modern

Four Japanese Folktales

For the Stage in English

Adapted and written by the students
of Matthew Barbee's English Practicum Class

同志社大学
Doshisha University

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Four Modern Japanese Folktales for the Stage

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Turtle Taiking & Mayor Urashima

A modern, English adaptation of the traditional Japanese folktale, Urashimataro.

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Scene 1 – Marin Yada

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Characters:

Urashima

Turtle *(Taiking)*

Kid 1

Kid 2

Narrator

SCENE 1

Narrator: Once upon a time, a mayor called Urashima had been dealing with so many problems that occurred in his village. Urashima was a very reliable person and became the beloved mayor in the village. One day, Urashima went to stroll on the beach. On the beach, he found two little kids messing around with a turtle.

Kid 1: *(aggressively kicking and pointing at the turtle)* Hey, weak turtle!

Kid 2: Making fun of you is so refreshing! It feels great!

Narrator: The poor turtle was being bullied. The two kids whose clothes were very dirty were kicking and hurting the turtle.

Turtle: *(in a pathetic weak voice)* Don't! Please! Don't bully me, please!

Narrator: The turtle was frightened and couldn't counter them. The two kids didn't stop bullying. They don't hear Urashima who is running toward them.

Urashima: *(approaching the kids)* Hey, kids, why do you bully him? It's bad, isn't it?

Kid 1: We know! But we have a good reason to bully him!

Kid 2: We are stressed from daily life!

Urashima: you are totally bad. Don't justify bullying. Just stay away from him!

Narrator: Urashima scolded them very strongly and tried to separate them from the turtle by grabbing their hands.

Turtle: Thank you, mayor Urashima.

Narrator: Urashima helped the turtle and then it hid in its shell, but at the same time, the kids took the turtle back again and pulled out a hammer.

Urashima: What the hell do you have!? *(seeing the hammer and yelling)* Not a hammer! What are you doing? You want to kill him? *(tries to take the hammer)* Give it to me!

Narrator: Urashima tried to take the hammer so that they couldn't take it back again.

Kid 1: *(avoiding Urashima)* Listen up, this turtle has a golden shell on his back! So, we'll take it!

Urashima: A golden shell?

Kid 2: Yeah, it is. You'll live much longer if you take it for yourself. This golden shell has the power to make humans immortal!

Narrator: The two kids looked so confident and tried to take off the turtle's shell.

Urashima: So, what!? Have you lost your minds? Are you crazy?

Kid 1: *(very sarcastic)* Oh huh? The perfect mayor, aren't you? I know. You solved all the problems we had, and we are the enemy. Huh. You're totally perfect all the time. You know it all.

Narrator: The two kids gave him an evil smile.

Kid 2: But think about it. Who will live forever? Who will protect this village after you die, huh? Maybe, no one, we will absolutely miss you, perfect mayor.

Narrator: Suddenly, a bad feeling crossed in his mind. Urashima was confused. And then he muttered something.

Urashima: After … I … die…?

Kid 1: Yeah, see? After you die, this village will collapse and be filled with evil, and it will prove you were not the perfect mayor! There is only one way to stop that. The golden shell.

Kid 2: Then you will be alive forever, and you'll keep being a perfect mayor forever! Always, yes always people must pay or sacrifice something for peace! Like we used to sacrifice a body for God in the old days!

Narrator: Again, Urashima felt sweat running down his back and was very nervous.

Urashima: I know if I were immortal, my village would exist forever!

Turtle: Mayor! Please! Please save me! Don't listen to them! I know my shell can immortalize people, but my shell is needed under the sea! We need it for the peace of the ocean!

Narrator: And then Urashima thought deeply about it again.

Urashima: If I save this turtle, the ocean would be saved... but …

Kid 1: Our town and our happiness would also be sacrificed! You are kidding us!

Kid 2: You would sacrifice our peace for such a little thing? You should prioritize people's lives first.

Turtle: No, mayor. Please. I beg you...! Please save me and protect the ocean.

Narrator: The moment of silence was long, but Urashima finally expressed his feelings.

Urashima: Sorry. I'm so sorry, turtle. Human lives are important. I need to live forever for my town and my people. I'll take your shell and use it to become immortal. I'm sorry.

Narrator: Right after Urashima said so, the two kids and Urashima peeled off the turtle's shell and took it, and they all became immortal. After that, Urashima and the kids cooperated to keep their village safe. Thanks to the golden shell, the village has lasted for a hundred years with unbreakable peace.

SCENE 2

Narrator: One hundred years later.

Kid 1: *(cheerfully)* You're awesome Urashima, the village has never stopped prospering.

Urashima: *(sigh)* Yes, it is great, but we now have a problem: people are mysteriously disappearing into the sea. For example, my uncle who loved fishing disappeared. The last place he went was the sea to enjoy fishing. Not only him, but I have heard other strange stories of more people disappearing. This is the most mysterious problem over these past 100 years.

Kid 2: Maybe we can go and find some clues on the beach?

Urashima: Yeah, you are right. We should go.

Narrator: They went to the beach and researched some solutions. However, they again found the same turtle without its shell and approached the turtle to talk.

Kid 1: *(surprised)* Omg!! You are the turtle that Urashima helped about 100 years ago, aren't you?!

Kid 2: Are you still alive?

Urashima: *(sympathetic)* Hey, it's been a while! How have you been?

Turtle: *(surprised)* Oh, what destiny! It has been a long time since you stole my shell. Even though my life is coming to an end soon, I'm doing well. How is the city?

Urashima: It is super awesome. The city never stops growing.

Kid 1: *(happily)* You can say it again! We never expected that your shell would have helped us so much.

Turtle: I'm glad to hear that! So, what brought you here today? You rarely visit the beach anymore.

Urashima: To be honest, people have been mysteriously disappearing into the ocean. We came here to find some clues. Do you know anything about it?

Turtle: *(acting clueless, while actually knowing what is happening)* Really? That's horrible. It's hard to believe such a crazy thing is happening here, but maybe you can find some solutions at Ryukyu Castle. In that castle lives the king of the ocean, so you can ask him about the incidents.

Kid 2: Ryukyu Castle..... yeah, that's it! Can you please take us there, turtle?

Turtle: Sure, I'd love to. I'm glad that I can help you again. Let's go.

Narrator: The turtle took them to Ryukyu Castle. On the way there, they realized how dirty the water was, and they saw a lot of marine animals dying and plants withering.

Turtle: Hey, we have arrived at Ryukyu Castle.

Kid 1: Wow, the castle is such a beautiful place, but I can't believe how dirty the ocean water was.

Kid 2: There is so much pollution and darkness around the castle.

Turtle: Too bad you'll never know how beautiful our oceans were.....*(Turtle whispering)*. Oops, anyway, let's go inside.

Narrator: They walked through a gloomy hall and finally found themselves standing in front of a big door.

Turtle: The king is through this door. *(grinning)* Are you ready to enter?

Narrator: They were a little bit nervous, but they entered anyway. Strangely, they didn't see the king. What they saw were some marine animals and fish hanging on the wall. There was no king of the ocean; the throne was empty.

Kid 1: *(confused and panicked)* Where is the king? Is he out today?

Kid 2: When does he come back?

SCENE 3

Turtle: *(mad)* Shut up! I don't care about that; I am Taiking the King of the Ocean, and I'll tell you why there are so many cases of people disappearing into the ocean.

Narrator: The three were shocked, fell silent, and listened to the turtle, feeling a little intimidated by his change in attitude.

Turtle: They turn people into fish and use them to feed the ocean. It is in order for us to live!

Urashima: Food for the sea? Why do you need to go to such lengths? And it's wrong to harm people. People have nothing to do with it.

Turtle: *(yelling)* It matters. And you and you and you are responsible! Don't you remember?

Urash. & Kids: *(not understanding)* Remember what?

(The turtle exhales a sigh and approaches them.)

Turtle: *(sighs)* Even though it's been over a hundred years. All you talk about is yourself. What do you mean, "if it were up to me"? What do you mean, "immortal"? You have stolen the golden shell from me. My precious shell.

Narrator: The three of them remembered what happened 100 years ago and got chills.

Urashima: *(sadly)* But it was for the good of the town.

Turtle: It was necessary for the sake of the sea. I told you so. That shell was essential for the health of the sea and the preservation of the ecosystem. It was to nourish the fish in the sea. But you took it from me, and now the oceans are slowly collapsing and are uninhabitable by fish. There is no food to live on, so I decided to eat people in return. It will continue like this until I get the shell back!

Narrator: The three of them were terrified.

(Urashima slowly began to realize that he had done something terrible.)

Kid 1: *(Bullish)* But wait, how in the world do you turn a human into a fish?

Kid 2: Can you do that?

Turtle: *(laughing)* I can do that. All I need is this white spray.

Narrator: The turtle pulled the string and sprayed the white spray from the front. The spray landed at the feet of the two, and their lower bodies turned into fish.

Kid 1: *(both kids fall with a loud thump)* Ouch! Oh, what the hell is this! My legs are gone!

Kid 2: Hey, what's going on?

Turtle: *(laughing)* This spray turns people into fish. Bad for you, you can't walk anymore. *(laughing louder and uncontrolled)*

Narrator: Urashima looked around, looking for a way out. However, he was surrounded by all sorts of fish, and next to him, the kids were panicking.

Turtle: There's no way you can escape. That's why I brought you all the way here. Even lying about it. You will become a fish, too! Blame your past action before you blame me!

Kid 1: *(mad)* You make us so irritated, turtle! Urashima, run!

Narrator: Seeing that he could not escape, Urashima thought back to his past. In the past, he had adopted the opinions of the two kids and ignored the turtle. How he had neglected the ocean in favor of humans. He realized that his decision had led to the situation he was in now. Urashima was terribly ashamed of himself.

Kid 1: *(panicking)* What are you doing?

Kid 2: Urashima, you'll turn into a fish too!

Narrator: Their advice went unheeded. Urashima, despairing of himself, managed to use the last of his wits to think. He thought about it. He tried to persuade Turtle Taiking.

Urashima: Wait up, turtle! What these two and I did is certainly not acceptable. You can turn us into fish and eat us right now. But after that, what are you going to do?

Turtle: *(mad)* I'll eat everyone in your town. All of them!

Kid 2: *(scared)* So scary, demon!

Urashima: *(as if he is about to give up)* ALL of us... Then what are you going to do after that? If the townspeople disappear, there will be no more food available. I think this is just revenge. Turtle, we did the worst thing to you, but that payback won't create anything good. I don't think it will solve the underlying problem.

Turtle: So, what? What do you want me to do? I've been thinking about it too. I've been trying to figure out how to solve this problem. But there was nothing. Without the shell, it's useless! So, the only option left for us is this revenge. I don't need you, the original culprit, to tell me this or that!

Narrator: Turtle Taiking sprayed Urashima's lower body with the spray, turning his legs into a fish's tail. Just like the other two, he couldn't walk anymore and fell to the ground.

SCENE 4

Narrator: With his legs now a tail, Urashima laid on the ground with the two kids who were very upset, but Urashima was not upset at all. Turtle Taiking was perplexed with his calm attitude.

Turtle: You're scared? I could eat you! Why aren't you making a fuss like them? You will die.

Urashima: *(with strong belief)* Hey, Mr. Turtle. Such a thing doesn't make sense. If you eat me, you can't solve the problem we made. Please listen to my suggestion.

Turtle: There is no way but to eat you!

Urashima: No! There is another way.

Turtle: No, absolutely no! Shut up!

Narrator: The turtle pulled a string and tried to change the three entirely into fish with the white spray. They closed their eyes and thought death was coming. But there was no spray! The other fish hanging on the walls of the castle managed to close the source of the spray! They reconsidered because of Urashima's strong resolution.

Turtle: What are you doing? *(thinking for a minute and sighing)* I have changed my mind after hearing you, but if your suggestion is not good enough, you will become fish.

Narrator: Urashima felt relaxed and kept talking.

Urashima: Oh, thank you. In order to protect the ocean, only your ability is not enough. Only I am not enough. But "we" can protect it together. Until today, our villages has been flourishing. S...so, we can use the wealth and the technology in this town for the good of the sea. To protect the ocean.

Kid 1: Wait! if you do this, what about the village?

Kid 2: Something bad will happen.

Urashima: The lives of the people and the marine animals are both important. We are always thinking about the problem in our town, but now we know that Fish Lives Matter too. We must share the wealth of our town.

Turtle: *(approaching silently)* Tell me how to use your wealth and technology. What are the specifics?

Urashima: *(turning his face towards turtle with strong eyes)* We'll think about this together. It's important.

Turtle: *(with his mind made up and convinced)* ….Ok. I believe you, Mayor.

Narrator: From then, Turtle Taiking and Mayor Urashima worked to solve the marine problem together. Through this conservation project, people in the village and the marine animals built good relationships. To celebrate the cooperation of the land and the sea, Mayor Urashima created an annual Surf and Turf Festival where everyone could celebrate together. Many people came from far away to the festival and helped both the town and ocean flourish.

THE END

One More Chance

A modern, English adaptation of the traditional Japanese folktale, Kachikachi Yama (Click Clack Mountain)

Authors:

Scene 1- Saila Suzuki

Scene 2- Kokoa Okawa

Scene 3- Ellie Ueno

Scene 4- Aki Norikane

Scene 5- Saila Suzuki

Characters:

Son

Old Man *(dad)*

Old Woman *(mom)*

Tanaka

Narrator

Police Officers

SCENE 1

Son: *(as narrator)* I live in an rural area with my parents and help them with the farm work. Our houses are surrounded by mountains and an ocean nearby. It's a really great place, except for one thing. Or should I say, one guy. And this is the story of how we handled him.

Narrator: One day, a guy named Tanaka-san, who was famous in the neighborhood for causing trouble, came to tease the old man while he was plowing the field.

Tanaka: *(yelling from a distance)* Hey you, old man! Don't you feel stupid working so hard doing farm work when it's this hot outside? No one's gonna eat those potatoes anyway.

Son: *(as narrator)* My dad usually just ignores him, but when we checked the farm the next morning, the potatoes were dug out, and mostly stolen. Tanaka had a bad habit of stealing our potatoes every night, while during the day he teases us for working hard. Since this happened too often, my dad who is usually very nice, finally got mad and rushed to Tanaka's house.

Old man: *(in an angry voice)* Hey Tanaka-san!! You came and stole our potatoes AGAIN! If you are honest and apologize, I won't call the police on you, so admit it and apologize!

Tanaka: Huh? What are you saying old man, are you serious? Don't wake me up so early for things like this. I'm NOT the one who stole the potatoes, and you don't have any proof. Stop calling me a thief and accusing me for things I didn't do or else I'll call the police. *(yelling aggressively)* I'm busy now so leave!! *(closes the front door loudly and goes back in the house.)*

Old man: (talking to the son) I'm gonna make a pitfall around my field so help me with it!

Son: Um…are you sure?

Narrator: The son was unsure if that was the right thing to do, but he was also annoyed by Tanaka-san, so he agreed to the plan and helped the old man make a pitfall all day. The next morning, as they predicted, Tanaka came to steal their potatoes and fell into one of the traps.

Tanaka: *(in the pit and yelling in a panic)* HELP! HELP! I sprained my ankle! Help! It hurts!

Old man: *(while looking down at him)* You really came back to steal again… what a hopeless man you are…*(thinks for a moment, while Tanaka screams for help)* Will you promise you'll never steal again?

Tanaka: *(on his knees begging)* Yes, yes. I'll never steal again. Now, can you help me get out of this? My ankle hurts really bad.

Son: Fine, we accept your apology.

(The old man and son pull Tanaka up.)

Old man: *(while tying Tanaka to a pole with a rope)* But Tanaka-san, you will have to make up for what you've been doing.

Tanaka: Wait what? What are you trying to do with that rope? Are you gonna call the cops?

Old man: Yes, we accept your apology, but we're tying you up and calling the cops, so you'll regret your actions. Baa-san, while I visit the police, can you check on him, so he won't run away? And no matter what he says, do not free him, okay?

Old woman: *(nodding)* Sure, sure, I won't set him free.

Narrator: The old man went to the police station and told the police about what Tanaka-san has been doing.

(Old woman continues doing house chores.)

Tanaka: *(watching her do her work)* Obaa-san, I'm really sorry for what I did. I really regret doing it, from what happened today. I promise that I'll never steal ever again. Oh, and to show how sorry I am, I can help you with the chores! So, can you please untie me?

Old woman: I know you're trying to escape; I can't let you free.

Tanaka: No way I could do that! The neighbors already know where I live, I can't get away with it! Also, my hands are starting to hurt, can you at least make it loose?

Old woman: Hmm…you have a good point…but I still can't trust you, considering what you have been doing.

Tanaka: Oh please, Obaa-san, I swear I'll never do it again. Now, my hands are starting to feel numb, and they're hurting so bad. Please let me free!

Narrator: Because the old woman was a nice person, she thought for a while and said,

Old woman: Hmmm… okay, I can't set you free, but I'll make it a little looser for you.

Narrator: As soon as the old woman made the rope a little looser, Tanaka-san stood up, hit her with a broom stick that was standing outside.

Tanaka: *(with an evil smile)* Thank you for believing me, Obaa-san.

(Tanaka runs away.)

Scene 2

Narrator: After a while, the old man and his son headed home and saw the old woman lying on the ground, injured.

Old man: *(Surprised)* Hey! What's happened?!

Narrator: He asked his wife but there was no response. And then, he soon realized that Tanaka was gone.

Old man: *(cried)* It must be the work of Tanaka!

Narrator: He took the old woman to the hospital and got her treatment for her injury. The son who was also there to visit his parents saw his mom sleeping on the bed and felt so depressed. He was finally filled with anger against Tanaka.

Son: I must get revenge against him!

Narrator: The son first went to the forest and found Tanaka.

Son: *(in a relaxed tone)* Hey, what are you doing?

Tanaka: Ahh…I'm just chilling. *(suddenly scared)* Wait, you are the old woman's son, right? Are you here to catch me?

Son: No, I just want to help you from getting arrested by the police because I actually hate my mom and dad.

Narrator: He lied to make Tanaka feel safe.

Tanaka: *(relieved)* Oh really? That is so helpful.

Narrator: The son gathered some sticks and made a fire to warm themselves.

Son: Anyway, you should be exhausted today. You should take a nap by this warm fire.

Tanaka: Oh really? I'll do that. Don't betray my trust, ok?

Son: No way! I'll just keep my eyes open so that we are not found by the police.

Tanaka: Ok…well…

Narrator: Tanaka fell asleep immediately with his toes by the fire. After checking if Tanaka was sleeping, the son gathered more sticks to make the fire bigger and bigger. The fire became so big, it started crackling and hissing and popping.

(Tanaka suddenly wakes up screaming)

Tanaka: *(screaming)* What's that noise? What's crackling and hissing? What's going on?!

Son: Oh my god, so sorry. I dozed off and didn't realize the fire was so big!

Narrator: Tanaka could barely move fast enough to escape. The fire had grown so big that it had burned Tanaka's feet and toes. Tanaka just hopped off in pain.

Scene 3

Narrator: The next day, the son sees Tanaka sitting on a rock in the middle of the forest caring for his burnt toes and approaches him.

Son: Hey Tanaka! What are you doing here? The police are looking for you. I know that you're trying to run away. Are your feet ok?

Tanaka: *(defensive)* I'm fine. Leave me alone. Wait, I can't run so well now. Can you really help me run away?

Son: Yes, of course. If we hide here the police won't be able to find you, and you'll be safe. Let's use this tent and you can sleep in there safe.

Narrator: The son is happy that Tanaka is going along with his plan and that it may possibly succeed again.

Tanaka: Okay, thank you!

Son: I'll set up the tent and everything. You must be tired. You should get some rest, I'll see you in the morning

Tanaka: Alright, goodnight. You better not be setting me up or anything. I trust you.

Son: Yes you can trust me.

(The son grins and waits till Tanaka is fully asleep)

Tanaka: *(snoring noises)*

Narrator: The son hears Tanaka snoring and starts another fire around the tent. This time he wants it even bigger to burn the tent and Tanaka.

(The tent starts to catch on fire.)

Tanaka: *(suddenly wakes up screaming)* Help! HELP!

Son: Are you okay?

Tanaka: Ouch, ouch, it hurts. Ah…. Get me out of here. I just burnt my entire back from this fire. What happened?

Son: I'm so sorry, I didn't realize. I was half asleep and don't know what happened.

Tanaka: *(running off in pain)* I need water. Water… where's water?

Narrator: Tanaka ran off with his toes, his feet, and now his back badly burnt. The son couldn't have been happier, but knew he wasn't finished with Tanaka yet.

Scene 4

(Tanaka fainting)

Son: *(out of breath)* Tanaka! Wake up! Wake up! Are you okay?

Tanaka: *(answering half asleep)* Wh, wh, what? What is it?

Son: We have to hurry! The police are coming soon to find you.

Tanaka: The police!? But ow!! My toes and feet and back hurt so bad. I can't run.

Son: No! But you must leave here right now! I've been looking to see if the police could find you, and they are already at the foot of the mountain!

Tanaka: *(panicking)* Oh my god! Really? I must go! I need to leave here right now!

Son: But wait, Tanaka! I have an idea. There is a river on the other side from where the police are. We can cross that river by boat and hide in another place.

Tanaka: Ok. That's a good idea. Let's go!

Narrator: Tanaka ran to the river with the son as he was told to, but he didn't know what was waiting for him at the river.

Son: Come here! Come here! There are two boats here for us to ride. Let's ride these!

Tanaka: Oh! These are definitely the perfect boats for us! Let's go! Let's go!

Narrator: And then, the son got into the boat, which was safe, and made Tanaka ride in the boat that had a hole in the bottom.

Tanaka: *(getting in his boat)* Thank you. Now, I will be safe.

Narrator: After a short moment when Tanaka was in the middle of the river, the boat started to take on some water and began to sink little by little.

Tanaka: *(surprised and scared)* Wait! What? What is happening! Water is starting to come into my boat. *(panicking)* And wh…what! I, I, I'm starting to sink!!

Son: Ha, ha! I finally got you! This is what happens when you injure my precious mom! I will never forgive you for what you have done to her! This is my revenge.

Tanaka: *(drowning and reaching out his hand for help)* Help! Help! I'm sorry! I'll never do that again! Please help! I'm going to drown and die!

Son: No. Sorry for you, Tanaka. You said you would never do it again several times before, and you never changed.

Tanaka: I know! I'm very sorry! I promise this time! Just please give me one more chance! Help!

Son: Fine, I don't want to be a murderer, but this doesn't mean I forgive you.

Narrator: And then, Tanaka pulled him into his boat and paddled back towards the mountain safely. Tanaka was out of breath and looked terribly exhausted, but he was alive.

Scene 5

Narrator: When the son and Tanaka arrived back on the shore, the police were waiting to arrest Tanaka.

Tanaka: *(to the police)* Hey! Help me. Police! My toes and feet and back are burnt. I'm in so much pain, AND I almost drowned because of this crazy boy. Please, save me from him.

Narrator: The police ignored the cries of Tanaka and placed him in handcuffs to arrest him.

Police officer: *(a little angry to the son)* Thanks for the cooperation boy, but you did too much! We won't make it into a big deal, but this man is dangerous, and you could have been hurt. It's the police's job to bring thieves to justice.

Tanaka: HE could have been hurt? Ow ouch, my feet, my legs, my back. I'm the victim here.

Police officer: You have the right to remain silent. You have been wanted by the police for a long time, and the town was offering a reward for your arrest. Thanks to this boy, he and his family will get the reward money.

Son: Oh, thank you so much. And I'm sorry for seeking revenge. I'll be careful next time.

Narrator: After the son apologized, he went back to the hospital to check on his parents. Tanaka-san was caught for stealing and harming people, so he ended up going to prison. The old woman was able to recover and leave the hospital, and they all went home. They were all able to continue working on their beautiful little farm peacefully. . .now, with an expensive, state-of-the-art security system that they bought with the reward money.

THE END

Happy Little Frixion Pen

A modern, English adaptation of the traditional Japanese folktale, Bunbuku Chagama (The Teakettle Tanuki)

Authors:

Ami Nagashima

Yuki Matsuzawa

Characters:

Narrator

Monk *(Matthew)*

Girl *(Qiqi, the pen)*

Young Monk

Store Clerk

Scene 1

Narrator: Not too long ago, there was a monk named Matthew, who lived in a temple. He loved collecting things from his favorite stationery shop. One day, he went downtown to buy more stationary, and he found a special erasable pen, the red Frixion pen. He bought it and returned to the temple with the pen in his pocket.

Scene 2

Young monk: *(delighted)* You are back, Matthew!

Matthew: *(content)* I'm very excited to do sutra copying with this erasable pen! Let's see if it erases sutras.

Narrator: Matthew arrived back at the temple, and immediately tried the pen. Three young monks surrounded him. When he sat down and clicked it, it gradually started shaking and vibrating out of his hand.

Matthew: *(surprised and vibrating)* What is happening? Did I buy an electronic toothbrush?

Young monk: No, you just bought the normal red erasable pen! What's wrong with you?

Girl: *(coming from the pen, offstage)* That's right, you just bought a pen!

Narrator: He heard a strange voice from somewhere.

Matthew: *(confused)* Hello?? Who's there? *(after a while, he continued to write sutras)*

Girl: *(shouting)* Ouch, it hurts! Don't push me to paper like that!... Oh well, I remembered that I am a pen.

Young monk: What are you talking about? No one has said anything!

Narrator: Matthew was surprised and gazed at the pen. The pen grew limbs and a head and long red hair. Suddenly, a girl appeared in front of Matthew.

Girl: Hello, I am not a monster. Don't look at me like that. I'm from the magic world!

Matthew: Hello, I am Matthew working for this temple. Tell me: are a pen or a girl?

Girl: Because I can use magic, I transformed into the red pen you bought at the store.

Narrator: Matthew felt sorry for this girl, but didn't want any drama. He just wanted a pen.

Matthew: I just want a red Frixion pen, my favorite red Frixion pen! I will return you to the stationery store, sorry.

Scene 3

Narrator: The girl changed back into the pen and Matthew took it back to the stationary store in the city where he bought it. A clerk appeared.

Clerk: *(smiling)* Hello, Matthew-san. Welcome back to the store. May I help you?

Matthew: *(discontent)* I always buy my favorite red Frixion pen here. But now, I must tell you something. *(coughing)* This pen, which I bought here, is very strange. When I started writing a sutra with it, it turned into a little girl with long red hair.

Clerk: *(confused)* S, sir, aah...

Matthew: What is that? A pen talking with humans?! It used to be quite useful in practicing writing my sutras since it is erasable and comfortable. I don't need such a talking pen since I need deep concentration on my writing. I want to return it.

Clerk: I'm sorry that our product caused you harm. I didn't know that we offered a pen with such a function, but it is always our fault when a customers' needs aren't met. I sincerely apologize for the unpleasant experience you had, and we will take the accident into consideration so that it will never happen again, sir.

Narrator: When the Clerk recorded the monk's complaint, he was not sure he could believe what the monk had told him. But soon the time came when the clerk understood everything.

Girl: *(smiling gently, voice off stage, pen vibrating)* Hi-yah, I am Qiqi! I turned into the red pen using one of the spells I have. I am here from the magic world, and I want to stay here for a while, can I?

Clerk: *(confused again, but looking calm)* . . .Hi, Qiqi. Are you the red pen? So, why are you here?

Girl: *(changing into the girl)* I have longed and pleaded for years to leave my world and broaden my perspective. I want to seek different ideas and meet different people from different worlds. It's so boring spending every day in the same way when you can do everything you want by using magic, you know. That's why I wanted to visit a world where people couldn't use magic to solve their problems.

Clerk: *(thinking)* Hmm...I see. So what did you do in your world, I mean, in the magic world? What was your job? Did you earn money there? *(sad)* I don't think you can live here without working for food. In this capitalist world we need money for everything, unfortunately.

Girl: Though I heard the concept of 'money' through TV, and it seems there are totally different systems here compared to mine, I have never really thought about that before I came here. Like... how should I live in a world where magic no longer works?

Clerk: *(worried)* What do you mean?

Girl: Well, in fact, my power and knowledge in the magic world vanished the moment I transcended the boundary of the two worlds. *(thinking for a while)* Wait a minute..., I think I've got a good idea. Do you have a broom?

Clerk: *(wondering)* A "broom"?

Narrator: The clerk brought the broomstick from the Stationery shop for her. The girl took the clerk to the roof of the shop with the broom in her hand. No sooner, she started to straddle the broom and put a lot of effort into it, she began to fly around! Astonished by the amazing broom ride, the clerk overwhelmingly shook his head, and his eyes blinked so quickly.

Clerk: *(opening his eyes so big, not speaking for a while)* Wow...

Girl: You, see? Because I've spent a lot of time practicing riding a broom, I now have good command of it to get anywhere I want! Now, here is the idea! I will be a courier! If you lend me this broom and get people you know who want to send someone something, it will certainly be helpful for people here, won't it?

Clerk: *(thinking)* Mm-hm, that's right. People here are so busy these days. If the situation seems to continue, we may cater their demand in that way! Alright, deal!

Scene 4

Narrator: From that day on, the girl and the clerk received so many calls from people around the city wanting their packages delivered. In a couple of months, Qiqi was known by people in the city as Broomstick Delivery. Although work was overloaded, Qiqi never felt overwhelmed or bored with her work. This is because every day was challenging for Qiqi and what's most, people needed her, which was very fulfilling for Qiqi. One day, the clerk, who was the person most aware of her hard work, asked Qiqi to take a paid holiday.

Clerk: Hi Qiqi, I know you've been working so hard. I appreciate it so much. Why don't you rest for a while?

Girl: I had a great time delivering with you, but I cannot move around anymore since I feel I am tired.

Narrator: The girl could not move so well so she stayed in bed for several weeks. Although the clerk looked after her along with his job, she eventually breathed her last breath.

Clerk: *(crying hard)* NO! NO! DON'T GO! I CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT YOU!

Narrator: After the girl died, she turned back into the simple red pen. The clerk returned her to the temple where he thought she could be remembered and appreciated. There, she was offered back to the monk Matthew who was happy to use her as a pen again. Now, she is the best of his favorite red Frixion pens and sits in a place of honor in his temple.

THE END

Lost Job David

A modern, English adaptation of the traditional Japanese folktale, Shita-kiri Suzume (Cut-tongue Sparrow)

Authors:

Scene 1 - Kota Nakanishi

Scene 2 - Yui Suzuki

Scene 3 - Ruka Ishihara

Scene 4 - Nao Taniguchi

Character:

Narrator

David

Harvey

Naomi

Mr. Adams

Client

911 Operator

SCENE 1

Narrator: In 2020, a new type of coronavirus was born in China. The virus has spread all over the world, and a lot of people have suffered and some have died. David was one of the people that suffered. He lost his job because COVID-19 decreased the sales of the company for which he had been working, and he lost everything. His job, house, and income—everything but his life.

One day, David was walking on the main street to search for a new job.

David: *(so depressed, walking slowly, and looking down)* Ugh. . .I can't find a job at all. It's not only us whose sales are falling, but other companies as well. I have been turned down by five companies already. How can I get a job.....?

Narrator: When he looked down the street, he found a man who was crossing while looking at his smartphone. Suddenly, a car appeared and was speeding toward the man, but he was completely unaware.

David: *(panicked and yelling)* What's that? What is he doing? Can't he see the car? No, no, no!!!

(David ran to the man and pulled him in a safe direction. There was a loud braking noise, and they were almost killed by the car.)

David: Are you serious? It's so careless to cross the street while staring at your smartphone. Anyway, I'm glad you are safe now.

Harvey: I'm so sorry. I was texting my wife so... And thank you. I'm sure I would have been killed without you. You are...

David: David. Call me Dave.

Harvey: Harvey. Thank you, Dave. I can't thank you enough, so I want to repay you for your kindness and bravery. Do you have anything you like or have trouble with?

David: Umm...I like pizza and... I don't have a job now. It's a huge problem for me.

Harvey: Why did you lose your job? Did you do something wrong?

David: No, I worked hard, but the company's sales plummeted because of COVID-19. Of course, I wanted to stay because I liked the job, and I had a lot of friends among my colleagues but, you know, I had no choice but to leave.

Harvey: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Then I can help you. I'm now working for a company and my team has some talented people, but they are understaffed. Are you interested in a job with my company?

David: Hold on. Hold on. Are you...?

Harvey: Yes. I'm offering you a job. My company was also affected by the virus at first, but our sales are gradually increasing. The company will keep growing. So, it will be a great opportunity for you to start your new life, right?

David: *(very happy)* Oh my god! I couldn't imagine that I would get a new job in such a lucky situation. Yes! Absolutely! Thank you, Harvey! I'll contribute to your team!

Harvey: Great! Ok, then I'll text her that I got a new team member.

David: Her? Oh, is she my new boss?

Harvey: Yes, her name is Naomi. She is a very capable person. She mentioned recruitment in our group message this morning, so it's the best timing. You had experienced working hard in a formal company, and you must be brave because you saved me. So, she will certainly like you. I can't wait to introduce you to her.

David: Yeah, I can't wait to work on your team too.

(They shake hands.)

Narrator: They shook hands and Dave became an official part of Harvey's company.

SCENE 2

Naomi: *(talking to her top boss on phone)* Really? Yes, I would like to accept your offer of going to the Corporate Office! It was one of my goals to get promoted!! Oh my gosh, I'm so glad that you have been seeing my work as a leader. Our team has excellent staff, but I don't think they are even close to being as good as me. Yes, as you have said, I am working on recruiting new staff. I just texted in the group message this morning asking for new recruits, and also posted it on the internet. Yes, I will do my best, sir. Yes, thank you.

(talking to herself) Whew, well done Naomi. I finally got promoted. I must keep showing him that I can do my work… I must show him that I am the ONLY one. Which means that we don't actually need new staff. I mean why do we need it? We have enough employees. What is Mr. Adams thinking? … But it's fine. Like who would bring a new person? I just deleted the post of job openings, and everyone's busy with their work and shouldn't have time to…

(Harvey comes in.)

Harvey: Hey boss, I found a new recruit for us. They are just what you were looking for!

Naomi: WHAT???

Harvey: *(smilingly)* I brought a new staff member to hire! Remember that you texted us to look for new employees this morning?

Naomi: Yes, but I meant the opposite.

Harvey: The opposite?

Naomi: Ahh, it's fine. Never mind. So, who did you bring?

Harvey: Oh yes! Let me introduce my friend David. He is my life saver. He saved me from a possible car crash.

David: Hi, boss!

Naomi: *(to David)* Hi, and don't call me that, I'm not your boss, *(whispery)* and will not be.

(to Harvey) Hey, are you sure that you read my text? I think I texted for you to introduce someone that is suited to work at this company, not a *boy scout*. I don't care who saved your life!

Harvey: Yes boss! I brought him to offer him a job at our company! We got close after he saved me from the accident. He doesn't have a job so I thought he could be a good addition to our company.

Naomi: You know that our company is not a charitable institution! It can't be just anyone! We need someone with skill. Not a N.E.E.T.!

Harvey: He's not a N.E.E.T., boss! He had a job, but he lost it because of the virus! I'm sure he'll do a great job!

Naomi: Okay whatever. David, do you have time now? Let me interview you.

David: Thank you, boss! Yes! I have time! Time is the only thing I have now, ma'am.

Naomi: Don't call me boss.

Harvey: Are YOU going to interview him? Isn't Mr. Adams the one who's in charge of interviews?

Naomi: Yes, but I just got promoted this morning so why can't I do it too? I'm sure I have the right to do it too. *(In whisper voice)* Don't worry. He won't pass anyway.

Harvey: *(in loud voice)* WHAT?? Why not?

David: Is everything okay?

Naomi: *(smiles at David)* Yes, everything's okay. *(To Harvey)* Shut your mouth, Harvey Thomas. We don't need any new staff. We're fine with the staff we have now. The text was fake. I thought no one would actually bring someone, but I forgot that there was one dumb guy who would take the text seriously.

Harvey: You're crazy, boss. *(Harvey gets mad and leaves the room)*

Naomi: Sorry for keeping you waiting, David. Okay, let's get started. Hmm, let's see… where are you from?

David: I'm from San Francisco, ma'am. I had a job there but due to the lockdown I...

(Naomi's phone rings)

Naomi: Oops, Hold on just a moment. *(answers the phone)* Hello? Oh, hi Mr. Adams. What's the matter, sir? The recruitment? Yes, I'm working on it very hard! *(…)* What do you mean I'm not doing it? I followed your orders, and I am looking for… Harvey? You got a call from him? And said that I am faking? Of course, I'm not, sir. I was just interviewing our new staff now! Yes, of course I will employ him! He is a smart guy and used to work at. . .(whispering to David) Um, where did you work?

David: At Silicon Valley!

Naomi: *(surprised)* At Silicon Valley? *(back to the phone)* At Silicon Valley, sir. Who wouldn't employ him? Yes. *(…)* Thank you, bye. *(slam phone with angry huff)*

Narrator: After all, Naomi had no choice but to employ David. And surprisingly David was an excellent worker. He learned all his jobs in a short period and got many awards for his contributions. He was also a very friendly man, and people started to doubt who the real boss was. And on top of that, Mr. Adams liked his good work and canceled his offer of Naomi's promotion.

Naomi: *(talking to herself)* Ugh! It is so frustrating!! That David!! Why does he turn out to be such a smart guy? I must have that promotion! If he keeps working here, he will definitely take my position from me. I must get rid of him!

SCENE 3

Narrator: Naomi starts thinking of a plan to get rid of David from the company.

Naomi: Oh, how about inviting him to dinner! then I can put poison in his drink. No, no that's not realistic. It's not like I'm going to kill him!

Narrator: Naomi is shaking. She is really scared about the thought of David taking away her position.

Naomi: I don't want HIM to take my position EVER. But I can't come up with a good plan.

Narrator: Two days later, David and Naomi had to go to a client's office in the countryside. It was a very important client for the company, so they were chosen to visit the client. They planned to meet up in front of the client's enormous building. The client's office was on the 7th floor.

(David arrives first. David was standing in front of the door of the building.)

Naomi: Oh, David, you arrived earlier than I thought.

David: Yes. I thought you would arrive early. but since I entered this company later than you, I just came here to assist you, I thought that I might as well arrive earlier than you.

Naomi: Oh, that's a good thought. I hate people who arrive after than me.

(rolls her eyes) Anyway, it's my second time visiting this client, but if we can do our presentation perfectly, the client will continue with our company. So, please be careful of what you say ok?

David: Of course! I will support you as much as I can because this is a big job, and you have being preparing for days!

Naomi: Thank you. So, let's enter.

Narrator: The two enter the big building, and when the conference starts with the client they both do great. After finishing the presentation to the client, the client looks up at David and says…

Client: I really like you, David. Maybe I will put you in charge of the next project.

(David looks really confused. He can't find his words for a moment but starts speaking carefully.)

David: Um... sorry. Me? Is it okay if I handle it? Like, I mean I just entered this company.

Client: *(laughing)* Of course I KNOW that. The days or years you have worked for this company doesn't matter. And I even heard that you have being working in Silicon Valley before the pandemic?

David: That's true… thank you. If I have the chance, I will do my best.

Narrator: The client grins and they all shake hands. Naomi and David leave the room. Naomi turns pale as she walks out of the door and her hands are shaking slightly. She was afraid again to think about herself losing her position. Then she has an idea.

Naomi: Let's go down to the lobby of the building by taking the stairs. I don't want to meet the client by accident in the elevator. Knowing how the client said good things to you but not to me, I'm shocked. I can't meet him with this expression on my face.

(David looks sorry.)

David: I'm so sorry to hear that. I don't know what I should say, but I will do my best for this project to help you. And okay, let's take the stairs.

Narrator: David starts walking to the stairs and Naomi follows. He opens the door that leads to the emergency stairs of the building. After they both start walking down the stairs in a slightly bad mood, Naomi speaks up.

Naomi: Why do you always interrupt me?

David: I'm really sorr…

Narrator: Before David finishes his sentence, Naomi pushes David down from the top of the stairs. David lies at the bottom of the stairs. He hit his head hard and is bleeding.

(Naomi gasps and is surprised in the way David is bleeding. Possibly regret.)

Naomi: *(quietly thinking to herself)* Oh my god is he DEAD!? I didn't mean to kill him!! I just wanted him to get injured slightly so that I can keep my position as usual!! Anyway, I must call the ambulance.

(Naomi takes out her phone and calls 911.)

Naomi: Hi, a man just fell down the stairs and he's BLEEDING from his head!!!!

Narrator: Naomi talks in a rush. She is scared to think that she might have just killed somebody with her own hand. Naomi is shaking.

Naomi: Please! Please come as soon as possible!

911 Operator: Yes, we will be there as soon as possible. Just please stay where you are and breathe deeply and relax. This was an accident, right?

Naomi: Yes, of course. Just please hurry!

Narrator: She hangs up the phone. She is completely pale now, but then comes up with a new idea.

Naomi: I must call Mr. Adams to tell him about this "accident"!

(Looking a little relieved, she takes out her phone and calls the president to the company, Mr. Adams)

Naomi: *(in a rush)* Oh hi, Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams: What's up, Naomi?

Naomi: We just finished the presentation with the client, and it all went well, but when we were walking down the stairs to get out of the building, David suddenly said that if I wasn't here, he could have been in charge of this project, and I was really confused. *(out of breath)* He grabbed me by my shoulders and tried to push me down the stairs!! I resisted but then… then….

Mr. Adams: *(politely)* It's okay Naomi, relax. What happened?

Naomi: He…David…fell down the stairs!

Mr. Adams: Okay, just relax and come back to the office after the ambulance arrives and David is taken to the hospital, okay? I will handle this issue too. Don't worry.

Narrator: Naomi says thank you to Mr. Adams and hangs up the phone. The ambulance arrives and she is told that David is still alive and that he will be okay if he gets treated well in the hospital. After an hour, Naomi arrives back to the company and tells her colleague and Mr. Adams again what happened.

SCENE 4

(Naomi is back at the office when Harvey suddenly arrives in a panic.)

Harvey: *(worried)* Oh, Naomi, are you ok? Where is David? Is it true? The boss has become hysterical. He said that David suddenly attacked you…and then he fell down the stairs?

Naomi: *(nervous, panting)* Absolutely. So, I don't like complete strangers. Who brought him to our company?

(Naomi stares at Harvey.)

Harvey: *(in shock)* Let's not think about that now. It's all so terrible. So…where is David now?

Naomi: He's at a hospital in the neighborhood. But he's a horrible man. You shouldn't go.

(Harvey leaves immediately to go the hospital to meet David.)

Harvey: Dave! Are you ok? How are you feeling?

David: Oh, I'm better now. Thank you.

Harvey: Tell me what happened.

David: Okay, well. . .

(David told Harvey the truth about what happened.)

Harvey: *(angry)* That's terrible! You must tell the truth to the company!

David: *(confused)* What do you mean? Wait… is there some sort of misunderstanding?

Harvey: Completely. Ms. Naomi lied and said that you attacked her!

David: Oh… I can't return to the company…

Harvey: Umm…Hey! I have a plan!!

Narrator: The two, who now knew the truth, decided to tell the truth. After two weeks, David fully recovered so they went to Mr. Adam's office.

Harvey: It's been two weeks since she attacked you. Can you do this?

David: *(nervous)* Y, yes, I will do my best.

(They *walk into Mr. Adams' office.)*

David: Mr. Adams, I need to talk to you.

Mr. Adams: Why, with Harvey …*(surprised)* and David. I'm sorry, you're fired. It's scary that you raised your hand to a woman.

David: That's what we want to talk to you about. The story that Ms. Naomi told is a lie. Please watch the video of the security camera analyzed the other day.

(They all watched the video together.)

Mr. Adams: *(dumbfounded)* This is terrible. David, I'm so sorry to doubt you. Hey, can you call Ms. Naomi in here?

(Harvey calls Naomi and shows her the video. Naomi turns pale.)

Mr. Adams: What does this mean?

Naomi: *(flustered)* No, this is a fake video made by David to trap me. This is a lie.

(She hits the monitor with the evidence. The monitor cracks and fragments are scattered.)

Mr. Adams: *(gets angry)* What are you doing! Let's call the police.

Naomi: Nooooo!

Narrator: Hysterical Naomi rampaged, but she was taken by the rushing police.

Naomi went to jail, but she was rehabilitated and released months later as a model prisoner.

David has worked harder than ever, and surpassed Naomi's former position. She decided to ask for a job at the same company, and David graciously rehired her to work as a junior employee in the mail room.

SCENE 5

(Harvey and David are chatting in David's new large office.)

David: I'm glad something good could have come from all of it.

Harvey: Exactly, I'm proud of you for getting the promotion.

David: Thank you so much. I can finally support my family. I also want to say thank you to you, Harvey, for believing in me from the beginning. You've been a great friend to me. My family and I want to invite you to dinner at our home to celebrate.

Naomi: (holding up some mail and calling through the office) Mail. Here's today's mail. Here you are, sir.

David: Oh, thank you, Naomi.

Narrator: After that, they all worked happily ever after.

THE END

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