

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

It's night in Ginza, Tokyo. The year is 1934. A dimly lit street is lined with bars and brothels. A drunk man, HIROKI dressed in a deplorable suit coat stumbles along the street alone. He is very handsome.

From a distance, the ruffian can be seen trying to stagger into a bar and stops by amorous woman at the door and speaks to her. He pulls out his pockets in a gesture to the woman to which she shakes her head with a small smile. Instead she pulls on his arm to pull him into the brothel next door.

Dejected and tipsy, the man staggers away from the woman and into the street. He goes on for a bit until the ground suddenly opens up beneath him. One of his legs had fallen into a man hole landing him onto his arm.

HIROKI
AHHHHH! Shit, Shit!!

Hiroki holds his arm to his chest and rocks to the pain. Footstep are coming closer and then a woman, TOMOE, appears from above. Her plain face is etched with worry and panic.

TOMOE
Hiroki?!? What are you doing??

Hiroki looks up at the sound of the familiar voice, the physical pain giving him good excuse for the look he gives her.

HIROKI
Oh Tomoe...I'm sorry...

TOMOE
Hush, come on now. You'll be fine
once we bandage it.

Tomoe helps Hiroki to his feet and walks him down the street and into the apartment building on the corner.

INT. TOMOE'S APARTMENT

Hiroki and Tomoe sit in the corner of the small tidy apartment. Tomoe is bandaging Hiroki's arm in silence.

In the opposite corner Tomoe's daughter TSUNEKO a little girl of about five plays happily with bisque girl dolls.

Hiroki finally breaks his silence.

HIROKI

Tomoe. I'm sorry. I got drunk.

TOMOE

Oh, you're awful. Trying to fool me by pretending to be drunk.

Hiroki looks at her startled. Tomoe is serious.

HIROKI

It's the truth. I have been drinking. I'm not pretending.

TOMOE

Don't tease me.

HIROKI

I should think you would have known. Can't you see my red face? I'm not pretending.

TOMOE

You're a good actor.

Hiroki is sobbing now. Tomoe gives him a sad knowing look, stroking his face. Hiroki's words are muffled by Tomoe's embrace. Her arms are holding him together.

HIROKI

I'm not acting, you idiot. I'm not qualified. I'm afraid I'll have to give up the idea of marrying you. Look at my face. Red, isn't it?

TOMOE

Don't try to fool me. You promised yesterday you weren't gonna drink. You wouldn't break a promise would you? We hooked fingers. Don't tell me you've been drinking. It's a lie-- I know it is.

Tomoe's whisper is almost harsh and it quiets Hiroki for a long time.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

It's morning in Ginza, Tokyo. The year is 1939.

The street that Hiroki hobbles along is bustling. It's a weekend and slumbering hungover business men line the alleyways.

Hiroki's eyes are dull. His good looks are fading from the alcohol. He wears a business coat half unbuttoned and a wedding ring on his left hand.

Hiroki reaches the corner and stops at a newspaper stand. He gestures to a pack of cigarettes.

HIROKI

And a paper.

Grabbing his items from the clerk, he opens the paper and flips to the comics section. On the page is a comic about a cat who is pretending to be a dog. The corner of the comic is signed Yuji Hiroki.

He balls up the paper and throws it away, lighting his cigarette.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He approached the door with tentative footsteps as voices can be heard from inside the apartment.

TSUNEKO (O.S.)

...why does he drink?

TOMOE (O.S.)

Because he's too good, that's why.

TSUNEKO

Do all good people drink?

TOMOE

No, but..

TSUNEKO

I'm sure he will like it.

TOMOE

Look! It's jumped out of the box.

At that moment, Hiroki silently pushed open the door to peer inside. A cream colored tabby runs giddly around the room as the mother and daughter chase the feline around the too small apartment. Hiroki peaks at the happy playful trio, distant.

He steps away closing the cracked door and stands there quietly smoking for a moment.

Hiroki drops the butt and crushes it with his foot. He bows deeply, then slips his ring off his finger and places it in front of the door. Hiroki turns away and walks down the apartment stairs.