The Baseball Muse

Girl made in Japan

ALAN NAFZGER
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FADE IN
BEGIN TITLES
EXT. MLB HOME STADIUM – DAY

Major League Baseball. Stadium roof is open. The flag poles and
the wind is blowing in. Crowd and the vendors. Hotdogs and
nachos. The players and coaches and the home bench, all from the
point of view of a nice expensive third-base line seat.

MINEKO (23) is an avid baseball fan, dressed in the team colors.
Hat and jersey. She has a nice Nikon camera with a telephoto
lens. High-quality Leupold field glasses. An Apple Ipad for
replays and stats. But also, she has a sketch pad and pencil.
She sketches players on one side and takes extensive notes on
the back.

No one has ever multi-tasked this much at a baseball game. And
she is surrounded by 60,000 people who are there trying to
relax. However, she is working. She also has a baseball glove
and she’s left-handed.

Mineko snaps some photos. She sketches a few. But, she’s
preoccupied with a player in the home team’s dugout. She keeps
glancing there, then draws the player and then takes his photo.

It’s ROGER ELDER, #12. He’s been benched. He doesn’t like it;
he’s clearly agitated. He may be going through withdrawals. She
continues to study him. Ball and batboys are staying clear of
him and also his teammates.

Suddenly, her phone’s weather app makes a horrible racket.
Mineko is embarrassed and apologizes. Now we see she’s Japanese
as she bows to everyone she might have offended. The people
sitting next to her clearly think she’s weird; typical American
xenophobes. But she IS Japanese and something of a baseball
fanatic. They look at her strangely.

MINEKO
(Asian polite)
I’m sorry. The wind has changed.

And sure enough, the flags have changed. The wind is blowing out
now and it’s a stiff wind. She looks at the lineup. She pulls up
the stats of the next three batters. She looks at the pitcher.
The flags. The batter. She’s looking at the batter on deck. The
batter on deck is watching the pitcher and trying to time his practice swings.

The batter at the plate takes a few balls and then powers one out to center. The ball hits about a foot under the yellow line and bounces down to the centerfielder. It’s a double. She checks her Ipad once more and becomes totally excited.

MINEKO
(to her neighbors)
Can you please watch?

She gestures to her camera and things neatly beside her seat. Again, they look at her like she’s crazy. But finally, they agree.

MINEKO
I must go catch a ball. Thank you.

The fans next to her are curious. She races off... excited. She runs three steps up, but returns. She’s been so excited she forgot her glove. She picks it up and runs full bore up the stairs.

She makes her way up and out of the third-base seats and out to the outfield seating. She has her phone and is streaming the game. She looks at the flags. She looks at the count on the scoreboard. She’s dodging people returning from the concession stand with hotdogs and sodas. She’s still multitasking the baseball and the crowd. There are a few narrow misses, but she’s small and agile.

By the time the count is full, she is in position. She feels the home run will land at her feet. She waits. A foul. Another foul. She adjusts her position according to the foul balls.

END TITLES

Crack! The ball is long and headed in her direction. She’s predicted it fairly well. She is set to catch it on the fly, but a brutish and slow man, with a beer, obstructs her path.

The ball hits the floor and then the wall and bounces straight up. Twenty men and four boys dive for it and miss. There is a dogpile of bodies and the ball SLOW MOTION hangs there. It gives Mineko time to race over, extend her glove, and catch the ball. The ball is in her glove just before it falls on the mountain of men and boys.
The cameraman catches it all for television. The TV flashes the batter rounding first, and back to Mineko. She holds the glove up to the umpire or the camera, all who are watching. Mineko celebrates. Everyone applauds, especially the women at the game. They all chuckle at how excited Mineko has become.

The MANAGER and BENCH COACH of the home team, notice, and point to the Jumbotron. They even chuckle. It appears that they might even know Mineko.

Mineko returns to her seat. She proudly shows the ball to the fans next to her seat. The kid in that group is amazed. For him, it’s magic. The young boy won’t talk to her but he looks at his father.

    BOY
    (to his father)
    How’d she do that?

The father shrugs to his son and smiles at Mineko, perhaps a bit frightened of her magic. She has a velvet drawstring bag and she puts the ball inside the bag.

    FATHER
    Why don’t you ask her?

There is a pitching change. The boy slowly works up his nerve.

    BOY
    (to Mineko)
    Can you tell me the next time that happens?

    MINEKO
    It won’t happen again today. I’m sorry.

She gestures to the new pitcher on the mound who is warming up.

    BOY
    How come?

    MINEKO
    It just won’t.

There is a long beat. The boy is studying her; he’s looking for more of an answer.
MINEKO
The new pitcher simply won’t allow it.

She shows her Ipad to the boy. It has some calculations. She points to a number on the screen. Zero.

MINEKO
You might get a foul ball, however. He throws very hard and the left-handers might not get around on it. You have to be ready all the time. Be ready to get on your horse.

BOY
Horse?

MINEKO
Be ready to move.

Later...

INT. ANTEROOM – MLB STADIUM – DAY

After the game, Mineko is there waiting. The GENERAL MANAGER enters with the OWNER. They spot Mineko.

OWNER
That’s her?

GENERAL MANAGER
That’s her!

OWNER
She’s so tiny.

GENERAL MANAGER
Don’t let that fool you; she’s as tough as anybody on our roster, especially the addicts.

They walk over and greet Mineko. Traditional handshakes but Mineko also responds with a polite bow.

GENERAL MANAGER
Mineko, this is the team owner.
MINEKO
I recognize you from the photographs.
Nice to meet you.

OWNER
Nice to meet you as well. I’ve heard a lot about you.

MINEKO
I hope all good.

OWNER
Yes, yes. I have to say your reputation as a problem solver is legendary.

MINEKO
Thank you.

OWNER
Well, you are certainly earning your money this time. I’ve never seen such a troubled soul.

GENERAL MANAGER
Well, let me introduce you to Roger. He’s been benched, and he’s been in quite a stew.

OWNER
Maybe if I’m standing here he won’t cause a scene.

GENERAL MANAGER
Well, you do write the checks.

OWNER
Well, I’m not writing him anymore unless he straightens up.

GENERAL MANAGER
Well, let me go get him.

MINEKO
No please. Just put him on the plane. I’ll meet him at the Tokyo airport.
GENERAL MANAGER

Oh?

MINEKO

It’s really better this way.

GENERAL MANAGER

You’re not going to...

MINEKO

I’ll pick him up at the airport.

(beat)

Something like a formula, we Japanese have developed.

OWNER

The Japanese?

MINEKO

Yes, I’m Japanese.

There is an odd moment.

OWNER

Yes, I’m aware.

MINEKO

It’s not just me. I have an entire village to help me.

OWNER

Oh, okay. I see.

The owner doesn’t really see. But doesn’t want to feel awkward.

The manager approaches and he’s with the bench coach.

There aren’t too many polite gestures. The team manager hugs her and they both are happy to see each other.

MANAGER

We saw you catch the homer.

BENCH COACH

Nice catch. In the right place at the right time.
MINEKO
Thank you. Yes. He always hits a right-hander throwing in the low 90s almost exactly there. Almost always.

MANAGER
See, what did I tell you?

BENCH COACH
She’s magic.

MINEKO
Do you know the speed of that particular pitch?

MANAGER
Oh, no I’m sorry. Ask Doug the stats guy. He’s around here somewhere. I’ll try to find out for you.
   (beat)
Hey, you want Tomas to sign the ball?

MINEKO
Oh, no. I don’t.

MANAGER
Why?

MINEKO
Well, business for one. I might have to majikku him.

MANAGER
What? Cure him?
   (beat)
Oh, you don’t have to worry about Tomas. Happily married. Eight kids.

BENCH COACH
Nine.

They chuckle.

MANAGER
Well, he doesn’t even drink soda?
BENCH COACH
No sugar. Not even aspartame.

They lead Mineko into the locker room.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MLB STADIUM - DAY

Roger is in an altercation with someone on the other side of the room. He’s kicked over a trash can and is throwing punches at some rookie that got in his way. His teammates are restraining him. A burly team security man arrives and helps restrain Roger.

ROGER
When I get back. I’m kicking your ass!

The manager and bench coach, ignore it. They lead Mineko through the ruckus and over to Tomas, who is calmly putting on his clothes. He’s ignoring the disturbance too.

TOMAS
This the home run ball?

MINEKO
This is Mineko; she works for this and some other clubs in Japan.

TOMAS
They said you made a spectacular catch. I didn’t see it, but I’ll watch the replay when I get home.

MINEKO
You have nine children?

TOMAS
Yes.

MINEKO
How do you have time?

TOMAS
My wife is an angel.
(beat)
Thank you for asking.
(beat)
Well, let’s see it.
Tomas signs the ball and hands it back to Mineko.

MINEKO
Thank you.

The manager and bench coach walk over to the fight and they act as if it happens often.

She smiles and Tomas smiles. Both are entirely polite.

At the same time, she’s been monitoring the fisticuffs on the other side of the room. They are dragging Roger outside, so he can cool off.

The suit and tie security man who is dragging him outside has him in a full Nelson and Roger is resisting.

TEAMMATE
Stop being a dick.

ROGER
I am a dick. That’s me. Let me go.

SECURITY
No, not until you calm down.

ROGER
Forget this bullshit. I’m not freaking going to no Japan when there are twenty-six clinics right here. Forget it.

Later...

INT. HALLWAY - MLB STADIUM - DAY

Roger has calmed down. And sitting on a step. The security man who restrained him is there in case there is another outbreak.

The general manager approaches them with an envelope.

GENERAL MANAGER
Your flight leaves in two hours.

ROGER
Stop being mean to me.
GENERAL MANAGER
You’re taking him?

The security man nods.

GENERAL MANAGER
No one is being mean to you.
(beat)
If you miss the flight your career here is over. Understand.

ROGER
There’s freaking... I don’t know how many other teams.

GENERAL MANAGER
There are 30 teams.

ROGER
That means there are 29 others.

GENERAL MANAGER
But you screwed up three other situations, before this one.

ROGER
So, help me with the math... That’s 24 teams left, right?

GENERAL MANAGER
They won’t want you.

ROGER
Whatever.

GENERAL MANAGER
Get yourself fixed up or we’re gonna let you go. You got no trade value. If someone picks you up it will be for league minimum.

ROGER
It’s discrimination.

GENERAL MANAGER
We’ve given you ten chances.
(beat)
You're a liability.

ROGER
What?

GENERAL MANAGER
I talked to the girls in player relations.

ROGER
Huh?

GENERAL MANAGER
They sort through your mail and emails.

ROGER
Okay.

GENERAL MANAGER
Well, you’re at the end of the line with the fans that buy the tickets that pay your over-inflated salary.

ROGER
Okay fine, whatever.

GENERAL MANAGER
Does that mean you’re gonna go?

ROGER
I’ll go. But it ain’t gonna be a vacation.

Roger really isn’t making sense. He’s an alcohol-addled player.

GENERAL MANAGER
(cold and exasperated)
Good luck.

Later...

INT. BEFORE TSA CHECK – AIRPORT – NIGHT

Mineko is in line, not far behind the team’s security man and Roger. We observe the following from her point of view.
The team’s security man hands Roger the ticket and visa. The security man puts his finger in Roger’s face. It’s a threatening gesture. Roger does look at the exit and contemplates resistance.

She puts down her carry-on items to be ready. If he bolts, little Mineko looks like she might tackle or at least trip him.

Roger turns and enters the secure area. Mineko picks up her things and proceeds.

INT. AFTER TSA CHECK - AIRPORT - NIGHT

Mineko takes a chair and waits.

Roger has a headache he sits, walks, buys aspirin, and a sports magazine. He can’t read it. He visits the restroom. He stands at the urinal but can’t urinate. He enters a restroom stall, but simply bangs his head on the wall. He’s clearly tormented.

Roger washes his face and exits the restroom. He sits and calls at least six numbers: his AGENT, his MOTHER is in a rest home watching ESPN and apparently deaf, three different WOMEN. None answer. The agent/lawyer and the women use the caller ID to screen the call.

When he calls the suicide helpline, they do answer but Roger hangs up. Roger eventually falls to sleep in the waiting area. Boarding is called for the flight directly to Tokyo and it appears Roger might miss it. However, Mineko approaches the AIRLINE EMPLOYEES and speaks with the staff; she points to Roger.

The airline employees wake Roger and he is the last to board.

INT. BOEING 777 - AIRLINER - NIGHT

Roger automatically plops down in the first a first-class seat.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir, your ticket is for economy.

ROGER
Huh?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
You can’t have this seat.
ROGER
What?

The FLIGHT ATTENDANT takes his ticket.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
In the back. B-27.

Roger moves to the back of the plane. His seat is between two large ladies.

We see Mineko comfortable for the long flight in first-class. She turns to see Roger, a large man, not fitting well into his small space.

BIG LADY #1
Hi, how are you?

ROGER
I can tell you I’m considerably closer to ringin' death's door than I was yesterday.

BIG LADY #2
Honey, you don’t look too good.

BIG LADY #1
Head-achin'?

Roger has a touch of delirium tremens, DTs

BIG LADY #2
Your little hand’s just a shakin’.

BIG LADY #1
Yep, and you need a shower and shave.

ROGER
I’m sorry, ladies. This wasn’t my idea. I just came off a three-game drunk.

BIG LADY #2
Don’t you mean a three-day...

ROGER
Not, in my case...
BIG LADY #1  
Well, we’ll just have to endure things.

ROGER  
I think I partied a little too hard.

BIG LADY #2  
Three days? Non-stop?

Roger chuckles.

BIG LADY #1  
You travel a lot?

ROGER  
I ain’t been in one town longer than three days for ten years.

Roger speaks to the flight attendant as she walks down the aisle.

ROGER  
Excuse me. Can you tell me how long the flight will be?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
A little over 13 hours.

Roger covers his face with his hands, despair. He will be polite but miserable.

Later...

INT. BOEING 777 - AIRLINER - DAWN

Roger looks worse. The flight attendants are busy. Roger drags himself through the first-class cabin. He pauses standing next to the door.

You cannot (CANNOT) open the doors or emergency hatches of an airplane in flight. However, you can think about it. Roger is seriously depressed.
When Mineko realizes what Roger is contemplating, she jumps up and walks next to him. She does it not to give alarm, but she’ll be there if need be. However, a flight attendant notices Roger.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir, can I help you?

ROGER
I just need to use the...

He gestures to the restroom.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
At the back of the plane, sir.

Mineko returns to her seat.

INT. CUSTOMS – TOKYO AIRPORT – DAY

The customs and IMMIGRATION OFFICER is a baseball fan and recognizes Roger. He confirms it with his passport.

The immigration officer is about to smile and dolt on the baseball star. He can’t speak but he might even ask for his autograph. But Mineko interrupts from three positions back.

MINEKO
(in Japanese)
Please don’t feed the animals.

The immigration officer defers to Mineko and instead of honoring Roger, his face turns flat and he simply stamps Roger’s passport.

Roger moves on, into Japan. Mineko eventually steps up to the immigration counter.

MINEKO
(in Japanese)
I’m sorry. This man, you obviously know who he is. He’s also an addict and here for treatment. Worship does not help.

MINEKO
(in Japanese)
I understand. I’m sorry.
INT. CONCOURSE – TOKYO AIRPORT – DAY

There are a slew of drivers and family to meet the passengers. They have signs with names. Roger expects to find a ride somewhere. But, they slowly disappear.

Mineko enters the restroom and changes from modern Western fashions into a traditional old and rural style kimono.

Roger is disappointed being left alone. Galapagos syndrome. He tries to use his phone, which is useless in Japan. Mineko observes his frustration. She approves of his misery.

Mineko walks past him out to the taxis. She speaks with each driver in the line. She’s telling them not to help Roger.

Roger sits and is dumbfounded. He tries to speak with some Japanese people.

ROGER
Where can a get a drink?
(beat)
How do you say “bar” in Japanese?

They don’t speak English.

ROGER
Beer, wine, whiskey?
(beat)
Vodka?

Roger struggles to think.

ROGER
Saki?

JAPANESE LADY
Oh, Saki. Hai.

Then the Japanese lady gives him complicated directions. There is no way he will remember any of it. There are many turns, left and right. Even up and down.

Mineko sits and watches Roger for a time. Roger looks in the general direction of the saki.
Mineko also watches two MISCHIEVOUS KIDS, who see another kid’s father throw an electronic toy in the trash. It might only be bad batteries so one kid boosts the other into the trash. The MOTHER arrives to find one kid inside the trash. He’s scolded and pulled out of the trash. She pulls them to her seat and tells them to remain still. Mineko chuckles.

The mother becomes preoccupied with television and the two boys sneak away. They stalk the American, Roger. They point and chuckle. They pull a prank. One of the boys stands in front of Roger and insults him in Japanese.

BOY
(in Japanese)
Excuse me, sir. Do you speak Japanese?

Roger doesn’t understand.

BOY
(in Japanese)
You look like an irrational, westerner. For instance, you an out-of-focus eggplant. I’m sorry if it is a very harsh insult. What are you doing here anyway?
(beat)
Are you a useless person or someone who can't do anything productive?

While this is taking place the other Japanese boy crawls on the floor under the seats. He crawls under Roger and ties his shoestrings to the bench.

The mother comes to fetch her boys. Roger stands when she angrily approaches. The mother brings the boys back to their bench. Roger is fed up and tries to walk away. He pulls the bench three inches. He bends down to untie the shoestrings. The boys are laughing uncontrollably, and their mother is punishing them. She bows to Roger and then spanks the boys more!

Roger walks out to the taxis. He tries to discuss things with them. But they pretend they don’t speak English.

Now, Mineko pulls out a blank paper from her sketchbook. She writes Roger’s name on it.
She changes into a bumbling traditional Japanese woman. She walks up to Roger. He’s relieved to see her and she pretends to be apologetic.

ROGER
Well, I’m sure glad to see you.

MINEKO
I’m apologize in enormity.

ROGER
Well, that’s okay. You speak English?

MINEKO
Once a day, all day long.

ROGER
You do?

MINEKO
Also, once a night, from dusk to dawn.

ROGER
Okay, I see.
(beat)
You don’t really speak English?

MINEKO
Don’t worry about judgement day.

ROGER
Well, you’re here. To take me to this clinic?

MINEKO
Entire village.

ROGER
Near here?

MINEKO
No. Far. Other side of Japan.

ROGER
Well, let’s get started.
MINEKO
I don’t sleep with gaijin.

ROGER
I guess that’s me?

MINEKO
An ugly American. You are.

ROGER
Well, that’s good to know.

They get into a taxi.

EXT. HARBOR FERRY - DAY

They take a ferry to Kurihama.

ROGER
So what do you do for a living?

MINEKO
This. I’m a driver.

ROGER
How long have you been doing this?

MINEKO
Since I was twenty-two.

ROGER
Before that, you were at college?

MINEKO
I was a geisha?

ROGER
You? No. I don’t believe it.
(beat)
For how long?

MINEKO
I left my parents home when I was twelve.

ROGER
You runaway?
There is an awkward moment.

MINEKO
Every foreigner thinks a geisha is a prostitute?

ROGER
They aren’t?

MINEKO
No, they. We, host. Entertain.

ROGER
You said we.

MINEKO
I don’t do that anymore.

ROGER
Well, that’s good. I’m glad. You don’t need that nasty business.

Mineko rolls her eyes at the dim-witted American. Mineko visits the restroom and pulls out her iPad. She pulls up the baseball scores. Cuba, Venezuela, Dominican Republic.

EXT. FERRY STATION - KURIHAMA - DAY

They wait in the Kurihama station. Roger buys a map and a giant bag of Gummy Bears... The map, of course, it’s in Japanese. He can’t read it, but still, he’s trying not to feel so lost.

ROGER
Where are we?

She’s thrown back a bit, with the appearance of a map. She improvises a fictitious location, a different island, Fukuoka. She’s leading him on a wild chase to disorient him.

They take the ferry to Chiba. But she points to Osaka on the map.

Again, Mineko visits the restroom for the baseball scores.
EXT. FERRY TO CHIBA - DAY

Her ruse is to hamper any escape if he were going to try. He’s sufficiently lost, which is her objective. Roger suspects something is wrong, and he sits working up his nerve to ask.

ROGER
So why are we going...

MINEKO
It don't do men no good to pray for peace and rain. Peace and rain is just a way to say prosperity, and buffalo chips is all it means to me.

ROGER
Where’d you learn to speak English?

MINEKO
Spotify of course. Like every Japanese.

EXT. CHIBA - DAY

At Chiba, they leave the station and board a bullet train.

Roger’s withdrawals are worse. He’s a nervous wreck as he boards the train, but she visits the restroom. For a moment, he believes he’s alone, that she’s missed the train. Momentary panic. But she arrives at his seat, just as the train is picking up speed.

MINEKO
What do you think is wrong with baseball?

ROGER
Me?

MINEKO
Of course.

ROGER
My swing. Late in the game I have a hard time focusing. My back. My elbow. My left knee. This pinky finger. And I drink too much.
MINEKO
What about the game?

ROGER
Oh, that. Nothing.

She loves his answer but she’s acting to test his resolve.

MINEKO
Nothing is wrong?

ROGER
Baseball has thrived for over 100 years BECAUSE of its unchanging character, its role is for fathers and sons to bond if it changes that’s ruined.

MINEKO
I never thought of that.

ROGER
And it’s popular nearly everywhere because it features a one-on-one face-off of individual skills tucked inside a team sport.

MINEKO
Yes, but how can such a slow game survive a society revved up for nonstop action and scoring?

ROGER
Attention spans like a nats.

MINEKO
Yes.

ROGER
Baseball’s deliberately slow pace is by design, to allow for deliberation and anticipation. The lesser sports are about instinct; that, I don’t care for.

MINEKO
But in a high-speed world it’s a challenge?
ROGER
I don’t care about all that. As far as I’m concerned the game remains the same and these damn TV executives can go to hell. That’s what is driving this B.S. if you ask me.

MINEKO
But it pays your salary, more TV more salary.

ROGER
Geez, you sound like the media. You aren’t are you?

MINEKO
No.

ROGER
Front office?

MINEKO
No. I’m just a driver.

ROGER
Well, you sound like front office.

She tries to hid it, but she is pleased by his answer.

Map. They ride in a huge ark from Chiba to Sendai and then down to Yokohama. It’s for deception, to make it difficult for him to run away. Addicts sometimes do.

ROGER
Where are we?

She lies and points to Hiroshima.

ROGER
Oh, let’s have a look.

Mineko’s been caught, she fakes anger.

MINEKO
You Americans are so proud of what you did. Trust me, all the destruction has been repaired.
Roger is sufficiently quieted.

They arrive at Yokohama. Only twenty miles from where they originally landed.

They exit the train and walk to a parking lot.

EXT. YOKOHAMA TRAIN STATION - DAY

Mineko proceeds to a parking lot, which seems like miles away. She gets into a beat-up 20-year-old rusted Toyota. It’s a very small vehicle for a professional athlete to sit in.

She puts his bags in the back but slips the passport out and slides it under the trunk’s carpet.

She gets in and starts the car. She looks left and right and pulls into traffic.

ROGER
This is your car?

MINEKO
Something about a Toyota? Nothing about luck.

Roger gives a chuckle; he’s feeling that she doesn’t really speak English. Of course, it’s a trick on her part. She drops her clients off in a village where no one speaks English. Maybe he will be forced to learn some Japanese. But it’s also to throw him off his guard and stop thinking about his next drink.

EXT. ZUSHI - RURAL JAPAN - NOT FAR FROM YOKOHAMA - DUSK

They drive until they are on a narrow rural road and then a VERY narrow road. It’s basically been overgrown by trees and brush.

She drives the Toyota through nearly a forest of growth.

And on the other side of the growth and a hill is a classic old Japanese village. It looks like a village from 100 years past.

There aren’t but one or two very old cars. An old tractor. Old boats. The buildings look old. It’s a fishing village and there are a few farms they pass.
It’s a nearly hidden and totally isolated village.

ROGER
    So, we are?

She points to a location on the map at the far southern tip of Honshu.

ROGER
    Durn. That took us nearly all day.

MINEKO
    Need a hot rod Lincoln.

So they get out in front of a traditional Japanese house in the center of the village.

INT. MINEKO’S HOME - DUSK

They enter the humble-looking home. She shows Roger a room where he’ll sleep. She unrolls bedding for him and begins to leave.

ROGER
    Wait. You’re supposed to be taking me to a clinic. Rehab. Nurses. Doctors.

MINEKO
    No doctors, only Japanese.

ROGER
    Now, hold on a minute. I’ve been to a few rehabs and this doesn’t look like any clinic.

MINEKO
    It’s a Japanese clinic. The entire village.

ROGER
    What?
    (beat)
    I don’t get it.

MINEKO
    You will, perhaps.

Roger sleeps.
EXT. MINEKO’S CISTERN – NIGHT

It’s not a cistern. Inside is a satellite dish. From ground level, it’s a cistern. From a bird’s eye, it’s an eight-foot dish.

INT. MINEKO’S WAR ROOM – NIGHT

Directly in the middle of Mineko’s house is a hidden room. There is a secret panel that opens and she enters. Inside are at least 12 television sets. She hits a button and they all come on. She puts some earbuds on and watches baseball. She has a computer and she makes notes. There are televised day games from Venezuela, Cuba, Puerta Rico, and the United States.

INT. MINEKO’S BEDROOM – DAWN

Roger wakes and stands over Mineko as she sleeps. She wakes up and kicks his ass. Of course, she’s trained in the martial arts. She craftily wraps (ties) him in the blankets. He struggles to free himself; he can’t.

    ROGER
    What the heck?

    MINEKO
    Private place. No invasion.

    ROGER
    It’s a little creepy I’ll admit, but I wasn’t going to jump you. I’m married. I got kids.

    MINEKO
    You think I born tomorrow?

    ROGER
    Yesterday?

    MINEKO
    Okay. I’m born today!

    ROGER
    Well, the sun was coming up and well it’s time to eat.
MINEKO
Eat what?

ROGER
Eggs, you got any eggs?

MINEKO
No, only pig in blanket.

Later...

EXT. MINEKO’S VILLAGE - MORNING

Mineko has all of Roger’s things. And she’s walking in anger. Roger is following like a child.

The day has begun and the villagers are all out. Mineko leads Roger past a few fishing boats; older fishermen only. Past a few farms; older farmers. She leads him to a home; something like a bed and breakfast; an older woman cooks.

ROGER
Where are all the young people?

MINEKO
(sarcastic)
In school perhaps?

ROGER
Oh, I forgot.

MINEKO
Sometimes?

ROGER
A lot of times.

MINEKO
You are a bit slow.

They enter a ryokan.

INT. RYOKAN - BED AND BREAKFAST - MORNING

Mineko speaks with the inn’s OWNER, an older woman.
OWNER
You okay?

MINEKO
My business plan might not be so solid.

OWNER
It’s not working?

MINEKO
American athletes are exasperating.

OWNER
Why didn’t you bring him here last night?

MINEKO
Your lights were out.

OWNER
This is still a quite conservative town. You just wake me up.

MINEKO
Thank you.

Mineko introduces Roger to the owner of the inn.

MINEKO
You will sleep and eat here.

Mineko takes his things to a room upstairs and coldly throws his things on the floor. The owner of the inn shows him a bedroll. She unfurls it and gestures to it. When Roger moves to lay down, he’s scolded.

MINEKO
No!

ROGER
I can’t lay down. Come on you’ve had me tied up all morning.

(beat)
It was exhausting.
MINEKO
You shouldn’t have struggled so long.
(beat)
Can’t you just accept?

ROGER
I’ll accept some breakfast?

The owner rolls up the bed.

INT. RYOKAN - BED AND BREAKFAST - ALMOST NOON

They sit. The owner, an elderly woman, brings them two bowls of food.

ROGER
What is it?

MINEKO
Natto.

ROGER
What’s that?

MINEKO
Soybeans that have been fermented.

ROGER
Really? Can you get drunk?

MINEKO
How much do you plan to eat?

ROGER
Not any. It smells awful.

MINEKO
Oh, so sad. What will you eat?

Roger looks around.

MINEKO
There isn’t any McDonalds or Pizza Hut.

ROGER
It’s a pungent smell. Like old cheese.
MINEKO
The more smelly, the better its taste.

Roger pokes at it with the chopsticks.

ROGER
It’s sticky and gooey.

MINEKO
Of course.

He takes a bite.

ROGER
Tastes like bleu cheese.

MINEKO
I suppose.

ROGER
This is what you eat for breakfast?

MINEKO
It can be, but this isn’t breakfast.

ROGER
What time is it?

MINEKO
Noon.

ROGER
You left me tied up in that blanket for how long?

MINEKO
This long.

ROGER
I’m really sorry about that. Invading your private space. I was just wondering about the chow?

She gestures to the natto.

ROGER
Thanks, but I’m not that hungry.
MINEKO
Japanese consider it rude to leave food on a plate, at home or at a restaurant.

ROGER
I suppose you’re going to tell me it’s related to one of the fundamental concepts in Japanese culture?

MINEKO
Mottainai.

ROGER
Which is?

MINEKO
Something not about America. A feeling of regret having wasted something.

ROGER
I need to call the embassy and see about a new passport.

MINEKO
How?

ROGER
I’ll call them.

MINEKO
There isn’t a phone.

ROGER
A computer?

MINEKO
No.

ROGER
A radio?

MINEKO
No.
ROGER
A television? I don’t see any television. At your house or here.

MINEKO
No.

ROGER
More Japanese culture?

MINEKO
Of course not. It’s just that this is a special village, with a special purpose.

ROGER
Oh, I get it. It’s a drug and alcohol rehab. Of course. I get it. And if I can’t watch cartoons, I’ll stop drinking. Magic. Right?

INNKEEPER
The idea is to separate you from the booze and women, and modern distractions that have led them away from baseball.

ROGER
What’d she say?

MINEKO
She said she hopes to improve your next meal. But that this is a village next to the sea and she doesn’t have too many options.

ROGER
No Taco Bell?

Later...

INT. RYOKAN - MINEKO’S VILLAGE - NOON

The elderly woman beings natto. Roger tears into it. Mineko arrives.
MINEKO
I see you aren’t quite so hard to please, today.

ROGER
A man’s got to eat.

MINEKO
Well, it’s very healthy.

ROGER
Soybeans and fish. That’s all you people eat?

MINEKO
Japanese people live longer than any people on Earth.

ROGER
It’s because you don’t watch television.

MINEKO
Really?

ROGER
I’m just a professional athlete but I’m smart enough to know that.

MINEKO
Okay. I’ll look into that. Thank you.

ROGER
You know this is my second meal and it’s getting better.

MINEKO
You were up early this morning?

ROGER
She made me… wow. A bowl of hot steamed rice, tofu steamed in dashi, and a huge triangle of broiled deep orange salmon.

MINEKO
Better than gummy bears?
ROGER
I didn’t eat all yesterday.

MINEKO
Only the gummy bears?
(beat)
So you liked the salmon?

ROGER
Well, I would have woken you.

MINEKO
Just let me sleep please.

Mineko eats like a bird and is finished. She leaves. But she waits in the front and watches from a distance.

The elderly lady returns to the table.

ROGER
I’ll give you a $100 if you get me out of here.

He shows her his $100 bill.

ELDERLY LADY
(in Japanese)
No. Need to tip.

Roger doesn’t understand.

ROGER
How about if we run off and get married?

ELDERLY LADY
(in Japanese)
The young lady, Mineko, she pays.

ROGER
Mineko? I can’t marry her.

He points to the innkeeper.
ROGER
I wanna marry you and we go. You take me to the US embassy?

The elderly innkeeper smiles but simply removes the bowl from the table.

EXT. MINEKO’S VILLAGE – MID MORNING

Mineko waits on Roger but he rushes to catch up.

MINEKO
Not custom in Japan, and may be déclassé.

ROGER
What’s that...

MINEKO
I’m sorry. Should not have used that word. It means rude.

ROGER
I wasn’t aware.

MINEKO
You simply pay the price – no tip needed. You leave a tip you'll be turned down!

ROGER
She turned me down twice.

MINEKO
Twice?

ROGER
I asked her if she wanted to run off and get married.

MINEKO
She might have but she doesn’t speak English.

ROGER
I wasn’t serious.
MINEKO
No one speaks English here. And you can’t escape.

ROGER
Okay. I see. I’m screwed. 
(beat)
Whatta I gotta do to get out of here?

MINEKO
What do you feel you need to do?

ROGER
I need to get out of this village.

MINEKO
There is the path.

ROGER
Really.

MINEKO
Yes.

ROGER
Lead the way, princess.

MINEKO
This way.

EXT. PATH TO TORII GATE – MID MORNING

There are six Hokora (small) shrines along a path that ends at a relatively dense forest. They visit one shrine each day.

BEGIN MONTAGUE

1. There is an Inari shrine. There is a statue of a fox, but then a real fox jumps out of the brush and runs across the path. Roger raises his arms like he wants to shoot the animal. Mineko pulls his arms down.

2. At the Ryokan, Roger eats umeboshi plums (salted plums).

3. They visit the second shrine. It’s a Hachiman shrine, dedicated to the Shinto God of war. Hachiman has the features of a sea deity, a rice field deity, and the patron deity of blacksmithing. Roger makes a martial arts move and Mineko throws him on the ground.
4. Roger eats mozuku (brown seaweed)
5. Tenjin shrines are dedicated to the kami of Sugawara Michizane, a scholar and politician. Ox statues and plum trees. Mineko gives Roger a book “Learn Japanese.”
6. Roger eats shishamo smelt (Willow Leaf Fish).
7. Sengen shrines are dedicated to Princess Konohanaakuya, the Shinto deity of Mount Fuji. There is a painting of Princess Konohanaakuya and Roger places Mineko beside it to compare. She’s embarrassed by the attention.
8. Roger eats inago (rice grasshoppers that are boiled in soy sauce and sugar).
9. Shrine to the God of ocean produce. Fishermen.
10. Roger helps elderly fisherman haul in nets.
11. Roger eats dried squid.
12. Shrine to the God of agricultural produce. Farmers.
13. Roger helps an elderly dairyman milk the cows.
15. Shrine to the God of Commerce. Merchants.
16. Behind a small store, Roger helps elderly businessman unload a delivery truck.
17. Roger tries a Konnyaku (Konjac potato).
18. Roger does maintenance around the shrines. Cuts grass. Removes trash. They are small shrines but he paints.
19. There is a giant orange Torii gate. However, there isn’t anything on the other side. The path ends. Roger points to the gate and the path that ends and Mineko shrugs.

END MONTAGUE

EXT. TORII GATE - NOON

On a different day, Roger stands before the gate, puzzled.

    ROGER
    What’s that?

    MINEKO
    It’s a Torii gate. It symbolically marks the transition from the mundane to the sacred.

    ROGER
    So it’s an enchanted forest?

    MINEKO
    No, silly.
    (beat)
It’s an abandoned construction site. The government was going to build a shrine to commercial fads, but changed their minds.

Mineko enjoys a bit of levity.

ROGER
A shrine to fads?

MINEKO
You know an intense and widely shared… a craze.

ROGER
That’s weird.

MINEKO
We Japanese always seem to be in the grip of one fad or another.

ROGER
There is an expression… (mispronounced but in Japanese) Japanese people become instantly hot and instantly cold.

MINEKO
(smiles for the first time)
You’ve been reading your book.

ROGER
It means you get excited about things very quickly and get bored of them just as fast.

Mineko chuckles.

MINEKO
I know what it means. (beat)
And it’s (in perfect Japanese) Japanese people become instantly hot and instantly cold.
In the far distance, there is a slightest crack of an aluminum bat. It immediately gets Roger’s attention. Again he points but...

ROGER
Don’t you hear that?

MINEKO
What?

ROGER
A baseball bat. Someone is hitting.

MINEKO
It’s your imagination.

The crack is heard again.

ROGER
No, sir. I mean ma’am.

MINEKO
It’s probably just children.

ROGER
Just children? Are you listening to yourself?

Roger wants to investigate, but Mineko has already turned back toward the village. She’s facing away from Roger, but she chuckles. The timing couldn’t have been better. Roger reluctantly follows her back to the village.

Drone shot: The drone rises above the forest at the end of the trail, but it’s not a particularly deep forest. We can see a dilapidated old baseball stadium. And the drone approaches. We can just barely make out a few youth playing on the field. In the far distance is a large city, Yokahama.

INT. HOME/RESTAURANT  –  MINEKO’S VILLAGE  –  NIGHT

Roger, before the sun appears, wakes and is quietly waiting on the porch. He sits and enjoys the peaceful morning. When he hears the innkeeper stir inside. He enters.
INNKEEPER
I’m a bit shocked the American is up so early. You are up to no good. I’m going to tell Mineko you are ready to escape.

He has no idea what she’s saying.

ROGER
What’s for breakfast?

Clearly, Roger is excited about something.

He has sushi, and eats quickly. She brings him a lunch to take with him.

EXT. PATH WITH SHRINES – DAWN

Roger walks rapidly down the path. He stops at each shrine and takes care of business. He leaves something. A paper note, a fishing hook, a toy soldier, a book, etc. It’s done in haste.

He walks through the gate and through the forest to where he reckoned he’d heard the baseball bat.

INT. DILAPIDATED JAPANESE STADIUM – EARLY MORNING

He sits in the stands but the wood is rotted. He and waits on the field. The wood on the player’s bench is stronger. No one arrives, but he finds some candy wrappers, a jacket left by one of the children, and a discarded water bottle. Everything else there looks like it’s been there since 1940.

Roger explores under the bleachers. He finds a tool and equipment room. There is a lock but the wooden door simply falls apart when he pulls on the lock. Inside, there is a horribly old lawnmower. It’s a 1923 Toro, the first roller-type push putting golf mower. It was industry standard until gasoline engines took over.

Roger finds a metal file and sharpens the blades.

Roger mows the entire field.

Still, no one shows up.

He finds a shovel, sharpens it. He finds a wheelbarrow and hauls dirt to the mound. He packs the dirt down with a rusted tamper.
In a few hours, he’s manicured the field and it looks 100% improved.

Still, no players.

He carefully climbs the stands... careful to walk on the support beams. He reaches the press box. He enters and notices several signed 8 x 10 photos of old NPB players. Roger begins going through some desk drawers.

Roger finds a 1934 program. It is printed in English and Japanese - Babe Ruth and American Exhibition Games. It’s falling apart but Roger is gentle. He looks at the 18-game schedule and the events are marked there on a map and there isn’t a red dot anywhere near Kagoshima, which is where Meniko told him they were. He is suspicious but hasn’t figured it out yet.

He studies the rosters.

ROGER
Earl Averill, Lou Gehrig, Charlie Gehringer, Lefty Gomez, Connie Mack, Jimmie Foxx, Babe Ruth, Moe Berg. All American league. What’s up with that?

Suddenly, some kids arrive and are looking strangely at how nice the field has been groomed. They have noticed and it causes a small debate. One boy wants to know who is responsible and the other doesn’t seem to care; he wants to begin to throw the baseball.

Roger runs outside the down the stairs. He falls completely through the boards, only the roof of the equipment room below breaks his fall. Then the roof of that room collapses and again he falls.

The young boys run to see if he’s dead.

He emerges from the dust filthy, but his teeth are smiling shiny white.

BOYS
(in Japanese)
Who are you?
ROGER
(in Japanese)
I’m the ghost of Babe Ruth!

The Japanese boys laugh uncontrollably. And Roger is immediately accepted.

EXT. DILAPIDATED STADIUM – ALMOST THREE PM

Slowly more kids a dozen MALES and a single FEMALE come from all directions. Only one player speaks English.

ROGER
So you guys are what, 13 to 16?

PLAYER
(in English)
Yes. We are.

ROGER
You speak English?

PLAYER
Sure, play MLB or perhaps run Microsoft.

ROGER
You?

PLAYER
Yes. Of course.

ROGER
Okay. I believe that.
(beat)
So, who are you guys?

PLAYER
We are all Japanese.

ROGER
No, I mean your team.

PLAYER
We are the Bay Pearls.
ROGER
So, this is where you practice? Where
do you play your games?

PLAYER
No, home field. We play away.

ROGER
Always?

The youth chuckle and look at the dilapidated stadium. All
Japanese are a little manic compulsive. The youth try to dust
Roger off with their gloves, but he rejects that and they must
bow to apologize.

EXT. JAPANESE STADIUM – PITCHER’S MOUND – FOUR PMS

Roger throws batting practice.

Roger has left the lawn-mower out in foul territory, against the
fence. A fly ball is hit and it’s going to land directly on the
mower. The THIRD BASEMAN runs over and doesn’t take his eye off
the ball. He’s determined.

ROGER
Leave it.

The kid doesn’t understand English and he’s going to probably
injure himself on the sharp blades of the mower when he collides
with it.

ROGER
No. No. you’re gonna hurt yourself.

Finally, Roger sprints over, and with one arm he grabs the boy
just before he runs into the mower. With the other hand, he
casually catches the foul.

It’s actually a Sports Center “Top Ten Plays” catch; the SHORT-
STOP has had his phone out and recorded the catch. He sends it
to the producers.

Roger puts the kid down and pushes the mower off the field,
under the stadium seating.
ROGER
Little dude. It’s just batting practice.

THIRD BASEMAN
(confident)
Catch.

The kid might not speak English, but he speaks baseball.

ROGER
No. If you’re injured in practice, then you can’t play in the game. It defeats the entire purpose.

The third baseman simply looks at him. The message is lost.

When the young boys and a girl are called home… They all have cell phones. Roger borrows one phone and uses the map app.

He chuckles and looks back in the direction of the village. He realizes he’s been tricked by Mineko. But he’s learned that he’s very near Yokahama. Within walking distance.

The children disappear home and Roger walks 7 km into town.

BEGIN MONTAGUE

1. Roger walks past a US consulate. The marine guard might recognize him, thinks about it, and breaks his guard stance in awe. Roger might enter, but he speaks with the guard and points over in the direction of the village. The guard enters a guardhouse and quickly returns with a baseball magazine and a Sharpie. Roger signs it.
2. Roger walks into a bank and shakes hands with the manager.
3. Roger walks into a lumber yard and shakes hands with the operator.
4. He walks into a lawn and garden store and shakes hands with the operator.
5. He walks back through town to the field.
6. Then he walks through the forest.
7. He’s met on the path by the entire village. Some have weapons. Pitchforks and gaffing poles. One has a baseball bat. He hides behind a tree. But he’s seen and Mineko chuckles when he comes out with his hands in the air.

END MONTAGUE
EXT. PATH WITH SHRINES – LATE AFTERNOON

MINEKO
Put your hands down.

ROGER
You all have weapons.

MINEKO
We thought you left.

ROGER
No, I was just playing baseball with some kids.

MINEKO
Oh? So, you really did hear a bat?

ROGER
Did you know there is a field just on the other side of those trees?

MINEKO
Okay.

ROGER
So, there isn’t a problem?

The villagers look relieved. Mineko only appears mad. As she turns, we can see from her expression that things are going as planned. She winks at the villagers. They’ve put on some nice theater for Roger.

INT. ESPN – STUDIO – NIGHT

ESPN television SPORTSCASTER cameo.

NEWS READER
And number eight, can anyone tell me who that is? Taking a baseball hiatus in Japan and working with a group of young players, it’s Roger Boros. That’s right, last year’s AL batting champion, rescuing a youngster from a reckless grounds crew who left a mower on the
field AND he still makes the catch.
Thanks for the video, Akio.
   (big smile)
You gotta love the Japanese; the
shortstop had his phone out the entire
play.

INT. MINEKO’S – EARLY MORNING

Mineko has been watching Sports Center and she expresses
surprise. But she nods her approval.

EXT. JAPANESE STADIUM – ALMOST NOON

Roger is working with three Japanese construction workers. They
are measuring cutting and nailing boards.

An old man, Mineko’s GREAT-GRANDFATHER (101) approaches him. One
of the WORKERS translates.

   GREAT-GRANDFATHER
   (in Japanese)
   What are you doing?
   (beat)
   We like this field in disrepair!

   ROGER
   (to the worker)
   Who is this joker?

   WORKER
   A village elder. Very old and
   established man.

   ROGER
   Tell him the young people need a place
to play. They can’t play on the road
always. It’s not fair.

   GREAT-GRANDFATHER
   (in Japanese)
   No, we don’t want them playing baseball
home or away. We want their noses in
books.

Roger simply ignores the Japanese man. Roger rudely waves good-
bye to him.
GREAT-GRANDFATHER
(in Japanese)
No, I’m not joking.

WORKER
(in Japanese)
Why do you hate so much?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
(in Japanese)
I don’t hate. I love the children of this village and this is nonsense with the exams going on.

(beat)
We are in the 21st century and face competition in math and science. Stop that repair immediately.

The worker starts up an electric saw and cuts a board.

WORKER
(in Japanese)
Have a good day, sir.

Politely, the worker bows and waves good-bye. Everyone continues working. Finally, grumpy Great-Grandfather moves on.

ROGER
What’s his problem?

WORKER
He wants the young people to study.

ROGER
Well, he needs to think about it. Playing all their games away from home takes more of their study time than anything. It takes forever to get anywhere in this country.

A pickup from the lawn and garden center enters to unload a huge sack of grass seed and irrigation sprinklers and water hoses.

Nearly enough lumber has arrived on trucks to repair the entire stadium. More lumber is being unloaded.
ROGER
(to the lumberman)
Paint?

The Japanese lumberman doesn’t speak English.

Roger looks it up in his book.

ROGER
Peinto?

The Japanese lumberman smiles and points to a truck that is progressing in that direction.

As the young people begin to arrive, Roger remembers something.

Roger rolls out an ancient batting cage, to prevent the foul balls. The netting disintegrates, but Roger has brought some old fishing nets from the village.

The lumberman smiles and gestures his approval.

WORKER
Congratulations. It’s a nice improvisation.

ROGER
Necessity is the mother of all invention.

EXT. THIRD BASE DUGOUT – JAPANESE STADIUM – NIGHT GAME

The lights have been repaired and two youth (senior league) teams square off. It’s certainly not the level in which Roger has become accustomed; however, the parents and especially Roger are taking a great deal of interest. The stands are full of parents and girlfriends, and Japanese baseball fans.

Before the game Roger is in the first-base dugout, maybe he’s planning on helping the coach. Perhaps he’s only observing. Mineko approaches him.

MINEKO
Oh, you’re here.
(beat)
You are in the wrong dugout.
I didn’t know that. I was just accustomed to...

MINEKO
Twelve of the 30 MLB teams use the third-base side.

Well, let’s get out of there before someone sees me over there.

They exit the first-base dugout.

They are walking behind the plate and a screaming ball comes directly toward Mineko’s head. Quick as a snake, Roger bare hands it, only inches from her head. It obviously hurt his hand but he heroically shows no pain.

He has reached across her body and as a reaction, she puts her face in his chest and her hands on his waist. He’s practically hugging her too. There is a romantic spark, but they realize everyone is watching them, so they step back and continue walking. Shy and nervous over what happened, both of them.

ROGER
So, the home team in Japan uses the third-base dugout.

Roger carries on a conversation with Mineko but mostly his eyes are on the field. He only glances at her when there is a lull. He tries purposefully not to fall for her.

MINEKO
An American Trey Hillman when he became manager of the Ham Fighters started that.

The Ham Fighters? What’s that?

MINEKO
From the days when teams had sponsors. A pork company.

You have ham here?

MINEKO
We do. Of course.
And, I’ve been eating... sea-weed and I don’t know what...

Well, we don’t have ham here in this village. Maybe another village?

Roger contemplates.

ROGER
No. I’ll stay here, if that’s okay.

MINEKO
Good, we are happy to have you.

ROGER
Hey, I’ve been meaning to ask you about something. You clearly speak English, but you pretended not to.

MINEKO
Well, I’ve found it shocks you lost souls of the MLB to be uncomfortable to be alone in an exotic place.

ROGER
Lost souls?

MINEKO
Yes. You must sometimes be shocked into reasonable behavior.

ROGER
Okay, but about the food. That’s part of the treatment too? You don’t really eat all that do you?

MINEKO
No, we really do.

ROGER
Okay. And it turns out you know something about baseball.

MINEKO
I know a little, yes.
ROGER
And the path to the stadium and the shrines?

MINEKO
What are you talking about?

ROGER
You built that just for me? How much did all that cost?

MINEKO
Typical American.
(beat)
The path and shrines have been there since 1310.

ROGER
Oh.
(beat)
I feel sort of dumb.

MINEKO
You aren’t dumb, you’re just American.

ROGER
Well, thanks.

There is an odd moment; is it romance? The game is beginning and the crowd has arrived.

ROGER
Isn’t this great. All these people for a youth game.

MINEKO
Japan loves baseball.

ROGER
They sure do.

MINEKO
It would not have happened if you hadn’t come here.
ROGER
So, all this was a trick to separate me from...

MINEKO
Your problems.

ROGER
Ok, I’ll admit it.

MINEKO
You were a mess.

ROGER
I guess I owe you.

MINEKO
Your team paid.

ROGER
Sure. I figured.

MINEKO
I found your passport. You can go home.

She hands him the passport.

ROGER
Sure, but not until the series is over.

MINEKO
Two more games?

ROGER
Yep.

MINEKO
That’s two games in American you will be missing. That’s a considerable amount of money.

ROGER
But, that’s about money.

ROGER
This is about face.
(beat)
See that guy... the manager over there?

Roger points out an incredibly ugly man, the manager of the opposing team.

MINEKO
Yes.

ROGER
He said no 'Pearl' ever made it to the NPB league. Not since... well ever.

MINEKO
Okay. It’s true. We are a small village.

ROGER
They put it in whatever local newspaper. Internet and all these kids had to read it. I heard them talking about it.

MINEKO
Really?

ROGER
They’re just kids.

MINEKO
He shouldn’t be prodding youth in that way.

ROGER
Well, you see that center-fielder?

He points to the home team’s center-fielder. There is a long fly ball and the center-fielder makes Willie Mays over-the-shoulder catch. Mineko raises her eyebrow.

MINEKO
What’s he hitting?

ROGER
.301, but all their games have been away.
MINEKO
The travel?

ROGER
I’m guessing he’ll end the season .320 or more perhaps.

MINEKO
He has a new stadium only yards from his home. And a batting cage?

She gestures to a batting cage and pitching machine.

ROGER
Should help.

MINEKO
Good fundamentals?

ROGER
We’re working on it. He could be NPB someday.

MINEKO
You tell him that?

ROGER
Of course.

MINEKO
I’ll keep an eye on him. Any others?

ROGER
Hum? Maybe.

MINEKO
Maybe if they had someone to watch over them.

ROGER
Maybe you?

Mineko scrambles for the roster and her iPad. She begins her calculations. Roger looks at her body.
ROGER
Hey, you know that I’m feeling better, maybe we can fool around a little?

MINEKO
Shut up. I’m thinking.

She makes some notes and takes out her camera and takes a few photos of the center fielder. Just then there is another fly ball to center field.

EXT. HOME MLB STADIUM – DAY

Major league baseball. We see the scoreboard. ELVIS BEGIGA steps out of the batter’s box. He has a charismatic smile, handsome, and is every bleacher bunny’s dream. However, he’s also an arrogant showboat, extrovert, and cocaine addict.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Ninth inning the home team is down by one. One out. One man on. Elvis Begiga is at the plate and represents the winning run. Two strikes.

ELVIS
(to the pitcher)
Cierra la boca de tu cerdo. Voy a golpearle uno.

Elvis points to the right-field fence. It’s straight out of what’s alleged about Babe Ruth in 1932. Only Elvis isn’t Babe Ruth. He is one confused puppy.

COLOR
Did he just do what I think he did?

PLAY-BY-PLAY
He did. He pointed to the fence.

COLOR
Well, he might wear Babe Ruth’s number but he’s certainly no Babe Ruth.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
While he started out a tornado of sorts as a rookie, we’ve seen a steady decline in his numbers.
COLOR
Let’s see how this develops.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
At this moment he seems to be provoking the pitcher.

COLOR
Maybe he’s trying to goad him into throwing at him. The count is 0-2.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
A bit juvenile, but if he were hit by a pitch and awarded first base, it would advance the tying run to second with the clean-up hitter coming up.

COLOR
Well, this sort of behavior will for certain get you a hard inside pitch. So maybe.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Pretty rapidly, I imagine.
   (beat)
I wish we could hear what’s being said.

COLOR
No, I don’t think you want to hear.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Well, let’s admit that we don’t know all the facts. We’re up here and they’re down there.

COLOR
The pitcher may have been taunting him earlier.

STATISTICIAN
   (off-air)
Like in the strip club last night.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Ok, here’s the pitch.
Elvis swings for the fence and misses. Strike three. The fans are disappointed and some boo Elvis.

**FAN IN FRONT**
You suck; you bum! Coach send this fool back down.

Elvis remains in the batter’s box, like he’s going to get another pitch.

**ELVIS**
I’m ready; throw that shit again.

**CATCHER**
That’s three. Elvis. You’re done.

Elvis holds up two fingers to the catcher.

**ELVIS**
That’s only two.

**CATCHER**
It’s three strikes, dude. They don’t play that way in Puerto Rico?

**ELVIS**
What’s that supposed to mean? Puerto Ricans only get two?

Again, Elvis holds up two fingers to the catcher.

**CATCHER**
Are you high or what? Get out of here.

The catcher points to the home dugout.

**ELVIS**
You get out of here.

Elvis points to the visitor’s dugout.

The **UMPIRE** walks around the catcher and looks into Elvis’s eyes.

**UMPIRE**
Elvis, what town are we in?
ELVIS
Maldito culo, no lo sé.

UMPIRE
Your eyes are dilated?

ELVIS
So?

The umpire dramatically throws Elvis out of the game. He makes note of it in a notepad. The umpire then walks over and has a word with the manager. It looks confidential and both the umpire and the manager wave off others as they approach.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Well, that’s it for Elvis; he’s been ejected from the game.

COLOR
You can’t argue balls and strikes.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Yes, but it wasn’t a called...

The fans are sickened and the broadcast crew as well. The broadcasters are trying their best to conceal the bile in their throats.

STATISTICIAN
(off-air)
He’s high as a kite. Professional baseball and he’s high.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Oh, Elvis, say it isn’t so.

BROADCAST ENGINEER
Do you have any idea how many kids would give their left nut to play at this level?

There is a period of dead airtime; neither broadcaster knows what to say.

COLOR
Clearly, there’s trouble in paradise.
PLAY-BY-PLAY
But on a positive note, Roger Hasting is due back tomorrow from a baseball trip to Japan.

COLOR
Rumors are flying around that’s he’s 100% well and ready to resume his career.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Well, let’s hope.

COLOR
Maybe Elvis could benefit from some time off.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
I’m sure that’s being discussed.

Elvis still hasn’t left the field. He expects the manager to argue for him. After he’s enlightened by the umpire, the manager simply makes eye-contact with Elvis and points to the locker room.

First pitch when the game resumes. The BATTER belts a homer and scores the winning run. Walk off home run.

Later...

EXT. HOME MLB STADIUM – DAY

On-field post-game interview.

Elvis is back on the field and jumping around after the game like nothing happened. He’s even more clearly high on something now, probably cocaine. We see a young ROOKIE, who’s eager to fit in.

The rookie gestures to the white powder under Elvis’ nose. Elvis thanks him and cleans it off careful, not wasting any.

Elvis looks inside a five-gallon water cooler; it’s three-fourths full. Together the two players pick it up.

A young and gorgeous FEMALE REPORTER is interviewing the PLAYER who hit the home run. Her hair is perfect, and she has on a $900
designer outfit. It’s clearly her dream job, interviewing professional athletes and what is about to happen is the worst possible thing that could happen to her.

PLAYER
I don’t know. I just made contact.

FEMALE REPORTER
How did it feel?

PLAYER
It felt really good.

FEMALE REPORTER
You’re becoming the crowd favorite.

PLAYER
I’m just glad to be here and contribute.

FEMALE REPORTER
Your wife just had a baby.

PLAYER
Yes, two days ago.

FEMALE REPORTER
Boy or…

The player, out of the corner of his eye, sees Elvis and the rookie sneaking up with the cooler and ducks. The Gatorade soaks the young woman reporter.

Later...

INT. MANAGER’S OFFICE - HOME MLB STADIUM - DAY

The manager and the bench coach are standing, Elvis is sitting. Silent and guarding the door is the burly security man.

ELVIS
Can’t you guys give me a break. I just traded a lover for a one night stand.

The coach’s jaws drop. There is an odd moment. The coaches are trying to wrap their head around that one.
MANAGER
What do you want us to do, get you a date?

BENCH COACH
Jesus, you’re a professional athlete? And you’re clearly a wreck.

ELVIS
Huh?

MANAGER
That’s your personal life. You understand that’s none of our business.

BENCH COACH
We’re here to talk about your baseball. Understand?

MANAGER
We’re ten games out of first. And you’re celebrating?

BENCH COACH
You’re acting like it’s the world series.

ELVIS
We won. I was excited.

MANAGER
Son, you don’t soak your teammates with the Gatorade every time we win a game.

BENCH COACH
He didn’t soak a teammate.

MANAGER
You soaked, Julie.

BENCH COACH
You humiliated her on regional television.

ELVIS
You think that many saw?
MANAGER
Yes. And she’s mortified.

ELVIS
I didn’t mean to do that.

MANAGER
But you did. She said you ruined her outfit.

BENCH COACH
And her hair.

MANAGER
AND, we won’t get a decent call from that ump for the rest of his career.

BENCH COACH
Which is considerable in this business!

MANAGER
We look like a pair of idiots for putting you out there.

ELVIS
I’ll admit I should have approached from a different angle. Okay?

MANAGER
No, it’s not okay.

The general manager enters the office and hands some papers, airline tickets, to the security man. It’s getting routine and only a few words are required.

GENERAL MANAGER
(to the security man)
Same as last time.

ELVIS
That was fast.

GENERAL MANAGER
This has been brewing for some time there, fella.
ELVIS
Really? Why didn’t you say something?

GENERAL MANAGER
Bought the ticket last week when you pissed in the sink and the video went viral.

ELVIS
Well, that’s what you get for letting females with cellphones in the locker room.

GENERAL MANAGER
You just don’t get it.

No one wants to make eye-contact with Elvis; the GM is on the way out of the room.

ELVIS
So, when do I come back?

GENERAL MANAGER
Report back when you’re clean, if you can do that. Or never, I don’t give a rat’s ass.

INT. CONCOURSE – TOKYO AIRPORT – NIGHT

Roger is leaving Japan. Elvis has just arrived.

Roger spots Elvis who is standing around looking for his ride. Elvis isn’t too nervous; he’s dancing to the music in his earbuds. Japanese kids are watching him.

Roger looks left and right, until he spots Mineko. Mineko is in her rural fashion kimono. She is watching Elvis from a distance. Elvis isn’t the worried type; nothing bad has EVER happened to him. He’s even trying to talk to some Japanese kids and making faces at them. He’s something of a clown.

Roger points at Elvis, but Mineko gestures (prays) that he does not interfere. Roger signals that he understands and that he will be boarding his plane. He gestures that she should call him. She signals “okay,” but also makes it clear that’s NOT going to happen.
EXT. HARBOR FERRY - DAY

Elvis and Mineko take a ferry to Kurihama. Mineko visits the restroom and pulls out her iPad. She pulls up the baseball scores.

She watched Elvis from a distance with disapproval.

Elvis is talking and smiling at everyone. They don’t speak English but that doesn’t hamper anything. It irks Mineko.

Elvis has his phone out at the rail and he’s taking pictures. She runs into him with such force he drops the phone into the sea.

ELVIS
What’d you do that for?

MINEKO
I’m sorry, the boat hit a wave.

ELVIS
I didn’t feel.

MINEKO
It’s a rough sea.

ELVIS
What’s your problem?

MINEKO
My problem is you are a drug addict.

ELVIS
You speak pretty good English for a rural Japanese girl. In fact, I think you owe me a new phone.

MINEKO
You have all the talent in the world, but you want to waste it.

Elvis might become irate but that’s not his personality.

Long beat.
ELVIS
That’s true and I’m gonna deal with it.

MINEKO
Oh? When?

ELVIS
Whenever we get to where we’re going?
(beat)
Well, that phone won’t work here anyway.

MINEKO
We like it that way.

ELVIS
Why? I’ve been nearly everywhere, and my phone worked, except here.

MINEKO
There’s no reason for you to have a phone here. If your phone worked here, you might stay.

ELVIS
That’s cold.

MINEKO
And, we Japanese don’t want to work overseas, so what do we care if our phones work in Texas?

ELVIS
That’s sick. Why wouldn’t you wanna fit in with other people?

MINEKO
This way, Japanese cannot survive outside, outsiders cannot remain here long.

ELVIS
Well, now I don’t have any way to capture my memories. It’s like I was never here.
MINEKO
Maybe you can buy a new one in the village?

She knows it’s a lie.

ELVIS
We’re going to a village?

MINEKO
Yes, a traditional Japanese fishing village.

Elvis is excited, like a little kid.

ELVIS
Really?

MINEKO
It’s a very old historic place.

ELVIS
Fishermen? Excellent! I love seafood.

MINEKO
And farmers.

ELVIS
With real live cows?

MINEKO
Yes.

ELVIS
Milk cows?

MINEKO
As a matter of fact. Yes.

ELVIS
Excellent.

MINEKO
You won’t like it.
ELVIS
Milk and seafood are my favorite food groups. I could have milk and seafood every meal.

MINEKO
But you don’t have them together. Do you?

ELVIS
Sure, why not?

There is a long beat. She realizes that Elvis is a tad bit off.

MINEKO
Okay, I meant you won’t like the village.

ELVIS
Oh, I don’t know. It sounds cool.

MINEKO
You like everything don’t you?

ELVIS
I even like you. And you gifted my phone to the South Cina Sea.

MINEKO
This is Tokyo Bay.

ELVIS
Whatever.

EXT. FERRY STATION – KURIHAMA – DAY

They wait in the Kurihama station. Elvis leaves and brings back a huge bowl of vegetables with sandworms.

ELVIS
What is this?

MINEKO
Stir fry.

ELVIS
But what is it?
MINEKO
Onions, snow peas, broccoli, brussels sprouts, green beans.

ELVIS
No that!

He points.

MINEKO
A carrot.

ELVIS
No. That!

MINEKO
A sandworm.
  (beat)
You sure got a lot of them.

ELVIS
They’re not cooked?

He continues to eat them. He is not troubled with the chopsticks.

MINEKO
They’re raw.

She expects him to be grossed out. He eats some more.

MINEKO
You are supposed to be grossed out and promise to never use cocaine again if you can just go home.

ELVIS
I’m not quite there yet.
  (long beat)
Why would you cook the vegetables and not the worms? You’d think it would be the other way around. Cook the worms and leave the vegetables raw.

Long beat. She expects Elvis to break at any moment. He doesn’t.
MINEKO
You don’t like them?

ELVIS
No, they’re good.
(beat)
You think they’d go over in the US?

MINEKO
They don’t have any taste.

ELVIS
No, I think I can taste them. Or, is that them tasting me?
(beat)
Hehe, get it? Worms… traveling through your gut? Funny?

MINEKO
Very funny.
(beat)
Did you put salt on them?

ELVIS
I’m supposed to?

She shrugs.

ELVIS
You have any?

She shakes her head no. He gets up to return to the restaurant.

MINEKO
Ask for gochujang sauce.

ELVIS
What’s that?

MINEKO
Red pepper.

ELVIS
Oh, great.
He’s thrilled to be in Japan and he’s not intimidated at all. Mineko looks worried Elvis ALWAYS has fun... maybe a bit too much fun.

Elvis returns with the red sauce in the bowl and he’s really doing damage to it.

MINEKO
It’s good?

ELVIS
Much better.
(beat)
Thank you.

MINEKO
Do you know where you are?

ELVIS
Sure, Japan.

MINEKO
What island?

Elvis shrugs.

MINEKO
What city?

ELVIS
No, why?

MINEKO
Do you care?

ELVIS
No. Not really.

He has no idea where he is, but he’s very good about not caring.

Elvis continues to eat. It’s Mineko who cracks first.

MINEKO
You think this is a vacation?

ELVIS
It is; isn’t it?
MINEKO
Can you even tell me why you’re here?

ELVIS
Well apparently, cocaine doesn’t help you hit a baseball.
(beat)
It doesn’t help with anything really.

MINEKO
It sure helped you make the papers.

ELVIS
Haha. That’s right. It did.

MINEKO
Made the owner mad.

ELVIS
No, what really made him bad was my seducing his wife.

MINEKO
Oh!

Mineko stands and she’s flabbergasted. She gives him a knuckle sandwich.

ELVIS
That’s gonna leave a frog.

MINEKO
Here, have another frog.

She hits his other shoulder.

ELVIS
No, no. I’m just kidding. It was a joke.

MINEKO
But it sounds like something you’d do.

ELVIS
What? Tell jokes. I always tell jokes.
MINEKO
It’s not funny.

ELVIS
Did you know in the Soviet Union jokes had to be approved by a committee?

MINEKO
No?

ELVIS
Well, official jokes.
(beat)
For me, that really sucks. I mean good or bad, it doesn’t really matter, but a committee. That is just the worst.

Mineko is puzzled. Long beat.

ELVIS
You follow baseball?

MINEKO
No; not really.

ELVIS
Why?

MINEKO
There aren’t any televisions in our village.

ELVIS
That’s weird; didn’t you guys invent the TV or something.

MINEKO
Did we? Really?
(beat)
Why are you here?

ELVIS
I don’t know why they care. I’ve hit a baseball perfectly well with every drug on this planet.
MINEKO
Why?

ELVIS
Just to see if I could.

Elvis is a 13-year-old in a grown man’s body. Mineko is enraged, again. Visibly, she’s nearly in tears now.

ELVIS
But, it doesn’t mean we can’t be friends. Does it?

MINEKO
I’m not your friend.

ELVIS
I’ve only been here, what a few hours?

MINEKO
Too long already.

ELVIS
Don’t worry; I’ll grow on you.

They take the ferry to Chiba.

Again, Mineko visits the restroom for the baseball scores.

She looks at Elvis with contempt. But perhaps, it’s becoming a wonder.

MINEKO
(to herself)
How can someone so messed up be hitting .280?

EXT. FERRY TO CHIBA – DAY

Elvis suspects nothing. She doesn’t need to worry about any escape; Elvis is perfectly content and is doing magic tricks and clowning to entertain some children.

MINEKO
Hey, I need your passport.
ELVIS
Okay.

He begins to search for it.

ELVIS
Why do you need it?

MINEKO
To board a train.

ELVIS
You need a passport to board a train?

Elvis can’t find it.

ELVIS
I must have left it in that other bag.

MINEKO
What other bag?

ELVIS
I think I walked off and left it on the bench at that first ferry station. Where I had the dried squid.

MINEKO
That was the second station.

ELVIS
Well, I left it there.

MINEKO
Why’d you do that?

ELVIS
Well, I was talking to this lady and she just had a baby and her husband doesn’t love her anymore... and well, I left it there by accident. I think.

MINEKO
You’re just a big baby, aren’t you?

ELVIS
(smiling)
That’s what my mom says.

Mineko is infuriated. She uses her phone to call the previous ferry station-master. Elvis does a magic trick for the kids. Where he finds money (American coins) in strange places, ears, hair, under shoes.

MINEKO
(to the station master)
Did you find a red bag on a bench? In front of the...
(to Elvis)
Where?

ELVIS
Where’s what?

MINEKO
Where did you leave the passport?

ELVIS
It’s in a red bag on a bench in front of the vending machines.

MINEKO
(in Japanese)
It’s a red bag on a bench in front of the vending machines.

Long beat.

MINEKO
(in Japanese)
Thanks.

ELVIS
They find it?

MINEKO
He said there are there are 410 vending machines in that station.

ELVIS
I guess we’ll be hoofin’ it.
EXT. CHIBA - DAY

At Chiba, they leave the ferry station and are about to board a bullet train. She was bluffing him a passport isn’t required. She just wanted to keep it.

ELVIS
Hey, I can’t be on that train. I lost my passport.

MINEKO
I’ll distract the conductor and you sneak on.

ELVIS
You’re not gonna get me arrested, are you?

MINEKO
A week in jail, tops.

ELVIS
Really, a Japanese jail? Those uptight front office executives won’t like that. Not one bit.

MINEKO
Well, let’s not do that then.

Mineko approaches the conductor and asked a question. The conductor points to the front of the train. Elvis sneaks onto the last car.

Mineko boards the last car. And the train leaves. Elvis reveals to the audience that he is the most confused baseball player ever. He’s politically incorrect in everything he says.

MINEKO
May I ask you a philosophical question.

ELVIS
Sure, I have an opinion on everything?

MINEKO
What is wrong with baseball?
As Elvis recites a memorized list, maybe from the players union, he gestures 1, 2, 3 with his fingers. It’s rote memory.

ELVIS
Protecting middle infielders, end the blackouts, performance-enhancing substances, sign-stealing scandals aren’t done, folks, minor league salaries and cheerleaders.

MINEKO
There aren’t cheerleaders in baseball!

ELVIS
See what I mean?
(beat)
But I don’t care anything about all that.

Nearly everything Elvis says confuses Mineko. Long beat.

MINEKO
So what is your answer?

ELVIS
It’s old and moldy!

MINEKO
What?

ELVIS
One of the problems is all their sacred unwritten rules.

MINEKO
Players are supposed to “respect the game” and be “humbled by its difficulty.”

ELVIS
This has about as much emotion as political conventions.

MINEKO
It’s a proud game.
ELVIS
A game? Don’t kid yourself. It’s about money. If the league wants to make some real money, they have to get the next generation of kids to watch.

MINEKO
And that means the players at the plate should be allowed to do bat flips?

ELVIS
Pitchers have been doing fists pumps and telling batters to sit down after striking them out, so the same emotion should be allowed by batters.

MINEKO
It goes against the grain.

ELVIS
Baseball can be exciting. Players aren’t robots.

MINEKO
Some are.

ELVIS
Let the kids play, and the fans will be more entertained.

MINEKO
But pitchers generally plunk batters after if they celebrate.

ELVIS
Well, I won’t lie; that really hurts. But if you want real excitement stop ejecting them for simple bean balls; they should be forced to bat their next start.

MINEKO
Am I hearing you straight?

ELVIS
I think so.
Elvis is oblivious that he’s obnoxious. Mineko is angry but remains polite.

MINEKO
Is that all?

ELVIS
You asked me a question and I aim to be thorough. Dignity for your sex? Okay?

MINEKO
Ah, okay.

ELVIS
And it’s not just the young players of today that need to liven up, former players that are color analysts in the booth need to get out of their old-tired ways.

MINEKO
The former players have institutional memory from when they played back in the day.

ELVIS
But disparaging what players are wearing as they enter the stadium is a problem. If I want to look like a pimp, I will look like a pimp. It’s my choice.

MINEKO
It’s a free country?

ELVIS
Yes, and I’m a Purto Rican and that means I’m a US citizen just like everybody else in MLB.

Beat, as Miniko weighs the insanity of that statement.

MINEKO
Your friend the second baseman, I forgot his name. He’s from Venezuela.
ELVIS
And he’s just as American as me.

MINEKO
You wore a purple polyester suit.

ELVIS
Some jackass colorman called it “a pimp’s disco suit”.

MINEKO
You loved that suit?

ELVIS
I still have it in my closet. (beat) My agent won’t let me wear it.

MINEKO
He wants to keep you valuable.

ELVIS
I don’t care. An old-school fashion police certainly isn’t going to endear us to the youth of America. It’s a form of racism!

MINEKO
Racism? No, I don’t believe that.

ELVIS
Oh, really? You’re Asian; what do you know about racism?

Mineko is outraged but tries to keep it hidden. Japanese are the worlds best at this and she showcases this skill.

MINEKO
I know the broadcaster you are talking about and he was particularly close to Roberto Clemente.

ELVIS
Well, brown might be okay with him, but he sure as hell doesn’t like purple. That suit cost me $2000.
MINEKO
I’m sorry. Maybe that style will come back into fashion.

Long beat!

ELVIS
Well, what do you think is wrong with baseball?

MINEKO
Missadministered teams.

ELVIS
What? Who?

MINEKO
I can’t say names.

ELVIS
Well, tell me what and maybe I can figure it out.

MINEKO
You have two clubs; one has thrived for years off revenue-sharing while another club, in a real baseball city, that should be run like Walmart but it’s run like it’s got the revenues that Lubbock, Texas could generate.

Elvis’ eyes become large.

ELVIS
You ARE front office!!!
(beat)
This is some sort of a secret drug intervention? Am I being recorded?

MINEKO
No, I’m your driver.

Elvis takes a break and looks out the window, but returns to the conversation.
ELVIS
Every team should be forced to field one woman. Eight men and one woman.

MINEKO
What?

ELVIS
A new rule.

MINEKO
Lord no!

ELVIS
It would showcase how your female race have always been exploited.

MINEKO
Exploited?

ELVIS
The woman player would be exploited and everyone would see.

MINEKO
That’s the most idiotic idea I’ve ever heard.

ELVIS
No? I thought you would like it.

MINEKO
I don’t.

ELVIS
So, what else about baseball?

Mineko is almost afraid to respond. Elvis is everything she opposes. Long beat.

MINEKO
It’s time baseball got with the program and ended the tobacco.

ELVIS
Really?
MINEKO
It sends a horrible message to younger fans to see players with their chaw during games.

ELVIS
Baseball will never do it.

MINEKO
Well, then the cities that host MLB teams, should.

ELVIS
I thought you didn’t know anything about baseball?

MINEKO
I don’t. But anyone can see it’s a disgusting habit. There should be a complete ban of chewing tobacco at the ballpark.

ELVIS
Now that IS racist! All and I mean ALL the white players chew.

MINEKO
I’m racist?

ELVIS
Listen to you!

Mineko is disillusioned. She’s very disappointed. She’s actually repulsed by Elvis and feels it is better for her to separate herself from the conversation?

MINEKO
Excuse me I must take care of some things.

ELVIS
What did I say something wrong?

Roger rests but Mineko never returns. Two hours.

He reorganizes his belongings. He’s put the small red bag inside his larger green bag. He finds his lost passport.
He’s okay with being alone for a time, but as he sits, the isolation begins to get to him. He worries.

He travels the train performing magic tricks until he runs out of coins for the kids. He sells a jersey he has in his bag for a handful of coins. More magic tricks with coins for the children.

When he reaches the first car, he finds Mineko sitting alone perfectly content.

**MINEKO**

I don’t want to talk to you.

**ELVIS**

What are you, some sort of introvert?

**MINEKO**

You know I learn a lot from signs. I was in an American hotel and there was a sign on the toaster, “Please butter bread, after use.”

(beat)
What does that tell you?

**ELVIS**

(doesn’t understanding the sarcasm)
It means to put the bread in and then butter it. Make it warm and crisp and then you put the butter on it.

**MINEKO**

Really?

(beat)
Oh, okay.

(very long beat)
It doesn’t mean that some American butters the bread before using the toaster?

**ELVIS**

What?

Mineko is distant and refuses to answer. The train stops at Yokohama and they disembark. They exit the station and walk to a parking lot.
EXT. PARKING LOT – YOKOHAMA – LATE AFTERNOON

ELVIS
What is it?

MINEKO
Nothing.

ELVIS
Beautiful women don’t pout over nothing. There is always a reason.

MINEKO
I’m not pouting and I’m not beautiful.

ELVIS
I know some men might argue with that.

MINEKO
Worthless men, but thank you.

ELVIS
So why are you pouting?

MINEKO
It’s none of your business.

ELVIS
You just said he was worthless.

MINEKO
No.

ELVIS
Men are pigs. In Puerto Rico we say, “Los hombres son cerdos.”

MINEKO
Wrong.

ELVIS
No, they are and the sooner you realize it the better off you are.

MINEKO
It’s not that.
ELVIS
Well? Your job?
(beat)
I found my passport.

He offers it and Mineko takes it.

ELVIS
You’re not going to be fired. I’m not going to be arrested. Hooray!

Mineko is clearly not amused or charmed.

MINEKO
My car is here.
(beat)
Please stop talking and get in the car.

ELVIS
I love dominant women.
(beat)
Are all Asian women this dominant?

MINEKO
In the car, please.

ELVIS
Oh, that is hot! Very very hot! You talk sexy like that to all your clients?

Elvis gets in an old Toyota.

She places the passport under the carpet in the trunk. She puts his modest bags in the trunk.

Mineko gets into the Toyota.

ELVIS
I think if I’m going to risk my life in a car with an angry woman driver. I should know the reason... Right?

MINEKO
Okay, this is not about me! Do you know you’ve disappointed a lot of people?
ELVIS
The executives? They just want a profitable team. I can’t live like that, you know?

MINEKO
Forget them. Little kids!

ELVIS
Little kids don’t read the newspapers.

MINEKO
I love Americans. Basically, you do everything we do, but you do it bigger and you do it better.

ELVIS
For example?

MINEKO
For example, we have stupid people here too. It’s just that you do it bigger and you do it better.

   (beat)
I’m not saying everyone in America is stupid. Some of the smartest people are in America. Why don’t I ever get to meet any?

ELVIS
I don’t know.

MINEKO
Ya think maybe it’s my job?

Mineko is further distant. Her job of rehabilitating Elvis might be impossible.

INT. TOYOTA – HALF-WAY THERE – LATE EVENING

Elvis is looking at the countryside. It’s a beautiful ride. But, when Mineko begins to speak he’s 100% riveted to her. His eyes don’t leave her. She’s been the calm cool actor; now under scrutiny, she a bit unnerved.
MINEKO
You’re not going to get any better, are you?

Elvis sits up in his seat. Something has occurred to him. Elvis contemplates things. It makes her even more nervous.

ELVIS
You were pouting on the train because you’re worried about me?

MINEKO
No. I don’t really know you.

ELVIS
Geez. Women!

MINEKO
I’m sorry. I’m an emotional wreck. Please don’t embarrass me.

Elvis contemplates more.

ELVIS
It’s okay. A lot of people are worried about my batting average. My agent, my auto-mechanic, the player production analyst, ESPN, Las Vegas, 60 or 70 thousand fans, and my mother. Why not a rural Japanese Uber driver?

MINEKO
Well, yes. Of course.

ELVIS
If I could get you to give me some tips I might could hit .300… maybe even .310.

MINEKO
I don’t know anything about baseball.

ELVIS
So your village has a batting cage?
MINEKO
The young people have moved away to large cities. Just a dairy, fishing boats, and the ocean.

ELVIS
And old people.

MINEKO
But about you, you don’t think you’ll ever really change?

ELVIS
You think you want to change me, pretty lady? You have the skill set.

MINEKO
No. Of course not... that would take...

ELVIS
I don’t know what you have under that pretty outfit, but...

MINEKO
You’ll never know.

ELVIS
Yea?

MINEKO
What I mean is, as a professional athlete. You never will want to change, not really? Reach the next level.

ELVIS
No, not if I want to remain a professional. Can’t change.

MINEKO
What? That doesn’t make any sense.

ELVIS
Well, think about it. If we’re professionals and change then we become unprofessional. And that’s why I’m here. I changed from professional to unprofessional.
MINEKO
I mean you don’t wanna grow? You don’t wanna progress?

ELVIS
To be honest. No. I’m not. I’m not gonna change.

MINEKO
Why?

ELVIS
I’m twenty-seven. I can play until I’m 40. If I take care of myself and I don’t change.

MINEKO
You’re afraid if you change anything, it will upset things?

ELVIS
Me? I’ve always felt my ability was precarious. On the edge of a big Puerto Rican table. So, think about it.

MINEKO
You know how lucky you are to be where you are. And you’re insecure.

ELVIS
If I stop taking drugs, I’ll lose it.

MINEKO
That’s wrong.

ELVIS
That’s what my doctor told me.
(beat)
If I sell my Corvette, I’ll lose it.
(beat)
My mechanic told me that.

MINEKO
Maybe he only wants your money.
ELVIS
Maybe he wants me to keep hitting.

MINEKO
What else?

ELVIS
Between you and I, if this is in a tabloid... I’ll deny it.

MINEKO
What?

ELVIS
If I met a woman and get married, I’ll lose it.

MINEKO
How terribly sad.

ELVIS
My mother said that too, but in the end, she agreed with me.

MINEKO
You still call your mom, that’s so sweet.

ELVIS
Every morning.

MINEKO
And she agreed you shouldn’t get married?

ELVIS
She said to wait until I lose it, retire and THEN marry a nice Puerto Rican girl.

MINEKO
You’re superstitious. All baseball players are...

ELVIS
(loud)
Ah, ha! You DO know about baseball!
Mineko is frightened by Elvis, because he’s raised his voice.

MINEKO
Wade Boggs, everyone knows about Wade Boggs. He ate chicken.

ELVIS
I knew you were putting me on the whole time. What are you?
(beat)
A professional gambler?

MINEKO
Of course not.

ELVIS
A sports psychic?

MINEKO
I’m a driver.

ELVIS
You’re a wanna-be amateur sports psychologist.

MINEKO
No.

ELVIS
Well, you’re a women in baseball, and that means this is some sort of a trick.
(beat)
A man in baseball will tell you, “I’m gonna mess you up.” A woman in baseball, she won’t give you any warning. It’s just BAM!!!

MINEKO
I’m your driver.

ELVIS
No, you know too much about baseball.
MINEKO
Like what?

ELVIS
Like you know we’re all superstitious.

MINEKO
You just told me you were superstitious.

ELVIS
Why were you late picking me up at the airport?

MINEKO
I live in a small fishing and farming village. I’m bringing you there.

ELVIS
I’m not sure I believe that.

She stops the car. They have arrived. They are parked in the village, in front of the bed and breakfast.

Only now does Elvis look around and realize there really is a quiet Japanese fishing and farming village.

ELVIS
Oh, we’re here. Sorry. I guess I do believe you.

MINEKO
Don’t try to leave, you’ll only get lost and I'll have to come find you.

INT. RYOKAN - BED AND BREAKFAST - NIGHT

Mineko knocks and the owner opens the door. She has been asleep but motions for them to enter. Elvis and the owner go upstairs, and she unrolls his bed for the night. He falls into it.

Mineko drives to her home.

Later...
INT. ENTRY - OLD JAPANESE STADIUM - NIGHT

Elvis is standing at the entry where the fans enter. He hands a noisemaker to every Pearl fan that comes by. Grandfather is there handing out political flyers, leaflets.

ELVIS
(in Japanese)
Thank you. Enjoy the game.
(to Mineko)
What’s with grandpa?

MINEKO
He wants the students studying.

ELVIS
I agree. School comes first.

Elvis gives Great-Grandfather a thumbs up. The old man scowls at Elvis.

MINEKO
No. He wants them studying now.

ELVIS
Oh well, can’t he see they’re busy.

An opposing team fan reaches for a noisemaker. Elvis withholds it.

ELVIS
No, you are a Shark!

YOUNG MAN
Why you say I’m a shark?

Elvis points to the young man’s t-shirt. But Elvis smiles all the while.

ELVIS
B-Y-O-N. Bring your own noisemaker. You are in Zuchi, now. Our stadium, our rules, our noise.

The young Japanese men smile and walk away.
YOUNG MAN
(to his companion)
American baseball players are not as
dumb as they look.

INT. PRESS BOX - OLD JAPANESE STADIUM - NIGHT

Elvis has borrowed (or bought) a sophisticated smartphone with a
But he also has a notebook and note cards and Post-It stickers
everywhere. A thesaurus.

Elvis has THREE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN in the pressbox with him
whispering in his ear and writing him notes. A SPOTTER (with
binoculars), a STATS girl (with a laptop), and the most
attractive women is doing the COLOR. Her job is to sit next to
Elvis and once there’s an interesting play, he allows her to say
“GREAT,” but she does it in such a sexy way, Elvis just giggles
and giggles.

Elvis brushes his teeth between some innings.

An inning ends.

STATS GIRL
Aren’t you going to brush your teeth?

ELVIS
We won that inning.

Elvis points to the scoreboard.

COLOR GIRL
(in Japanese)
In innings we lose ot tie, he brushes
his teeth. It’s an American custom, I
suppose. He’s religious about it.

All the girls giggle and smile at Elvis and each other.

When the home team, the Pearls, do something well, Elvis uses a
different word. He has flashcards and it’s all color-coded.

ENGLISH: prominent, eminent, preeminent, important,
distinguished, august, illustrious, noble, celebrated, noted,
notable, noteworthy, famous.
ENGLISH: sufficient, enough, ample, requisite, appropriate, suitable, acceptable, passable, reasonable, satisfactory, tolerable, fair, fairly good, pretty good, goodish, middle-of-the-road, mediocre.

JAPANESE: 十分、足りる、十分な、必要な、適切な、適切な、許容できる、まあまあ、合理的、満足のいく、耐えられる、公正、かなり良い、かなり良い、グッド、道の真ん中、平凡.

OR IN OTHER WORDS: Jūbun, tariru, jūbun'na, hitsuyōna, teki setsuna, teki setsuna kyouyō dekiru, mā mā, gōri-teki, manzoku no iku, taerareru kōsei, kanari yoi, kanari yoi, guddo,-dō no man'naka, heibon.

He’s a very biased announcer and the fans from the visiting team boo and scold him. He takes it well and simply smiles and waves back to them. Elvis points to the phone.

ELVIS

It’s the phone. The translating app is bias.

Everything works well until there is a spectacular play, walk-off home run and the phone hangs. There isn’t a translation. The phone is dead.

The fans pause, waiting. Even the baserunner and the umpire turns to look up at the announcer’s box.

ELVIS

It almost made nine innings.
COLOR GIRL
Oh, no. The battery.

The young women all suggest words for Elvis.

SPOTTER GIRL
(choice)
Sentaku.

STATS GIRL
(fine)
Komakai.

COLOR GIRL
(first-rate)
Ichiryū.

Everyone is watching Elvis. Elvis might panic. He doesn’t.

ELVIS
(in very passable Japanese)
I’ve seen my share of extraordinary play, but this is fantastic! I love this country and I love this village. Pearls win! Pearls win!!! Walk-off home run.

The crowd goes wild a second time. Elvis has tears in his eyes.

Mineko is in the stands and she has tears in her eyes.

Parents tear up in joy and excitement. Japanese love their baseball.

ELVIS
Was it okay? I didn’t make a fool of myself, did I?

The three women in the press box are shocked but they all nod, smile, and congratulate him. Elvis politely bows to each woman.

It’s been a walk-off home run ending a dramatic game, and Elvis borrows two phones… He plugs one into the public address system.

He takes the other phone to the field...
Elvis is superstitious and refuses to ever step on the foul line. Elvis displays one of his famous huge leaps over the line to ensure he never touches it.

When he interviews the game-winning player, the player ducks and two ornery boys soak Elvis with a bucket of Gatorade. Same as he had soaked the young reporter, Julie.

Elvis isn’t mad, but the two boys bow six times.

ELVIS
Relax. It’s part of the game.

The two boys bow six more times.

INT. ESPN - STUDIO - NIGHT

ESPN television SPORTSCASTER cameo. Last one minute of the show.

NEWS READER
Everyone remembers this right?

They show a tape when Elvis soaked Julie, the lady reporter.

NEWS READER
Well, just watch this. Sent to us by our friends in Japan. It’s Elvis and ain’t Karma a…

ANALYST
Biscuit. Karma is sometimes a hot buttered biscuit.

They show a tape of Elvis being soaked by the ornery Japanese boys.

NEWS READER
You gotta love the Japanese; the kid’s mom had her phone out caught the entire soaking. Thanks for sending it to us, mom!

EXT. OLD JAPANESE STADIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Elvis returns the phones to the women and they invite him to get into their vehicle. However, Elvis sees Mineko walking back
toward the village. He bows again to the women and runs so he can walk down the path with Mineko.

Later...

INT. DAIRY BARN – VERY EARLY MORNING

Elvis is in the barn helping the DAIRYMAN. The dairyman projects a serious attitude. It’s serious work. It’s a modernized operation with milking machines. However, the dairyman is teaching Elvis how it works.

DAIRYMAN
(in Japanese)
The cows come in and the machines are attached. It’s entirely automatic. When the teat isn’t productive, this light comes on. Remove it like this.

ELVIS
I don’t know what you are saying.

DAIRYMAN
(in Japanese)
Of course, you are human. You know tits give milk.

Elvis shrugs. He doesn’t understand.

The dairyman removes a suction cup gives a teat a hand squeeze a stream of milk comes out and hits Elvis in the face. And the dairyman replaces the mechanical suction cup. Elvis giggles.

The men work as the cows come through the barn.

DAIRYMAN
(smiling and singing)
I want to go home with the armadillo. Good country music from Amarillo and Abilene.

ELVIS
You speak English?

DAIRYMAN
(Yes)
Hai.
ELVIS
What’s the story with Mineko?

They don’t understand a word the other says.

DAIRYMAN
(singing and smiling)
The friendliest people and the prettiest women you’ve ever seen.

The dairyman doesn’t speak English. The story of Elvis in Japan is a story of confusion and miscommunication, but Elvis is fine with it.

There are two cats around the barn and when the dairyman leaves for a moment, Elvis squirts the cats with milk. Naturally, they open their mouths and Elvis is having the most fun.

When the dairyman returns, there are eight very fat cats in an arch around Elvis. It’s every cat in the entire village. The amount of milk in the collecting container is a bit short. There is a line and the milk is below that line, and the dairyman seems to be gesturing, “where did the milk go?” Elvis shrugs and CUT TO the cats who look happy.

INT. RYOKAN - VILLAGE - MORNING

Mikeko is sitting on the porch of the bed and breakfast.

Meniko watches all eight cats follow Elvis toward the fishing dock.

She looks at the clock on her phone, 7:11 am.

Mikeko’s having her breakfast, but watching an American baseball game on her phone.

EXT. MLB HOME STADIUM - NIGHT

Roger walks to the plate, bat in hand.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
In his first at-bat since returning from alcohol and drug rehab, in Japan of all places.
COLOR
A number of questions come to mind.

Roger swings and we hear the crack of the bat and the crowd cheers a homerun.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
No question about that!

COLOR
Wow!

PLAY-BY-PLAY
That baby is gone.

COLOR
How about that?

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Welcome home, buddy.

A Roger’s WIFE and KIDS are in the stands cheering.

COLOR
Well, Roger’s wife Jenny Elder is here from Pleasanton; apparently, they are reunited. She and the kids are all standing and cheering their husband and father and if they have a little tear then we understand why. Roger Elder just homered on the first pitch of his first at-bat since returning to the game.

Roger rounds the bases and points to the sky. As he runs, he looks at the clock on the scoreboard, 7:11 pm.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
And he just pointed to the sky as he rounded the bases.

Roger calmly, humbly, rounds the bases.

COLOR
Whatever happened in Japan, it seems to have worked.
The entire team leaves the bench and are waiting at home. The umpire even has a soft place his heart, and is tearing up.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
In a show of support, the team has left the bench and are waiting for him at home plate.

COLOR
It’s always good to see a man shake his demons.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Recovery.

COLOR
I understand he was in a rural location. A small fishing village.

PLAY-BY-PLAY
Good for your soul?

COLOR
Apparently.

INT. RYOKAN - VILLAGE - MORNING

Mikeko shows more enthusiasm than Roger.

MINEKO
(shouting)
HOMER!!! He homered!

Mikeko almost chokes on her food, she’s so excited about the home run. She gets up and walks around the table confidently. She even raises her fists in the air like Rocky. She sits and finishes her meal.

EXT. FISHING DOCK - MORNING

The already fat cats are all watching Elvis standing on the fishing dock. He throws them some severed fish heads, meant for bait, to the cats.
EXT. SAGAMI BAY - FISHING BOAT - MORNING

The old FISHERMAN pulls a few levers and drops a large net into the sea. They speak but MUCH is lost in translation.

Elvis struggles to look up various words. But primarily, he makes the mistake of thinking a geisha is a prostitute. The Japanese fisherman pretends to understand English.

FISHERMAN
(in Japanese)
Good because Mineko likes this to be an old conservative place.

ELVIS
Mineko? Can you help me?
(in Japanese)
What’s her story?

FISHERMAN
Mineko?

ELVIS
(in Japanese)
What do you know?

FISHERMAN
(in Japanese)
She was a geisha.

ELVIS
Get out of here.
(beat)
A prostitute? A geisha?

The fisherman does not understand the word, “prostitute.”

FISHERMAN
(in Japanese)
Geisha is an intricacy of Japanese culture.

ELVIS
But I heard about the wild geisha parties.
Elvis looks up the Japanese word for “parties.”

FISHERMAN

Nani?

Elvis looks up the Japanese word for “parties.”

ELVIS

(in Japanese)
Parties.

FISHERMAN

(in Japanese)
Oh, parties. When men hire geisha to entertain at a party, sex has nothing to do with it.

(beat)
A geisha entertains with singing, music, dance, storytelling, attentiveness and flirtation.

Elvis understands the Japanese words for “sex” and “geisha”.

ELVIS

(in Japanese)
How much?

FISHERMAN

(in Japanese)
And she was famous, expensive.

Elvis looks up the word for “expensive”.

FISHERMAN

(in Japanese)
She was from a very respectable house.

ELVIS
What caused her to stray?

FISHERMAN
Baseball.

ELVIS
Baseball?

FISHERMAN
Hai.
ELVIS
Who?

FISHERMAN (in Japanese)
Maybe a danna.

ELVIS
A what?

FISHERMAN (in Japanese)
Client.

ELVIS
A baseball player turned her out?
(beat)
I knew something was up. She knows just too much about baseball.

FISHERMAN (in Japanese)
She told me her father wanted a son.

ELVIS
Her father?

FISHERMAN (in Japanese)
Hai, the father would pick her up from her kaburenjo and take her to games.

ELVIS
What?

FISHERMAN (in Japanese)
Her school.

Elvis looks up “Gakkō” in his dictionary.

ELVIS
You have a school for prostitutes here?

The fisherman only understands the word “school”.

105
FISHERMAN
Hai.

ELVIS
Amazing. And that’s okay?

The fisherman understands “okay.”

FISHERMAN
(in Japanese)
Hai! A geisha at that level is highly respected.

Elvis looks up “respected” in his dictionary.

FISHERMAN
(in Japanese)
Ask her and maybe she will entertain you with a party.

They haul in the net of fish. But it has a shark in the catch. The fisherman hands Elvis a huge butcher knife. And the fisherman gestures to the knife and the shark.

FISHERMAN
(twice in Japanese)
Cut off the fins for soup.

Elvis understands after a second time. But he’s like a deer in the headlights. Paralyzed. He can’t kill, not even a shark.

The weather radio alert goes off and the fisherman enters the cabin to turn it off.

The small or medium-size shark is thrashing about violently. Elvis uses his foot to nudge the shark off the fishing boat through the scupper and back into the sea.

When the fisherman returns the shark is gone, Elvis gestures that the fish tried to bite him and then “ran” overboard. The fisherman looks disappointed and storms around the ship for a bit. Perhaps he’s cursing or insulting Elvis.
INT. VILLAGE CITY COUNCIL – NIGHT

The very old Great-Grandfather is at the rostrum. It’s a town hall meeting. Mineko is sitting on the front row mortified by the speech. It’s her Great-Grandfather who is speaking.

The dairyman and the fisherman enter the hall with Elvis and sit relatively near other people. A woman wrinkles her nose. They have all been working and clearly smell bad. They move to the back row.

The villagers understand what is at issue. Elvis does not.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
My family and I are examples of productive living. And this city is run by local autonomy laws.

(beat)
I've made myself perfectly clear on this issue.

(beat)
To our esteemed mayor. I don't see why we have to have a baseball stadium after all these years.

(beat)
Our community has long stood for high values – education and computers.

(beat)
Mr. Mayor. You've not represented the wishes of the people of Zushi by agreeing to pay this electric bill.

(beat)
Our young people should not be playing silly games that lead to nowhere.

Applauding. Mineko looks back and sees the dairyman and fishermen are not applauding. Elvis is clapping his hands but has no idea why.

MAYOR
Are you gonna let me speak or is this just an honorable but boring speech?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
I feel like you have spoken by paying the bill without consulting any of the council members.
MAYOR
I talked to Akio and he thought it was a good idea.

AKIO
Only three more games and we might be playing for the youth championship.

MAYOR
Night games, so all the working parents can see their boys play.

AKIO
And a young girl plays too.

There is a lot of chatter in the audience, which is incredibly conservative. A female baseball player.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
I'm calling for a complete end of the baseball games and for the young people to return to their studies. (beat) With all due respect, people still run this village even if our elected official refuses to acknowledge that.

Applauding. Mineko looks back and sees Elvis clapping again. Elvis is trying to be polite and popular. Great-Grandfather returns to his seat.

GREAT GRANDMOTHER
Good job up there, hero.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Thank you, sweetheart.

Later...

EXT. PATH WITH SHRINES – DAY

Mineko is trying to interest Elvis in the shrines and the Shinto faith. He’s not having it.

ELVIS
So, the fellow with the fishing boat...
MINEKO
Yes.

ELVIS
He said you wanted to be a baseball player?

MINEKO
Of course, but...

ELVIS
Your dad wanted a boy?

MINEKO
I really don’t talk about that.

ELVIS
That’s it; you’re a woman with baseball issues.

MINEKO
Daddy issues?

ELVIS
I don’t know what that means. Your dad wanted a short-stop?

MINEKO
Sometimes, you are the most rude of people.

ELVIS
He also said...

Odd hesitation.

ELVIS
I don’t know how to put this.

MINEKO
It’s not like you to be shy.

ELVIS
You were a geisha?
MINEKO
Yes. What’s wrong with that?

ELVIS
Absolutely nothing.

MINEKO
Okay.

ELVIS
So, I was thinking maybe you’ll show me how that works?

MINEKO
Keep your head down when you swing and stop clowning in the dugout.

ELVIS
I just wanna have some fun.

MINEKO
When you take cocaine, your head flies up and you miss the ball.

Elvis contemplates things. Odd hesitation.

ELVIS
Thanks. I’ll remember that. But, I mean about the geisha thing.

MINEKO
I know. It’s just that you are constantly misunderstanding me.

ELVIS
I misunderstand you?
(beat)
You hardly ever speak. All business.

MINEKO
Still waters run deep.

Odd hesitation.

ELVIS
My grandmother used to say that.
(beat)
I have no idea what that means.

MINEKO
She said, "still waters run deep"?

ELVIS
Only it was more like, "Las aguas quietas son profundas."

MINEKO
Why do you want to know about geisha?

ELVIS
I’m here in Japan, aren’t I?

MINEKO
A geisha is a person of art. And you aren’t to think of it any other way.

ELVIS
I agree.
(beat)
I like art.

Long beat.

MINEKO
Be at my home at seven pm...

INT. MINEKO’S HOME - NIGHT

Mineko answers the door dressed in the traditional geisha outfit and makeup. She invites him in.

BEGIN MONTAGUE

Singing, music, dance, storytelling, attentiveness, and flirtation. Elvis listens intently and laughs.

END MONTAGUE

MINEKO
I left my parent’s home at the age of twelve to begin studying traditional Japanese dance.
ELVIS
At the kaburenjo.

MINEKO
Congratulations. You are learning
Japanese.

She’s still flirting.

ELVIS
So, your father was the one who...

MINEKO
He would visit and bring me to Japanese
baseball games.

ELVIS
He wanted a boy?

MINEKO
It’s not uncommon.

ELVIS
So, from age 12. That’s a bit early
don’t you think?

MINEKO
I always worked myself to my physical
and mental limits. I was very good at
what I did.

ELVIS
I’m sure you were. Why’d you stop?

MINEKO
I entertained a lot of celebrities and
even an American politician, and a lot
of people knew who I was.

ELVIS
That’s not good, huh.

MINEKO
This notoriety made me the subject of
jealousy and gossip.
ELVIS
So, you quit?

MINEKO
That’s part of it, I guess. I stabbed an Australian with a sharp piece of bamboo.

ELVIS
What?

MINEKO
He thought geishas were prostitutes and I told him geishas aren’t prostitutes and he just would NOT stop.

Elvis is having trouble processing.

MINEKO
Uh my. That’s what you’re doing there. Isn’t it?

ELVIS
Uh, no.

MINEKO
You are here because you think I’m a prostitute?

ELVIS
No, I’m here because you’re a geisha.

MINEKO
Liar.

ELVIS
Seriously, you just said geishas aren’t prostitutes. I knew that. I totally knew that.

MINEKO
You’ve been aloof the entire time... preferring to milk cows and fish and hang around the baseball diamond, annoying people.
ELVIS
Annoying people?

MINEKO
And who told you to interfere with their work?

ELVIS
I can’t just sit around all day. And it looked like they could use some help.

MINEKO
Did they ask you to help them?

ELVIS
Well, no, but… I’m their friend.

MINEKO
And suddenly, you realize that maybe I was a prostitute in the past and you’re looking for me to be your friend.

ELVIS
Okay. You got me. I don’t pretend anything ever. So, what exactly do geishas do?

MINEKO
What have I been doing with you all night?

ELVIS
Well, you’ve been flirting…

MINEKO
And you liked it?

ELVIS
Sure, it’s like nothing I’ve said all night has been wrong.

MINEKO
And you’re not treated that way at home?
ELVIS
At home, EVERYTHING I say to a woman is wrong.

MINEKO
When men hire a geisha to entertain, sex has nothing to do with it.

ELVIS
No one told me that. Wow, this is embarrassing.

Mineko might scold him but she remembers that she’s in geisha mode.

MINEKO
It’s okay, hero. How could you have known? A stranger in a strange land. We have different customs.

ELVIS
You know. I get it. I really do.

MINEKO
And you like it?

ELVIS
What man wouldn’t?

MINEKO
Okay, then lesson learned. Good night.

Elvis chuckles, bows and leaves.

Later…

EXT. PATH – DAY

Elvis is doing his best with the shrines. He’s using them as an exercise station. At each shrine, he stops and does ten or twenty burpees. Other exercises. He then runs to the next shrine.

The dairyman hustles on a tractor to catch him.

DAIRYMAN
(in Japanese)
They are trying to kill baseball.

He’s come to tell Elvis about the city council meeting, but it’s a workout and Elvis doesn’t have his dictionaries.

The dairyman, fortunately, has a flier and hands it to Elvis.

DAIRYMAN
(in Japanese)
Be there if possible.

INT. RYOKAN - BED AND BREAKFAST - MORNING

Elvis goes home and fetches his dictionaries. Word-for-word, he sits at the inn and translates. Six people interrupt him to wave and say, “Kon'nichiwa.” He’s clearly become a popular personality in the village.

INT. GENERAL STORE - MORNING

The dairyman and the fisherman stand at the counter of the general store. They are looking at smartphones.

STOREKEEPER
New item.

EXT. PORCH OF MINEKO’S HOUSE - DAY

Elvis knocks.

MINEKO
Just a second.

She opens the door.

MINEKO
What?

ELVIS
Sorry to bother you, but I found this flyer.

MINEKO
You found a flyer?
ELVIS
Yeah, look, they're tryin' to shut the youth team down.

MINEKO
I know what they're tryin' to do, Elvis.
(beat)
I've seen the flyer, okay?

ELVIS
Well, what are we gonna do about it?

MINEKO
Well, I'll tell you what you're gonna do about it.
(beat)
You're gonna go out there and you're gonna do whatever you've been doing. Go milk a cow or go fish.

ELVIS
Why?

MINEKO
I'll take care of it. You will only make things worse.

ELVIS
Why?

MINEKO
You are the walking talking nightmare to these people.

ELVIS
How is that?

MINEKO
One, you're a foreigner.

ELVIS
What's that got to do...

MINEKO
Two, everyone knows why you're here.
ELVIS
And why is that?

MINEKO
To dry out from the cocaine.

ELVIS
Well, I’m feeling much better, actually.

MINEKO
I don’t know how you’re getting it, but Japan has strict drug laws.

ELVIS
Really? You think I’m on coke still?

MINEKO
You announced a baseball game in a language you don’t even know!

ELVIS
Using the most up-to-date technologies… Does not mean someone’s on cocaine.

MINEKO
Those women in the press box with you? You share the drugs with them?

ELVIS
Okay, I’m using them but it’s about their phones. I promise! You gotta believe me.

She slams the door.

ELVIS
Hey, what are the kids gonna do?

She opens the door again.

MINEKO
Hey, that is my problem, okay?
(beat)
I’ll handle it.
(beat)
Now throw that thing in the trash.
She gestures to the flier and slams the door.

ELVIS
I liked the trained geisha better, you know! I don’t care how much it costs, I want my geisha back.

INT. YOKAHAMA RESTAURANT – NIGHT

A journalist is interviewing Great-Grandfather for the television news. News camera is taping it. Great grandmother is beside him always.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
We have to get everybody on board.

TV JOURNALIST
Otherwise, you can't legally stop it.
(beat)
I am glad you called us. Television will be interested.
(beat)
This is exactly the kind of fight that brings people to the news.
(beat)
What are your chances?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Baseball is one of my top enemies.
(beat)
It’s a true violation of the young person’s education.

TV JOURNALIST
But baseball has been here since...

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Since Japanese culture began to suffer.

TV JOURNALIST
So, for you this is about education?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Well, this town is all about supporting education. Exams are coming up.
TV JOURNALIST
Exams are always coming up in Japan.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
That’s why the children must concentrate and not be distracted by sports.

TV JOURNALIST
Great. I think that’s enough to get people sufficiently worked up in Yokahama. Might even go national.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
You think there will be a lot of people who will drive out here for the vote? We’re just a small village.

TV JOURNALIST
Uh, I doubt it. But you’re doing the right thing. Raising hell this way. It will be great for our news program.

EXT. BACK OF GENERAL STORE - VILLAGE - DAY

Elvis is unloading boxes out of a truck.

The dairyman and fisherman approach. They have new smartphones in their hands. The phones do the translating.

PHONE
Welcome to Japan, an honorable friend and co-worker.

ELVIS
Hey, welcome to the 21st century.

Elvis shows that he’s also bought a new phone.

DAIRYMAN
Yes, new phones to speak with our new friend.

FISHERMAN
Dear honorable Elvis. Did you hear? They're gonna shut us down. No baseball.
ELVIS
Yeah, I heard.

DAIRYMAN
You need to get to that meeting.

ELVIS
I'd make things worse.

FISHERMAN
You’re the only person around here that even cares about this thing. You’re a big shot American baseball player.

ELVIS
I’m here to dry out.

DAIRYMAN
Dry out?

The two Japanese men don’t understand. The translator is not perfect. They seem to think he fell in the ocean.

ELVIS
I’m a drug addict.

FISHERMAN
Go to the meeting. You know Mineko's gonna be there.

ELVIS
No, I’ll make it worse.

DAIRYMAN
You're missing the bigger picture here honorable Elvis.

FISHERMAN
The troublemaker is an old, old man.

DAIRYMAN
His friends care only about tradition.

FISHERMAN
You care about our boys.
ELVIS
Oh guys, I get it. You’re the fathers of future MLB players. I get it.
(beat)
Your son is the centerfielder and your son is the pitcher?

FISHERMAN
No, our sons have no chance at a baseball career. His son plays 1st base, hitting .148. My son plays 3rd and hits only a little better.

ELVIS
So, why...

DAIRYMAN
You care about the future.

FISHERMAN
And this sport.

DAIRYMAN
For real, this is actually somethin' that my boy is passionate about.

ELVIS
Well, what if I mosey over and I’ll just listen. Mineko won’t want me to say anything.
(beat)
She says everyone knows and...

DAIRYMAN
What?

ELVIS
That I’m a drug addict.

FISHERMAN
Addict? That’s news to us.

DAIRYMAN
A vicious rumor.

ELVIS
Well, maybe I’ll have a word or two.
DAIRYMAN
Right, but let’s take a bath first.

The fisherman, dairyman, and athlete go to a bathhouse.

INT. BATHHOUSE – DUSK

Elvis, the dairymen and fishermen bath and dress for success.

EXT. BATHHOUSE – DUSK

FISHERMAN
Red clouds take warning.

DAIRYMAN
A sign or symptom of impending doom and disaster.

FISHERMAN
They ARE the impending doom and disaster.

DAIRYMAN
Maybe they're a mass of enemies so large that they just look like a cloud.

FISHERMAN
Or maybe they're some ghostly beast of a supernatural nature.

DAIRYMAN
Or maybe they just hang there looking ominous and threatening to unleash something awful.

The Japanese men are playing with their new phones, but Elvis is nearly frightened silly. He’s Purto Rican and has an abnormal fear of hurricanes.

ELVIS
That never happens.

FISHERMAN
Whatever they are, you'd better believe it won't be good.
ELVIS
Guys, maybe we should skip the meeting and prepare. That is a hurricane coming this way.

DAIRYMAN
Let’s ask Susanoo.

The purest nuts-and-bolts phone app that will ever be created.

FISHERMAN
(reading)
Susanoo is a Japanese weather app based just outside Tokyo dedicated to telling you what to expect outside every morning, afternoon, evening, and night.

ELVIS
Susanoo, tell me about the storm.
(beat)
Please?

The computerized voice calmly states...

SUSANOO
Where have you been? There is a typhoon coming. It will be very windy with extreme rain - heavy at times with winds that might reach 160-225 kph.

ELVIS
Susanoo, when? When will the storm arrive?

SUSANOO
The storm is expected to hit the Japanese mainland at 3 am. All baseball games scheduled for tonight and tomorrow in the Tokyo area are canceled.

FISHERMAN
How does she know you are a baseball player?

DAIRYMAN
Susanoo knows a lot.
The fisherman speaking into his phone.

FISHERMAN
Susanoo, what should I do?

SUSANOO
Lash down your boat.

The dairyman asks his phone.

DAIRYMAN
Susanoo, what should I do?

SUSANOO
Bring your cows into the barn.

The men are in awe of Susanoo. She knows their browsing history.

INT. VILLAGE CITY COUNCIL – NIGHT

When the three men enter, Mineko is just finishing.

MINEKO
So I'm suggesting to you ladies and gentlemen, the decision to shut baseball down, solely based on your personal beliefs, is nothing short of tyranny...

(beat)
Thank you.

Polite applauding.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
I appreciate your concern, ma’am.

(beat)
But the stadium is within our city limits and with exams coming up, we have the final say.

(beat)
If three of the five council members vote nay, we will overturn the mayor's decision.

(beat)
And there's nothing you can do about it.
ELVIS
(loud)
I’ll pay for the lights.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Not that anyone asked you. It’s not about the lights. It’s about the sport taking time away from the young people’s study hours.

ELVIS
(quietly)
I thought it was about the lights.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Now to enlighten you all on the evil of the baseball, I've invited a university professor to say a few words.

Applauding.

A distinguished but elderly PROFESSOR (82) stands. It takes him at least 30 seconds to reach the rostrum.

PROFESSOR
Thank you all for inviting me to take part in your honorable cause to put a halt to wasting time in Japan.

The professor shows the audience some photos of Japanese students at desks in a classroom.

Later...

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Thank you. Professor. The Japanese students are falling behind the world in their studies. Enlightening.

(beat)
And finally, I would like to show you some of the horrors we’ve invited into your village.

Great-Grandfather has a powerpoint show as well.
GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Tio Escabar. Adderall.  
(beat)
Davey Frese. Vicodin, OxyContin.  
(beat)
Juan Felix. Marijuana and methanphetamins.  
(beat)
Roger Eleder. Alcohol abuse.  
(beat)
And, currently, Elvis Begiga. Cocaine addiction.

MINEKO
Great-Grandfather!

Elvis whispers into his phone; he needs a translation for “great-grandfather.”

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
All have been in your village. Your children exposed to their addiction.

The phone answers back a translation loudly. Everyone laughs. Mineko storms out of the meeting in tears.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
What is taking place in the name of entertainment? Our youth are giving up places in colleges to become future drug addicts.

ELVIS
Wait.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
The only thing baseball has bought our village are alcoholics and drug addicts.  
(beat)
I stand by these facts.

ELVIS
It’s entirely not true.
GREAT-GRANDFATHER
I'm sorry, son, we've already heard from your side. And she’s just left in tears.
(beat)
We're gonna vote.

ELVIS
May I please be heard.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
There is a storm coming and we’ll all need to go home and prepare. So, there’s not any time. I’m sorry.

The people grumble. They like Elvis.

ELVIS
I don't mean any disrespect.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Please, sit down.

The people grumble even louder, and the innkeeper stands.

INNKEEPER
But this young man has a right to speak.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
He’s not even Japanese.

INNKEEPER
Show me in the rules, please.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
And out of respect to everybody who's here today, let's hear what the American has to say. Quickly.

ELVIS
Okay? Okay.

MAYOR
Hey, everyone, settle down, settle down.
GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Elvis, is it?

ELVIS
My mother said when I was born, I came out with hair like Elvis.

The audience chuckles.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
I’m sure.

ELVIS
This professor has shown you photos of some serious academic preparations.
   (beat)
And having seen that, I might vote right alongside those that want to shut down the game.
   (beat)
But baseball doesn’t get in the way of education. You are parents; why can’t you require certain marks or your son…

MOTHER
Or daughter.

ELVIS
That’s right; your daughter can’t play, unless they achieve a certain level.
   (beat)
I don’t know why baseball can’t enhance their studies.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
But you’re a drug addict.

ELVIS
Well, it’s not true that all baseball players are drug addicts.

Elvis holds up his phone. He links his phone to the projector and shows the village the team’s web page.

ELVIS
The first baseman, eight children. He’s a great father.
The right fielder, is a minister.

The coach has a son in Harvard and a daughter at Yale.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
We aren’t concerned with them, but you.

ELVIS
I was an addict. I’ll admit it and I’m very sorry.

I was raised on professional baseball. My family. My island is all about making baseball players.

And I’ve seriously wasted good money and a few good years with drugs and tomfoolery.

The villagers react negatively to, “tomfoolery.” They gasp! Clearly, the smartphone translators have shocked everyone. Maybe, “demonic possession” or something more sinister than “joking around”.

ELVIS
But I’ve learned a thing or two here. And I’ll never embarrass myself again.

The game is a celebration. It's a celebration of youth and skills, mathematics and strategy.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Outside the storm. Are you done?

ELVIS
(in perfect Japanese)
It’s mind and body. Many cultures have long acknowledged: the mysterious tie between body and mind, what you call, “kokoro.”

The crowd awes at Elvis’ language skills.
ELVIS
Thank you, everybody.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Thank you.

They vote.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
All in favor of overriding the mayor? As Japan’s oldest municipal councilman and candidate for governor, I vote Hai.

COUNCILMAN #1
Bangō.

COUNCILMAN #2
Hai.

COUNCILMAN #3
Hai.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Three of the necessary five vote. Baseball is banished. Meeting adjourned. It sounds like the storm is going to be serious. Go home and make preparations.

They all rush out. Elvis, the fisherman, and the dairyman are dejected and sit shocked, but eventually they leave as well.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Great-Grandfather and Grandmother get into a classic old red 1965 Toyota Sport S800. It’s rare and distinctive. Elvis notes the car.

ELVIS
Where are they going?

FISHERMAN
Evacuation, I hope.

DAIRYMAN
Safer in the city.
EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Elvis and his two friends stop by the dock and lash down the fishing boat.

EXT. DAIRY FARM - NIGHT

The three friends stop by the dairy and herd the cows into the barn. The dairy farmer and fishermen work putting boards up and reinforcing the barn. Flashlight in hand, Elvis searches for a lost cow. And brings her up to safety.

EXT. MINEKO’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elvis walks past Mineko’s house. She’s boarding up the windows. She’s in a snarky and sarcastic mood. Elvis isn’t aware she’s being snarky.

ELVIS
When will this ever let up?

MINEKO
When it does let up, it will start back up again the minute you comment on it.

ELVIS
Well, that’s just the eye passing over.

MINEKO
Congratulations. You should be a meteorologist.

ELVIS
I’m Puerto Rican. We have these too, you know.

MINEKO
Oh, then you know what I’m doing?

ELVIS
Sure. You’re boarding up the windows.

MINEKO
Are you going to help or just stand there?

Working their skins touche. Eyes meet.
Elvis kisses her. She pulls back.

    MINEKO
    You aren’t angry?

    ELVIS
    Hard to believe, but I’ve been rejected before. But I never had sex during a hurricane.

    MINEKO
    Sex? No, I mean at me because of the baseball.

    ELVIS
    That’s your Grandfather?

    MINEKO
    Great-Grandfather.

    ELVIS
    No, why?

    MINEKO
    Please help me finish? (beat) There is time for foolishness later.

    ELVIS
    Really?

INT. BEDROOM - MINEKO’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mineko and Elvis are about to be intimate, but an entire wall of the house is blown away.

As the home disintegrates in the wind and water, Mineko opens her secret media room. It’s sturdy. They embrace, afraid for their lives.

INT. MEDIA ROOM - MINEKO’S HOUSE - MORNING

In the morning, they awake and are still in the same embrace. The TV room is the only part of the house left after the storm.
The construction, wiring, and the heavy electronic equipment anchor the room and they survive.

There is a very large Peruvian fishing boat in Mineko’s front yard the next morning.

Elvis wakes up and the walls of the house are gone; he scatters about. He also sees and gathers up wet papers...

    ELVIS
    Newspaper clippings.
    (beat)
    Statistics.
    (beat)
    Scouting report.
    (beat)
    Medical, wow! Psychological evaluations.
    (beat)
    Correspondence from a team owner.

He’s figuring it out. Mineko is looking at the destruction outside what is left of her home.

He sees television sets, which Mineko wasn’t supposed to have. Elvis follows the cabling, which leads to Mineko’s satellite dish, laying in the back yard. Only the cabling has kept it from blowing away.

Elvis realizes to a certain extent who Mineko is. He falls into deep thought. All the progress Mineko has made might be lost.

    MINEKO
    You’re mad at me?

    ELVIS
    Why? ’cause you didn’t let me watch TV?

    MINEKO
    Well...

    ELVIS
    So, this is what you do for a living?

    MINEKO
    I’m an efficient organizer and I know a little something about baseball.
ELVIS
Your father?

MINEKO
Yes. He wanted me to be a baseball player I’m sure. But my mother wanted me to be a geisha.

ELVIS
Wow!

Eventually, Elvis smiles at the situation he has found himself in. He hugs Mineko.

MINEKO
So, you aren’t angry?

ELVIS
For bringing me here? I don’t mind being here so much, you know.

MINEKO
You don’t feel tricked?

ELVIS
You can’t trick me. I knew all the time.

MINEKO
You don’t ever get angry?

ELVIS
What good would that do?

MINEKO
I don’t know. I’m pretty sure sometimes you get mad.

Elvis looks up at the sky and shakes his fist!

ELVIS
Is that all you got!

Mineko laughs at Elvis’ bad acting.

They hear a faint cry for “help.”
Some of the village is intact but the inn seems destroyed.

EXT. INN - MORNING

Elvis and Mineko pull the injured innkeeper from the rubble.

EXT. PATH TOWARD YOKOHAMA - MORNING

The only car in the village has been destroyed. Elvis puts the injured woman in a cart. He jumps over downed power lines with the innkeeper and the throws the cart over the lines. He navigates around boats, houses and trees in the road. He is a professional athlete and gets the job done. Down the path past the shrines toward town.

He passes the baseball field and notices his friend’s fishing boat is in the middle of the diamond. Past the field, he’s met by several boys from the baseball team. He hands the woman off to the boys and they will take her in the cart to the hospital.

Mineko is a small woman and has been beside Elvis. She throws her arms around Elvis but suddenly she freezes. She’s a deer in the headlight. She looks up into a tree.

Elvis turns and also spots Great-Grandfather’s red Toyota sportcar, stuck in a tall tree between branches. It’s the same distinctive S800.

Elvis climbs the tree. He’s worried the car will be empty.

The Grandfather rolls down the window.

ELVIS

Are you okay? What about grandmother?

(beat)

She's okay?

Grandmother smiles. She’s going to be rescued.

ELVIS

She’s happy up here?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

She’s not happy.

Elvis laughs a bit...
ELVIS
You’re up a tree.
(beat)
I guessing you won’t wanna climb down?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
Rescue please.

Grandfather opens the door and water pours out.

ELVIS
No, no. Stay there. We’ll get you down.

Elvis climbs down the tree.

ELVIS
Call the fire department.

MINEKO
No phones and they’re in Yokahama. With the debris on the roads it will be forever. Help won’t be here until maybe tomorrow.
(whispering to grandfather)
Climb down!

ELVIS
No. No. Stay there!

Elvis contemplates.

Elvis runs to get the fishing nets off the boat. Wet, they weigh a ton... He’s trying to bring them. But the dairyman arrives with the tractor. The fisherman helps.

They spread the fishing nets below the trees.

The farmer and the fishermen and Elvis hoist them up and lash the nets to the surrounding trees. They make something similar to the netting below trapeze artists.

ELVIS
Okay, jump?

GREAT-GRANDFATHER
What?
(beat)
Momma. They want us to jump.
(beat)
Are you ready to go first?
(beat)
Together?
(beat)
Okay, unbuckle.

The couple is about to work up their nerve to jump from the car, but the tree becomes unstable and a branch breaks... the fall will be their doom?

No! The nets and the ropes and the surrounding trees bend to land them and the car safely in the net. Everything bends to deliver them to the ground.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAWN

BEGIN LONG MONTAGE

The government emergency workers have arrived.

Mineko and Elvis travel the path to the baseball diamond. The shrines and memorials on the path have all been blown over and scattered. Mineko and Elvis remove debris, what they can along the path.

When they arrive at the baseball field a few kids are taking debris off the field and stacking it to the side. It is too dangerous to work in the debris of their village, so the young people retreat to the baseball field and they work there.

Mineko and Elvis join them and clear the field. They are using round poles and the tractor to roll the fisherman’s boat from the field.

It might be a long time before games are played on the field, but Elvis has made the journey.

Elvis and the baseball team trains by running to Yokahama and marching back with propane tanks.

Mineko consoles everyone and she cooks noodles for people remaining in the village. The village lines up at the stadium’s stand concession. The homeless villagers live under the stands at the stadium.
Elvis digs ditches to repair the water lines. He lifts trees off the roads and he’s there helping when they pull the old fishermen’s boat back into the ocean.

Elvis and Mineko repair the media room so Mineko will have a place to live. Elvis sleeps in the press box.

Mineko’s car is pulled out of a ravine. Elvis finds his passport when cleaning Mineko’s car.

When there is nothing remaining to do in the village, water and some electricity is restored, Mineko takes Elvis to the airport.

END LONG MONTAGE

INT. TOKYO AIRPORT - DAWN

Elvis is trying to put on a game face, but it’s impossible. His character is to either smile or tear up. He’s teared up.

    MINEKO
    But you are sometimes so obstinate.

    ELVIS
    I guess the Lord made me hard to handle
    So lovin' me might be a long-shot gamble.

    MINEKO
    You are not allowed to associate with gamblers.

They call his flight. Hug. Elvis is emotional. Mineko is strong.

    MINEKO
    Public displays of affection aren’t proper in Japan.

    ELVIS
    Well, you don’t want to do anything improper.

    MINEKO
    Elvis, please. Go back to America and forget about me.
ELVIS
I’ll be back.

She smiles but there is a bit of reserve.

Before the credits roll, we see day-to-day life in the devastated village. Very little progress is made. People do have water and electricity, but the basic structures aren’t repaired.

Nothing is rebuilt. The villagers are still living in rudimentary temporary shelters under the stadium’s seating.

ROLL END CREDITS

In the middle of the credits, Elvis, Roger, and what appears to be eight other baseball players return to the village with several trucks each. The trucks are loaded with lumber and building materials. Elvis brings enough Japanese workers to rebuild the homes.

And of course, he has returned for Mineko. But the audience doesn’t see this unless they stay for the credits.

COMPLETE THE CREDITS

FADE OUT