room listening to music and I fell asleep. That's how I know this is a dream. (She says with conviction)

Kubu reaches his hand into the air and pulls out V's speaker.

Speaker: (**BEEP. BEEP.**) Low — Battery

V's eyes fixate on the speaker. She remembers.

Kubu: You see? It's all coming back to you now! Come along! Come along! (He says returning to his joyful manner, floating back into the air heading away from V)

V: This — no...NO...so that's why I can't wake up? (She says innocently) Is there anyway out of here? (She says following him)

Kubu: (Chuckles) Trust in Kubu! We must go through Yomi first!

Kubu pulls a glowing instruction manual out of the air as they walk. He can be seen turning the pages with his mind.

Kubu (continues): It says here we go through Yomi, Kosho, and Utsu and then we will find our way to Ukeire! I've never been to Ukeire but I've heard it is absolutely breathtaking! You know...I've actually never been to any of these. Hmph!

V: Wait... how do you expect to guide me somewhere you've never been? (She says to Kubu). I can't believe I'm even following this thing — I've lost my mind (She says to herself).

Kubu: Trust in Kubu! What is lost MUST be found!

V: (grunts angrily)

Chapter 4

YOMI GRASSY HILL – DAY – After some time, Kubu and V travel up a large hill. On top of the hill stands a tiny cottage; bent out of shape like it was pulled in different directions using a giant wad of clay. Green smoke can be seen steadily coming out of a bent chimney, and the cottage contains one small, circular window – and no door. The 2 companions slowly make their way to the window. Kubu, acting like he’s seen this before, doesn’t care to look inside. He gently floats to where his back is leaning against the outside wall of the cottage, and folds his arms; insinuating the window is meant for V – and V’s eyes only. V looks at Kubu, then slowly walks up to the window and peers inside. To her surprise, she sees a strange version of her old living room with her Mom sitting in a rocking chair – rocking back and forth in front of the fireplace – humming to a tune from the record player sitting next to her.

V: MOM?

V knocks on the window.

V: MOM! MOM I’M HERE! (She yells frantically banging on the window.)

V knocks on the window more forcefully now—hoping for an opportunity to be saved from her current reality, and to wake her up from this nightmare. To her dismay, there is no response from beyond the window. Mom’s humming and the record player stop at the same time, as V notices a dark shape off to the side moving toward Mom. V’s eyes widen.

V: DAD! (She yells even louder, banging on the window as if her hand was a mallet) Why can’t they hear me? Kubu!? (She says looking over at the creature)

Kubu remains silent as V looks from him back to the window. The dark figure walks to Mom’s side. Mom looks up to kiss him as he leans over to kiss her, revealing a baby wrapped up in her arms. He walks to the record player. takes the record off of the turntable, and flips it over.

Mom: Take her for a second hunny?

As Dad puts the needle back on the record, a familiar song comes on. He walks behind Mom, puts his hand on her head, and kisses it before reaching down to pick up the baby. He puts the baby’s head against his shoulder and begins dancing slowly and singing softly to the tune from the record.

Tears fill V’s eyes as the musical familiarity courses through her veins with strict emotion. She looks around and finds a broken branch lying a few feet from a dark tree next to the cottage. She runs over to the branch, picks it up, and with all her might she slams the branch into the window; shattering the glass into pieces. As the window breaks, the shards of glass float in front of her as if someone just turned on a zero-

gravity switch. Green smoke pours out of the window, and like a tornado the smoke surrounds the cottage, and seemingly swallows the entire building; lifting it up and squishing it down corner by corner like origami. Before V could say anything, the green smoke condenses into a tiny orb of green light. Where the cottage sat, an orb remains in its place and shines a bright green as it floats in place. Slowly the orb floats toward Kubu, and he closes his eyes as the orb gets absorbed within the gem on his forehead like a milkshake being sucked through a straw. The light illuminating from Kubu's gem changes from blue to green in an instant. Kubu opens his eyes as V stands there in disbelief, still holding the branch. A single, lingering shard of glass seen stuck in the branch dissolves into green smoke and swirls through the air toward Kubu before being absorbed by the green gem on his forehead.

V: Wa-wha-what just happened? Why did you take them away from me? Why couldn't they hear me? Wha—

Kubu: What you saw, I did not create; nor did I allow you to see. (He interjected) You saw the creation. The beginning. Everything you have ever experienced began in that moment of love, as all things do. (He says intently) Hmmm...

Kubu makes the glowing instruction manual re-appear again.

Kubu (continues): Says here "Tell them to...Trust — Now is not the time for understanding. All will be revealed."

V wipes the tears and dust from her face. Then with a frustrating yell, she throws the branch at Kubu, who casually floats over it.

Kubu: Hey now that's not very nice! Fine, I'll just leave you alone and you can figure all this out by yourself!

Kubu's body begins dissolving away.

Kubu (continues): None of the other guides ever said anything about how difficult this would be so early on (He says to himself in a frustrated tone as the bottom half his body disappears). Come to think of it I didn't even talk to the other guides about how it would be...anyway, good luck and good riddance! (He says as the last of his upper half fades away)

Just like that, in a flash Kubu disappears into the air, leaving V standing silently on the hill — alone.

V: Oh that's just great! Thanks so much!

She waits for a response, getting none.

V: Yea ok go ahead and leave me too, I'm starting to get used to it! (She says fighting the tears back) I didn't ask for help from some weird, annoying little... THING anyway!

V starts to walk toward one side of the hill...slows down... and looks out. Then turns to walk toward the other side, and stops – realizing she was turned around by the events that just took place and has no idea which way she came from. V takes a deep breath, and then exhales.

V: (Sigh) Kubu? (She yells) I don't know where I'm going! I'm sorry, please don't go!

Silence.

V (continues): Come on, what will the others say if you give up after your very first chance of being a guide? And I promise not to throw anything at you again!

Kubu's head pops back into sight. The rest of his body still invisible.

Kubu: I'm still here (he says with a chuckle as his head pops back into sight). You can go "ms kukoo crazy lady" all you want, but you won't be getting rid of me. (The rest of his body materializes) I have nothing but time, and my purpose is to get you to Ukerie.

From above, V hears a thunderous noise as an upright, rectangular object descends from the sky and lands in between her and Kubu. Standing before them exactly where the cottage stood is a set of 1940's-style Elevator doors with a gate in front. Kubu floats over to the panel and closes his eyes. As he does so, the panel turns green to match his gem.

(DING)

The elevator rings as the gate moves to the side with a creak and the elevator doors open.

Kubu: After you... (He says with a smile as his tail motions toward the open doors like a bellhop welcoming a new hotel guest)

V looks inside the elevator, then steps to the side and looks behind it. There is no sense of dimensions about the vessel, just the two-dimensional doors creating a portal leading to an elevator shaft.

V: Trust...right? (She says veering over at Kubu)

Kubu shakes his head in agreement as his tail still points toward the open elevator doors.

Chapter 5

ELEVATOR SHAFT – LIGHTING ONLY FROM PANEL – V steps into the elevator, and before Kubu can get inside, the doors quickly close and the elevator begins moving up. V quickly steps up to the doors and looks at the panel, noticing there are no buttons, only a green-lit panel. She tries pressing the lit panel from the inside to get the doors to open – No luck. She bangs on the door with that mallet hand...then she steps back, and closes her eyes.

V: Trust. (She calmly tells herself as she takes a deep breath and closes her eyes)

Her mind returns to the little cottage — her Dad flipping over the record and kissing his hand atop his mom's head — and seeing herself wrapped in a blanket while Mom slowly rocks her back and forth. Her mind starts to wonder...

V: You left us. You left me. You didn't even say goodbye... (She sadly says to herself)

The elevator sounds, as V hears an abnormally eerie "ding."

(DIiNnGggg)

Before she can open her eyes, the green brightness from the elevator panel she can see within her closed eyes turns to a bright red as the elevator comes to a bumpy stop. The doors start to open with a creak — and gets stuck suddenly — offering V a slim glimpse through the narrow, parallel opening in the door...

ELEVATOR SHAFT — IKARI REALM — Heat seeps through the doors as she looks out of the opening. Smoke dissipates revealing Fire. Rivers...of Fire — Treacherous, smoldering, mountain-like terrain as far as she can see with smoke in every direction. And the smell — the god-awful smell. The instant fear and smells combine to cause a fit of nausea in V's stomach that shows on her face as she covers her mouth with her right hand. As the smoke dissolves she notices the "mountains" are bodies climbing and fighting over each other in an attempt to flee the fire surrounding them. Many transparent cubes are seen floating in the air containing fire in each one, and V can make out the outline of people flailing around inside the small quarters.

Strange, humanoid-winged creatures can be seen through the door slit. Some beating on the outsides of the cubes, some unleashing spews of lava over the infinite amount of bodies. Endless screams for mercy and pain are coming from every direction. Her eardrums begin to shake from the excruciating level of the screams as she lifts her hand from her mouth; joining its left companion to cover both her ears.

(Intense music plays)

A kraken-type giant erupts through one of the taller mountains of bodies in the distance. The creature explodes through it like a volcano sending what seems like hundreds of thousands of bodies into the air with a gut-wrenching screech. Some of the bodies are snatched by the winged creatures in mid air. V, in utter disbelief and terror, slowly steps back against the wall of the elevator. Fear shivers down her spine and her eyes fully widen as the redish-orange light narrows on the middle of her face to a slit from the open space in the elevator doors. The painful moaning and frantic screaming start pulsing through the elevator shaft — as all of the sudden a set of decaying, frail fingers appear through the slit of the elevator doors. A large, veiny wing appears and attempts to push on the left side of the elevator. A set of pointy fingers grab onto the right elevator door and slowly grip onto it as a terrifying face of melting skin and dripping eyes appear into the narrow slit — looking directly into the elevator shaft — and right into V's eyes... shocking her to the very core of her soul. As the creature's wing strives to open the left door, the decaying hand reaches in through the opening in the doors swatting at the air

in an attempt to get closer to V. The left door slightly creaks as it gives away just a tiny bit, allowing the hand of the creature to enter the elevator shaft ever-so closely to V's face. The elevator shakes with a rumble as a singular claw from the creature's other wing attaches to the right elevator door. An intense, loud screech bellows from the creature, amplifying the already pulsating screams.

V lets out a loud shriek and closes her eyes, shaking in fear. In an instant, the doors forcibly slam on the humanoid's arm. With a screech of pain, the doors to the elevator slam closed, detaching the creature's arm from its shoulder and falling to the floor at V's feet. The sound of screams vanish immediately, leaving V in silence. The fingers of the severed arm come to life and attempt to crawl towards V as the panel in the elevator turns back to green. V opens her eyes to see a different creature standing right in front of her in the tight space who steps on the arm, stopping it from advancing closer to V.

V: (Screams) WHAT DO YOU WANT? (She says paralyzed by fear, gripping the back of the elevator and closing her eyes again; expecting the worst)

Kubu: What is lost — must be found... (He says with a smirk)

V opens her eyes — minus the hippo head, furry body, paws, and feathery tail...it was Kubu. In front of her stands a short, child-like humanoid who's entire body is different from Kubu's animalistic stature. He now stands upright, but slouched. His long arms hang past his knees and his knees bend in the opposite direction, causing him to slouch forward for balance. His skin is droopy with a set of pointy ears on top his head. The gem shining a bright green, glowing from his forehead. V's grip starts easing off the back wall as she raises her hands to her chest; rubbing her hands together (she gripped the elevator wall so tightly it felt like she'd bruised her finger bones).

Kubu: Sorry about that — Ikari is definitely NOT one of our stops, and I don't know what the malfunction was but I'll talk to my friends over in the maintenance department...

Kubu's eyes instantly drift off as if in a dream. He looks toward the elevator door in a state of wonder.

Kubu (continues): You know, I don't think I've ever met the crew over in maintenance... (He pauses) Anyway, I'm sure I'll be able to chat with them once we wrap this up.

V slumps down on an angle as if every bone in her body just melted, now sitting against the back-right wall she once held so tightly. Her arms fall to the floor beside her as her left knee, bent, shakes from the nervous anxiety just experienced a moment before. Her head now rests against the right side of the elevator in a state of shock as she stares blankly at the severed arm on the floor. Kubu moves to the side of her and plops down next to her.

V: Those people...those were all...people... (She says, her voice trembling almost in a whisper)

Kubu: Ah I wouldn't worry about them. I've learned there is an infinite number of realms across space and time. Seriously, Billions and Trillions of them. So – if you can think of it – chances are it exists out there somewhere...

V doesn't move. Doesn't speak. It all resonates with her now: This is NOT a dream. She is really in this place – and this is all very, very real.

Kubu: Take all the ti...

(DING)

The elevator sounds as it comes to a slow stop. V looks up in horror at the closed elevator doors; the shaft lit up green from the gem and elevator panel, jointly.

Kubu (continues): Ah, nevermind, we're here!

Chapter 6

ELEVATOR SHAFT – KOSHO REALM – DAYTIME – The elevator doors fully open to reveal a large, beautiful landscape full of hundreds of different flowers as far as she could see. Flowers of every color and size line pathways along with gorgeous hedges. Floating butterflies can be seen and sounds of birds singing fill V's ears. In the distance she sees a row of tall, red-leaved trees outlining a walking path. Classical music can be heard faintly in the distance. V breathes a sigh of relief as she uses all her strength to raise to her feet and ease out the door. Kubu removes his foot from the arm as V kicks it as hard as she can out the elevator doors. The arm soars through the air as V breathes, and walks out into the new world. She walks 5 steps ahead as Kubo follows behind her, and both take in the grand sights of nature in front of them. V's strength leaves her as she falls to her knees, and lets a smile sneak across her mouth.

V: It's beautiful. (She says in aw)

Kubu is still standing in front of the elevator doors, and has his glowing instruction manual hovering in front of his face.

(DING)

V quickly raises to her feet and spins around to see the elevator doors close behind Kubu. The two-dimensional shape rises back into the sky, disappearing into a cloud above them. V's eyes follow the shape as it fades away; then looks back at Kubu.

Kubu: Welcome to Kosho! (He says still looking at his manual, not fazed in the slightest by the departing elevator).

(Classical Music and talking can be heard faintly in the distance)

The instruction manual vanishes as Kubu looks ahead toward the red-leaved trees.

Kubu (continues): Follow the path. I'm sure wherever that music is coming from is where we need to go.

For the first time since they met in the tunnels beneath Yomi, V didn't question the creature. Maybe she understood her only way out of this was to do whatever Kubu says – or maybe it was the state of shock she was still in from the series of events that happened in the elevator shaft not 5 minutes before. Whatever it was, she quietly turned away from Kubu and began silently walking in the direction of the trees.

KOSHO – DAYTIME – As V walks through the trees, music and vocal chatter continues to get louder with every step. The pathway leads to a large opening centrally located within the garden full of at least 150 people, all in chairs, laughing and conversing away with one another. Kubu stops next to V as they look out over the event taking place. A sea of suits and ties in a variety of colors, gorgeous dresses, and sparkling gowns fill the seats all facing away from them. Before V had time to think, the music stops and all the conversations come to a sudden halt. It was as if the moment had been frozen in time, because V couldn't even hear the birds chirping anymore. V started to take a step back as everyone turns in their chairs to look right at her – like they had been waiting for her.

V stops in her tracks and whispers to Kubu, who is still standing next to her, all while making sure not to move her eyes off the crowd of people piercing through her soul with their stares.

V: (Whispers in Kubu's direction) I think they're scared of you, dude.

(Piano begins playing Bridal Chorus)

The piano immediately starts playing as everyone stands. V turns around to see a young, familiar face walking up behind her.

V: Mom?

Mom has the most beautiful, white wedding dress on with diamonds perfectly placed, and a diamond headband that all glimmers in the sunlight. In her right hand is a bouquet of yellow flowers, and her left arm is wrapped in her grandfather's as he slowly guides her right past V and Kubu. Neither look over at the odd couple of V and Kubu.

V understands now, and she looks down to Kubu...

V: These are all... memories? So we're not really here.

Before Kubu could answer, a tiny, 5-year-old girl casually holding up the long tail of Mom's dress is seen following behind her. The girl has blonde, braided hair wearing a tiny version of a bridesmaid's dress. The tail of Mom's wedding dress is full of yellow flower petals. As V's Mom and grandfather slowly walk down the aisle toward the front of the crowd, the young girl can be seen picking up handfuls of the flower petals and throwing them up into the air in every direction as she follows her Mom. Pure joy is seen on the child's face as the crowd of people smile and laugh at the cute site of the little girl's happiness overload. As they are about to arrive at the end of the aisle, the girl

suddenly drops the tail of the dress and b-lines it up a set of steps. A man dressed in a perfectly tailored, navy blue suit with a yellow boutonniere pinned on his suit jacket is bent down on one knee with his arms open wide. An arch of yellow flowers stands behind him; the floral vines fan out on its sides and intertwine along lattices on both sides, stretching in both directions behind the groomsmen and bridesmaids on their respective side. The tiny girl and man embrace as a tear can be seen streaking down his face.

V: Dad... (she says quietly watching the events unfold before her). I know this place...

V begins walking forward in disbelief as it all registers in her mind what she is witnessing. Just ahead of V, her Mom hugs her grandfather as Dad stands upright; his left hand holding the young V's hand. He wipes the tears from his eyes with his right hand and looks on as Mom turns to walk up the steps toward the floral arch. When she reaches the top of the steps, young V releases Dad's hand and runs over to Mom, who bends down and gives her a big hug and kiss as the piano fades out and the Marriage Officiant begins to speak...

Marriage Officiant: You may be seated (He says to the crowd).

The crowd of people all sit as young V has her back to the crowd, standing between her Mom and Dad; holding each of their hands with the biggest smile on her face as the ceremony continues. Mom and Dad are looking deeply into each others eyes as they both hold one of V's hands. The sound trails off from the marriage officiant as V looks down at Kubu.

V: I get it — they can't see me. But I don't get why I'm here? What does your little manual say I'm supposed to do?

Kubu's instruction manual appears in front of him and, using his mental power, he slowly turns it to show V the illuminated writing on the page.

V: (Reading) "Trust — All will be revealed." Yea — thanks. I think I've heard that somewhere before (she says sarcastically rolling her eyes).

Kubu: (Once again ignoring V's sarcasm) So beautiful. So pure. I can feel so much love here.

V looks up, absorbing the event in front of her.

V: I remember this day. We were all so happy ...for so long...then he left us...

V's expression suddenly changes as all the dark memories of that dreadful day come flooding back to her. Before she had a chance to say anything, a burst of red light appears on her face. She looks down to see Kubu's gem was no longer green — it was now red. The clouds quickly drift to shade the sun, filling the sky as far as she could see. V looks up to the sky as a thunderous rumble can be heard. Then like a hammer, the clouds drop down surrounding V and Kubo in a light, red-lit fog. As the sky falls, all the chairs, suits, gowns and dresses of the wedding guests fade into the fog like sugar dissolving in coffee; leaving an empty, gloomy, grassy environment. Kubu is the first to speak.

Kubu: Well that was unexpected.

V: What — is — happening?

Kubu: Utsu (he says softly looking ahead where the flower arch stood)

A fog creeps over the empty space as tombstones begin to forcefully thrust their way out of the ground in rows. V's eyes widen as what was once a bright, happy memory is replaced by a foggy cemetery in an instant. Mom, Dad and young V are the only ones remaining as the steps that led to the flowery arch turn into a grassy hill. She takes a couple steps forward toward the alter, noticing that it is starting to fade away as the environment of Utsu ravagely appears; replacing all the beauty from Kosho. All the flowers and gardens are gone, and standing iron gates rise up from the ground lining their location in their place. V looks up as Dad slowly fades away, revealing Mom and young V standing there holding hands — now looking out over a lonely gravestone.

(Lights begin to flicker as young V is now replaced with a teenage V, who never let go of Mom's hand despite the age transition)

V: NO. NO. PLEASE NO. What the hell is this? Why are you making me re-live this again?!
(She yells at Kubu)

Kubu: I know it may be hard for you to hear... but you are changing this vision. You have been the catalyst for everything we have been through thus far.

V doesn't move. She looks on as teenage V bends down and places yellow flowers on the gravestone. Teenage V looks up at Mom with tears in her eyes as Mom kneels down and embraces her.

(Piano plays)

V walks up behind them as Mom stands up, and attempts to assist teenage V in helping her to her feet. In the process, teenage V melts and becomes hysterically erratic. She screams as she yanks on her Mom's hand falling back to the ground with a river of tears flow down her face.

Teenage V: DAD — NO... DADDY — PLEASE DAD PLEASE...PLEASE... (She screams)

Mom catches her balance almost falling over herself with one hand still holding tightly onto teenage V's hand; with teenage V's other arm, outstretched, reaching desperately toward the gravestone. Mom is crying now, doing her best to fight the tears off as she bends down and wraps both her arms under teenage V's armpits from behind her, lifting her up the best she can through the hysteria and dragging her away from the gravestone. Teenage V doesn't stop yelling or reaching for the gravestone until they are out of sight, leaving V and Kubu standing in front of the abandoned gravestone on the grassy hill alone — in complete silence.

Kubu's gem returns to its green form as the fog begins to dissipate and a yellow light can be seen shining from the bouquet of yellow flowers left at the foot of the tombstone. V steps over to the bouquet and picks up the single illuminated flower from within the bouquet; and holds it close to her chest.

V: Why did this have to happen? What could I have done to make sure he didn't leave me.... It's all my fault he's gone. It's all my fault...

Kubu: You must understand, V, when the universe decides it is your time, no action by you or another soul can undo that decision. As a human, the only thing you know for certain is that one day – you will die.

Kubu extends his hand out toward V with his palm facing the sky as the flower raises out of her grasp and begins floating in the air slowly toward him.

Kubu: Every day when you open your eyes in the morning, you know you're alive... and you know that some day you will leave in death. Everyone's "Life" in your realm is a series of events making up a timeline of experiences; none of which can be predicted to perfection by anyone. These timelines have all been written before your birth, and every decision made throughout your life has been pre-determined.

The flower, now directly in front of him, illuminates his face in a bright yellow light.

V: Why do I feel so lost – so empty? So...angry...? (She says looking down at the tombstone)

Kubu: Suffering is a part of the human existence. Without suffering, there is no healing. Without healing, there is no growth – and without growth, there is no reason to be.

V looks on as the bright, yellow flower slowly absorbs into the gem on Kubu's forehead, causing the gem to change from green to yellow. Almost immediately after the gem changes colors, the clouds slowly disperse, revealing a sunbeam that illuminates V and the tombstone beside her. V looks into the sun's ray as a familiar rectangular shape materializes from the blinding light and descends toward the ground. V turns to look at the tombstone, and the bouquet of yellow flowers laying in front of it.

—TOMBSTONE READS —

NAME

Loving father and husband

1988-2025

The elevator completes its descent as V turns around to face it. To her surprise, standing there before her are shiny, gold elevator doors standing in place of the previous 1940's style elevator she was in before. The panel, now lit up yellow, creating a bright, reflective yellow aura around the floating contraption.

(DING)

Kubu: Shall we?

(FADE TO BLACK)

Chapter 7

*** * I N T E R M I S S I O N (15 Minutes) * ***

FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA — EARLY AFTERNOON — LATE SPRING — V, Dad, and Mom are on a beach vacation. The day is perfect. There is not one cloud in the sky. The sun is shining bright and the temperature is a perfect 74 degrees. Mom and Dad lay on their own respective wooden, blue beach chair with a large, blue and white umbrella sticking out of a narrow table in between them. The table is small but fuses the chairs together into one. Dad sits slightly leaned back in his chair reading Anthony Keidis' "Scar Tissue" as Mom lays on her belly, eyes closed, soaking in the rays of sun. V is lying on her over-sized Cheetah towel in front of the chairs with her earbuds in, scrolling through her phone. Occasionally she'll chuckle as she sees the next meme slide by and watches the next fail video.

V: (Laughs) Dad, look at this! (She says handing the phone in his direction)

Dad folds the book over his finger as not to lose his place, and leans forward to take the phone with his opposite hand. He brings the phone up closer to his face and laughs at the video on her phone.

Dad: Ooo ouch! That one hurt. (He says grimacing. A smile forms over while handing the phone back to her)

V: So dumb! (She says chuckling as she takes the phone and continues scrolling)

Seagulls can be heard from above and music can be heard faintly in the distance from a young group of male beach friends; all in short board shorts—each with a different color-scheme and design—and some formation of a flat-billed hat on their head. Most of the group has fit physiques, with one of the guys very heavy-set; his gut protrudes toward the sky like the Superdome, continuing past his waistline before it comes to a perfect semi-circle over the top button of his baggy swim shorts. He is passed out cold with a large, straw gardening hat over his face. His large belly has been absorbing the sun's rays for at least an hour as his skin pigments to a **bright red color**. The rest of the boys are all beer-in-hand, throwing a football along the waterline and diving into the water to catch it; often cat calling the younger women forced to walk in front of them along the waves crashing against the shore.

Mom turns her head to face Dad.

Mom: I totally wanted to come to the beach and hear THIS... not the waves or the birds or the wind...just THIS particular playlist (She says towards him smirking)

Dad: (looking out toward the group) Young and free! Not a care in the world. Good luck in the future boys (He says with a smirk, side-eyeing mom and reaching out to grab her hand)

Mom smiles as she holds his hand for a brief second and then puts it back under her head. Dad opens his book back up to his finger-marked page and continues reading. Suddenly, the book dramatically swings down in his hand and slaps against the wooden beach chair. He looks out over the water washing against the shoreline with a blank look on his face. V feels the sudden change in energy and takes her left earbud out, looking up at Dad. The expression on his face makes him almost unrecognizable to her – it was as if his soul had been ripped away from him; morphing his face into a different version of the same person. She thought he was going to cry.

V: Can't hang huh? (She says to Dad with a forced smirk, unconsciously hoping to break his trance)

Dad ignores her. He stands up with his book in his hand, and turns to walk up the sandy path towards the pier jetting out from their condo building.

Dad: I'm gonna go up for a bit (He says not turning around to look for any acknowledgement from them)

One of the boys from the group next to them walks over to the radio beneath their umbrella and turns up the volume, bobbing his arms and hands up and down to a catchy hip-hop song. V looks over for just a moment as the other boys all join in and start dancing hysterically around their large friend, still passed out in his chair.

V: You ok? (She says to Dad while still looking at the boys)

No answer. She turns her head back to see Dad is already too far to hear her over the volume of the music coming from the group—now almost halfway to the pier—leaving behind his book and his beach backpack still sitting idly next to his wooden chair.

V: Wierdo. (She says looking back down at her phone to continue the mindless process of scrolling)

After another hour, the girls decide it's time to call it a day. Mom looks out at their ice chest, rafts, and beach bags and then over at V...

Mom: I hope he doesn't think WE are bringing all this back up with us. Call him to come down and help us, please (She says putting her sunscreen back in her beach bag)

With a sigh, V goes to her favorites and presses her Dad's name at the top, followed by the speaker phone button. The phone's dial tone can be heard and continues until his robotically generic voicemail is heard, followed by the beep.

(BEEP)

V: Uhhh HEY Bum! Thanks so much for leaving us with all this stuff to bring up, how about coming down here and being helpful for once? Thanks! (She says firmly, knowing Dad would get the humor behind it)

V aggressively presses the button on her phone and hangs up.

V: (Sigh) He didn't answer. I'll text him (She says to Mom).

Mom: No he must be napping. Let's just grab what we can and he can come grab the ice chest (She says grabbing her bag and a raft)

V fills her arms with as much as she can carry and her and Mom begin walking up the sand toward the pier.

BEACH CONDO — EARLY EVENING — The sound of the keycard beeping their entry into their condo is heard from behind the door as V opens it and enters the room. Mom can be seen setting the raft outside next to the door as her beach bag slips off her shoulder and falls to her elbow as she sets it down.

Mom: (Ugh) Thanks for the help! (She yells from the doorway into the condo, hoping to make a patronizing impact)

V walks to the dining room table and sets her bag down along with her phone; then she takes off her sunglasses and raises them to sit atop her head. The sunset can be seen from the sliding glass doors, staining the condo with an **orangish-yellow tint**. The living room furniture is all empty, with a single, lonely lamp illuminating a small area of the room.

V: Dad? (She says with her voice slightly raised, walking towards the room her parents were using.)

Their bedroom door was open as V takes a look inside the room. The bed is perfectly made from the housekeepers who must've come while they were enjoying their day at the beach. The blinds on the windows are pulled down, but open, causing the sunset's **orangish-yellow tint** to streak into the room and across the bed; creating slivers of darkness in between each stripe of color. Sitting, placed with an almost precision in the center of the bed, is Dad's phone. The light to the connected bathroom is off and a stale silence resonates throughout the room.

V: He's not here? (She says turning to Mom)

Mom: What? (Mom says walking to stand next to V, taking a look inside the room for herself)

V: ...and he left his phone.

A sense of urgency ignites within Mom. V can tell something isn't right judging by Mom's sudden facial expression, as Mom turns and walks toward the front door; slow enough attempting to not raise any alarms to V. Despite her attempt, V was already feeling anxious as soon as she saw Mom's expression change. Mom opens the front door as the sound of the door unlatching is heard, and she walks to the front balcony looking out over the edge.

Mom: Car's still here... (She says turning around, deep in thought)

Mom (continues): Oh well, he'll be back soon I guess (She says unconvincingly, leaning back against the outside balcony; her hands fidgeting together at her waist side.)

A Timelapse occurs as early evening turns to night. Hours have passed now as the street lamps illuminate the parking lot and lights brighten up the doors outside each condo. Mom and V are seen sitting at the dining room table hovered over Mom's phone.

Phone Voice: No, I'm sorry, there's no one by that name at this hospital. I can give you the number of the urgent care across the bay if you'd like to try there?

Mom: No that's ok, thank you (She says pressing the screen of her phone, hanging up before the voice on the other end could respond)

With a deep breath out, Mom puts her elbows on the table. Both of her hands slide onto her forehead and fingers slip through the hair of her hairline. Thin, long strands of hair fumble over the joints in her fingers as she looks wide-eyed at the glass dining room table like a magical answer would appear any second.

V: It's been hours, why don't we go look for him?

Mom doesn't respond. She's still looking at the table, waiting for the answer bubble to appear out of thin air.

V: MOM, hello? (She says forcefully)

Mom: What? Uh...yea...ok... (She says taking her hands off her head and folding her arms over one another on the table; some of her hair remains extremely misplaced from the saltiness of the ocean)

V: At least we know he's not in the hospital—and his phone is here so we can call it while we're gone in case he comes back (She says standing up).

Mom: Yea...ok... (She says distantly)

Mom stands up slowly and grabs the car keys off the bar behind her. V is already at the front door waiting anxiously. Mom walks up and opens the door as they both head outside—the door closing behind them as the mechanics are heard latching; leaving a dark, quiet, lifeless room behind them.

The closed door remains center frame. The orangish-yellow light turns into a bright orange, followed by darkness as the door slowly moves further and further away. The **vibration** can be heard from Dad's phone as V sends a new text message, illuminating the bedroom for a brief moment and being reflected off the white door frame as it comes into view:

Phone reads, "Please as soon as you get back home, please call me! Mom's freaking out!"

As the door moves further, a faint light is all that remains from the small lamp in the living room, creating a silent, eerie ambiance.

The door falling further still.

Now the dining room table, couch and living room lamp come into view, with the door remaining distantly central. The **sound of a car** can be heard pulling up; followed by the faint **sound of car doors closing** and a “**beep beep**” of the familiar car alarm as the doors lock. A “**ding**” can be heard from an elevator along with **footsteps getting closer** to the outside of the door. The door lock “**beeps**” from the keycard and the **latch is heard opening** as the door slowly swings open with a **creak**.

V is the first to enter, and leaves the door open as **she shuffles her feet** into the condo. V takes over as the central focus. Behind her, Mom arrives through the door a few seconds later, her face red and eyes swollen from crying. V continues to drift closer to the living room, and she stops at the door frame of her parents bedroom. She slowly turns her body toward the door frame, pausing for a second before finally **shuffling her feet** into the bedroom—remaining the central figure in frame.

The **sound of the keys hitting and sliding along the granite countertop** of the bar is heard from the other room as V stands in the silence of her parents condo bedroom. The camera pans around to show the side of V as the rest of the dark bedroom and the doorframe of the opaque bathroom come into frame. A vibration is heard from Dad’s phone on the bed and it lights up from an incoming email, briefly illuminating the dark room for a moment in a pale, white light. Behind V’s left shoulder, a half-standing privacy wall divides the bathroom sink area, mirror and vanity drawers from the bedroom that fuse into an open doorframe to the toilet and shower area. As V remains staring at the phone notification, behind her the light reaches just far enough to reveal an opaque outline of the upper half of a person into the darkness of the bathroom door.

V looks at the phone and turns to walk out the bedroom, as she notices the shadow figure just before the phone fades back to black. A shiver rattles up her spine as she slowly shuffles her way to the bathroom door. As she reaches the short privacy wall, her left hand fumbles along the wall next to the mirror like a spider making a web—no luck on a light switch. Accepting defeat, she turns to face a dark outline of the white bathroom door frame; the opaque, rectangular black hole of the inside slowly gliding closer...and closer. The sink turns on in the kitchen as the sound of dishes clanking together in the from the next room infiltrate the silence.

(SUDDEN CRACKING PLASTIC)

V stops and lifts up her right foot to see a square piece of plastic lying on the floor. She bends over and picks up the foreign object, studying it for a second...

V: (Looking confused) Mom? (She hollers in the direction of the bedroom door)

Mom doesn’t answer as she nervously scrubs another dish from the sink in the kitchen. V sets the object on the counter beneath the mirror, and turns back to face the framed void. The sound of the water erupting out of the sink gets louder...and louder; forming

into a white noise vibrating inside V's ears. The frame of the door glides closer...and closer—until the frame is absorbed into darkness. The vibration suddenly stops as Mom turns the sink off, and silence falls over her.

(FADE TO BLACK)

The light switch is heard as the soft-white light turns on above the shower; providing just enough light to grimly illuminate the small room.

(CLICK)

Paralyzation creeps over her. Her big toes are frozen as the numbness spreads like a virus through her feet, up her legs, and branches upward through every vein and muscle in her back. Her left arm remains outstretched at the light switch as her brain absorbs the final, feverish spike of shock from what her eyes are telling her.

Two black, thonged sandals lie on a sandy white towel. Hovering above them is a set of feet, covered in sand as they attach to their owners ankles...blue in color. Four screws sit atop the commode of the toilet next to a blue-handled screwdriver. Above, an exposed ceiling joist with wires protruding through its center where the bathroom fan once lay secured—unbothered. Hanging from the joist, a brown belt wrapped through the recessed metal in the ceiling sits taught... gravity gently turning the weight of the human attached, slowly in a semicircular pattern. The bottom of the belt wraps into the buckle around Dad's bruised, lifeless neck like a python, digging into the skin of his neck and causing the blue veins to bulge from his forehead.

V's brain completely stops communicating with the rest of her body as she loses all feeling in her knees and collapses inside the doorframe; hitting her head against the metal toilet paper holder attached to the wall rendering her immediately unconscious.

(LOUD THUD)

(FADE TO BLACK)

(MOM'S FOOTSTEPS GETTING CLOSER)

(MUFFLED SOUND OF MOM'S VOICE—FOLLOWED BY A SCREAM)

Chapter 8

(DING)

GOLDEN ELEVATOR — The clouds disperse allowing light to shine across the grassy cemetery where Kubu and V stand. The gold doors slide open on the elevator in a welcoming fashion as V stands, peering inside the empty box of magical transportation. For the first time since she arrived in this strange series of universes, she wasn't afraid.

V: After you this time, thanks (She says looking at Kubu, gesturing with her open palm towards the open doors)

Kubu looks up at her and smiles, then walks into the elevator. V follows suit as the elevator “dings” and the doors close behind her.

(DING)

For a moment neither one of them say a word. They ride up the elevator in complete silence as the graveyard turns from headstones to tiny specs beneath the transparent elevator floor. Rising higher still, they are swallowed into the clouds creating a sea of fog that’s seen in every direction. With a “poof,” they blast out of the clouds— the curvature of the earth pairs with the sun painting a breathtaking bridge from earths atmosphere into space. Just as they break the atmosphere, V speaks...

V: It’s funny how you think you have so much time left with someone... until...(She says staring into the stars beginning to surround the capsule). All the times I didn’t answer his call...all the times I ran out the door to do something lame with my stupid friends... (She says, now looking down through the transparent floor of the elevator at the earth below). We had... “I” had no idea...I thought we were all so happy...I always thought he would just...be there...forever... (She says trailing off, closing her eyes as a tear streaks down her cheek)

All of the sudden, a glowing yellow aura fills the elevator shaft as the machine continues upward. The sky surrounding the elevator seemed to fold in on top of itself, and through her tears she sees the vast array of stars that once surrounded them, replaced by a pitch black void. Within the void surrounding them, memories of her family begin to pass by in blobs of illuminated purple and white fire—from the first time Mom and Dad met, through V’s birth, her childhood— more and more up until Dad’s final day. Faster and faster the elevator travels as the seconds go by. The memories race past them as V turns to speak to Kubu — and he’s gone. She’s alone, traveling through her life memories of love and anger between her parents.

The elevator screeches to a halt, knocking V off balance and into the side of the elevator as the panel suddenly changes from yellow to a bright, purple light.

(DING)

The elevator doors open to a familiar, yet empty street. Her street. V steps out of the elevator and looks around...

V: I’m...back (She says in a relieving tone)

Not wasting another second, V sprints down the street toward her house. Moving ever-so quickly, her body drifts to the right toward the front door of her house and barrels harshly through the front door.

V: MOM? I’M HOME! MOM I....

V stops dead in her tracks. In her living room, in front of the sofa, is a young boy with a purple light illuminating from his forehead that surrounds his entire being in a purple

aura. A familiar song plays on the record player as the young boy bobs his head in a vibe, seemingly reading the back of a vinyl album cover. V slowly walks around the side of the couch and speaks...

V: Kubu...?

The young boy turns and looks at V as he sets the album cover down on the floor. He stands to his feet and smiles a familiar smile. The music plays on... V's eyes widen...

V: Dad...

Tears begin to pour uncontrollably down V's face. The glowing, purple aura surrounding Dad begins to pulsate as glowing particles appear and begin dancing around him before completely taking over every inch of him. An explosion of whitish/purple light causes V to put her hand and arm up over her eyes like a shutter, and she grimaces and squints as she tries to see what is happening before her though her fingertips. The light fades, leaving Dad, in all his entirety and age, standing before her—just as she had remembered him; the purple gem still glowing from his forehead.

V slowly lowers her arm, but otherwise doesn't move; staring at her Dad. The music remains playing as Dad walks toward V.

V: I wasn't ready for you to go...I wasn't ready to be alone (She says through the tears)

He pauses briefly in front of her as his sadness shows and he frowns looking down at her. He extends his left hand and gently wipes away V's tears with his right as she lay her head in his right hand. Then he smiled...

V: (Opening her eyes) Why are you smiling? You left us all alone. How could you? How could you do that to us...how could you do that to ME? (She says angrily)

Dad's smile never fades as V looks up at him through the tears with conviction. Her tears fall through him and continue falling through the floor of the house, showing the floors are all transparent. V reaches out and grabs Dad's other hand and forcefully pulls herself in to fully embrace him. Immediately, the ceiling, walls and floor surrounding them suddenly seem to fold in on top of each other, revealing an endless utopia resembling an unfathomable, tropical island.

V: I miss you...(She whispers to him while he strokes the split ends of her hair as she cries into his chest) I miss you so much (She says through the tears).

Dad lifts his head over V's and kisses her head as she squeezes tighter. V buries her head deeper into Dad's ghost-like chest as she realizes they are flying through the landscape of this beautiful dream-like world; over waterfalls and green hills that go on for miles and miles.

Dad: My beautiful angel. I'll love you, always.

V: Please...please...don't leave me... (She says painfully)

Dad pushes V slightly back as he looks into her eyes. His smile never fades.

Dad: My body is gone, but I'll always remain with you— Always. You are so strong, so much stronger than I've ever been...so much stronger than I ever could've hoped you to be. My love for you will always remain... inside. (He says putting his right hand over V's heart as they slow to a stop, floating in mid-air in front of one of the many waterfalls of Ukeire; their intertwined bodies slowly turning while they float)

Dad: I guided you here... and now it's time to go.

V holds even tighter.

V: Just let me stay...please just let me stay.

Dad: One day, you will—but not for a long, long time. You have an amazing life yet to unfold. I've seen it all...and it is truly—beautiful. I'll be there with you through it all... always.

The familiar music continues to play as Dad moves his hand back down to V's, holding both her hands atop his; looking happily into her eyes with a smile. As V looks into his eyes, she finally understands...this is it. Never again will they run through a playground. Never again will they share a joyous moment. Never again will they laugh together. He's gone.

All of the sudden, Dad rips his hands out from under V's and hits her in the chest with all his might. The purple specs leave Dad and remain surrounding V as, in slow motion, she flies backward into the waterfall. The water takes over her body as she slowly passes through it creating an exploding, purple splash.

(FADE TO BLACK)

Chapter 9

VOICE: CLEAR! (Heard faintly)

(LOUD THUMP)

The sound of a defibrillator charging up echoes through the blackness.

VOICE: CLEAR! (Heard more prevalent)

(LOUD THUMP)

V's ROOM - NIGHT - V's chest jumps up as the electricity passes through her veins. V opens her eyes wide with a deep and exhaustive gasp. She is surrounded by 3 EMS workers with her Mom sitting frantically in the doorway of V's room on her knees — sobbing in an uncontrollable fit of chaos as she rocks back and forth. The EMS worker turns V on her side as she vomits white all over the herself and onto the floor beside her.

EMS #1: We got her! We got her. (She says to her colleagues while holding her attention on V) You're ok, you're ok – breath...breath (She says to V)

V continues to choke through her vomit, gasping for large quantities of air with every free chance she gets. Mom leans forward from the doorway and begins crawling on all fours toward her; her mascara smears down her cheeks—down her neck—forming a large black, wet stain on the neck line of her shirt. Her voice tries to call out to V but as remains in a state of hysteria, the words come out sounding untranslatable.

Mom: (Untranslatable Gibberish directed at V)

EMS #1: She's going to be ok (She says to Mom smiling, motioning for her colleagues to bring in the gurney)

Mom crawls over to V as she lifts up her vomit-covered body and bear hugs it.

Mom: I thought I'd lost you... (She says, her voice quivering as she embraces V and holds her head close to her chest) I'm so sorry sweetie, I'm so sorry...

The gurney enters the room as V's eyes gloss over and her vision gets fuzzy. Mom's voice fades out slowly as V's vision fades darker and darker until she loses consciousness; going limp in the EMS worker's arms. Sounds of the gurney retracting lower are heard.

Mom: (Crying) I'm so sorry...Im sorry... (Fading out)

(FADE TO BLACK)

Epilogue

**** 1 YEAR LATER ****

COMIC-CON/CONVENTION CENTER — MID-DAY — Countless booths are set up in traditional Comic-Con fashion. Hundreds of people are mingling on the floor walking from booth to booth to meet their comic-inspired heroes, B actors, writers, etc. V and Keller slowly walk thru the front door and their eyes light up with excitement as familiar costumes of all different kinds work their way through the crowd at the entrance of the convention center. Mom walks in behind them, putting the tickets into her purse.

Mom looks healthy and well-rested; her make-up is perfect and her hair done up nice wearing a clean, white polo shirt and high-waisted jean shorts. She pulls out her phone, checking the time before looking at V and Keller.

Mom: Be back at this spot at 5 PM sharp!

V grabs Kellers arm as they look at each other and laugh with joy; then both take off running into the crowd without another word. Laughing and squeezing through people, they quickly speed to the middle of the booths before V reaches their target first. Keller trips over someone's foot, stumbling to where V stands looking forward at the booth.

Keller stands up and they both stay completely still, arms at their sides, taking in the “awe” that lies in front of them. The neon (Video game title) sign from the booth radiates before them in all of its glory, with posters and merchandise below it as people greet the characters within the booth. Without looking at V, Keller holds up the slender (Video Game Title) box in his left hand as his breathing and heartbeat increases. V turns slowly and hugs Keller briefly, but tightly, then grabs him by the shirt and pulls him in the direction of the booth with enough force to cause a slight whiplash for Keller. They both run up to the table and begin talking to the people behind the booth. The view rises higher and higher, viewing the countless people in the convention center, to the roof, the sky, the clouds, and as soon as it breaks the atmosphere into space...

(FADE TO BLACK)

THE END

AFTER CREDITS

The arm of the winged creature can be seen crawling it's way through the beautiful garden of Koshu.

