

FADE IN:

EXT. ONSEN ENTRYWAY - NIGHT.

Snow falls softly on the sign for the Onsen. The hot springs are especially inviting this cold day in Nagano. Several Macaques run past the door. These snow monkeys come and go from the hot springs as they please. Many tourists and natives to Japan come out to the freezing temperatures and isolation of the mountains to bathe with the macaques.

LYDIA (late 20s, curly red hair) is out of place in the snow and with the monkeys. Her stark Irish-ness stands out among the Japanese visitors as she welcomes them to the Inn. She sweeps the entryway and looks outside at the falling snow. A man approaches. YURI (late 70s) walks with a slight limp as he carries a small satchel. He is tall and skinny and his winter coat is as large as his intimidating aura.

Lydia takes notice of him, as is one of her jobs at the Onsen. She bows and welcomes him in her rough Japanese as he enters, checks in at the desk, retrieves his room key, and vanishes up the stairs.

INT. ONSEN DINING ROOM - DAY.

Breakfast is served in the cozy dining room, or, in each guest's room if it is requested. Lydia carefully balances the tray of an egg, a small soup, a simple rice pudding, a few peaches cut up in a bowl, and a cup of hot tea as she makes her way up to a room. After knocking on the door several times, Lydia lets herself into the room. The curtains are drawn and the room is surprisingly warm for the cold day.

LYDIA

(quietly, in Japanese)

Good morning, sir. I have your breakfast here. I'll leave it on the table for whenever you're ready. Thank you for staying at-

YURI

(loud, in English)

I wonder if theres any place around here where I might play piano.

He says this as more of a statement than a question. After a pause, Lydia responds.

LYDIA  
(in English)  
There's a middle school on the  
other side of the mountain. After  
school's out, they might let you  
play the piano in their music room.

YURI  
(in English)  
If it isn't any trouble, could you  
take me there?

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY.

The room is large and cavernous, maybe it's good for acoustics. A large board has an agenda is written in Japanese. Around forty chairs and music stands are set up in semi-circles around a grand piano. Yuri limps slowly into the music room, Lydia trails shortly behind. It looks as if she is trying to brace herself for him to crumple at any moment.

Without a word, Yuri moves to the piano. Lydia finds a seat among the sea of music stands and sits down quietly.

The tap of a few keys rings out over the empty room. Yuri smoothly reaches into his shoulder bag and pulls out a small ornate cloth bag and places it on top of the piano. Lydia watches carefully.

Yuri begins to tap out "Round Midnight".

CUT TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. SMALL PIANO ROOM - DAY

An imposing older woman, MOTHER (late 50s, gray hair tied up in an almost suffocating bun) stands above a young Yuri (around 8 years old) as he sits behind a piano. A metronome is banging out the beat. Yuri is playing Schubert's "Six German Dances D.820 No.4", a short but furiously precise piece.

On the piano, Yuri's fingers dance along the keys. Six fingers on each hand, the sixth sitting next to the pinky finger on the outside of each hand. His fingers dance across the keys.

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