

SCENE ONE

FADE IN:

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION - EVENING, 20 YEARS AGO

The station looks older and less streamlined, with dingier lights. Everything looks slightly faded. People mill back and forth on their way to and from work; a man in a conductor's uniform walks down the stairs holding the hand of a young boy, 10 or so, wearing a conductor's cap and dorky black-rimmed glasses.

The man leans down to point something out and explain it to the boy. The noise of the crowd drowns out the exact words, but the boy nods in understanding.

JR LINE PLATFORM

The man is walking slowly, pointing things out to the boy as they walk. The boy listens diligently and nods in understanding, then looks up in time to see two figures walking past him.

The two figures are: a burly man in a yakuza suit, with sunglasses and tattoos peeking past his sleeves, and a young girl holding the man's hand. The girl, 13-ish, is in a pretty black skirt. She also turns her head to look back at the boy.

The lighting goes bright and fuzzy, soft music playing in the background. Romantic, dramatic slow motion.

YASUDA (V.O.)

That was the first time I saw her.
She was pretty, she really was.

The muffled sound of the trains drawing near, along with the sound of two screams - a man's, and a shrill woman's. The boy is still staring dumbstruck at the girl.

YASUDA (V.O.)

And I'd be lying if I denied that
I'd fallen in love at first -

The train shrieks into the station. Blood splatters everywhere, over both adult's suits, and over the faces and

clothes of both children. The lighting loses its soft fuzzy quality, and a hubbub starts.

PASSERBY (O.S.)

Oh my god, he jumped!

PASSERBY (O.S.)

Jesus Christ, his head came off!

PASSERBY (O.S.)

Somebody do something!

The ruckus continues, as the boy dumbly raises a hand to wipe a piece of flesh off his face. He is still staring as the yakuza man gathers the girl up in his arms and leaves.

YASUDA (V.O.)

It wasn't a very romantic moment.
Although I do think that maybe
that's where this entire mess
started.

OPENING CREDITS

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT, PRESENT DAY

A view of the station from a security camera; black and white with a timer in the corner. A top-down view of the ticketing area. Quite a few people leaving, but none entering.

STAIRWELL - SECURITY CAM

Exhausted businessmen head up the stairwell from the platforms, holding briefcases or with their jackets slung over shoulder. A tipsy looking young couple stagger up, leaning on the railing.

PLATFORM JUNCTION - SECURITY CAM

A beggar sets up a cardboard box to sleep in for the night. A stray cat pads by.

JR LINE PLATFORM - SECURITY CAM

A conductor stands at ready on the platform near an empty bench. He checks his watch, then lowers his arm, straightens his jacket and cap, and stands back at ready.

JR LINE PLATFORM

In color now, no longer seen through the security cam. There is now a drunken-looking business slumped on the bench - necktie tied around his forehead, face flushed, drenched from head-to-toe in blood.

The conductor is YASUDA, 30, wearing the same dorky black-rimmed glasses he had as a child, with fly-away hair under his cap and an extremely uncomfortable expression.

Oh the bench the businessman sags against the backrest, mumbling drunkenly. A moment passes in awkward silence.

A train screeches into the station and wheezes to a halt; tired-looking people exit the train and head towards the exit stairwell. Yasuda moves to make sure no one straggles behind.

YASUDA

The rails are closing now,
so this was the last train.
Thank you for your patronage,
and please have a safe night.

A thuggish looking high-schooler - tall, standard uniform jacket undone, cigarette in lips, hands in pockets - walks from down the platform past Yasuda, bumping shoulders and jostling him roughly. This is KUWABARA, age 19.

KUWABARA

Watch it.

YASUDA

Ah - sorry, sir, I'm sorry.

Yasuda moves meekly out of the way; Kuwabara gives him a hard stare before snorting disdainfully and walking off. Now standing just beside the bench, Yasuda awkwardly rubs his sore shoulder as people exit the platform, staring at Kuwabara's back.

YASUDA

He's here today too, huh.

The drunken businessman snorts and flops over to sleep more comfortably, drooling a trickle of blood.

The platform empties, leaving just Yasuda standing beside the bench. The screen freezes.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Ah, in case you were wondering,
please don't worry.

A hitaikakushi* appears on the man's head with a cartoonish ding!-ing noise.

YASUDA (V.O.)

This man is already dead.

The hitaikakushi disappears.

YASUDA (V.O.)

So, there is no worry of him
bleeding to death. If he were alive,
and were in this state, I would
have immediately taken action to
save his life. Please don't worry,
the staff of Tokyo's subways are
always looking to do their best for
all passengers.

The businessman mumbles something before rolling over, off the bench and onto the ground. Yasuda flinches at the dull thump and looks away awkwardly.

YASUDA (V.O.)

You see, I've been able to see
the spirits of the dead for a while,
now.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Yasuda stands in an empty graveyard, holding up a bright red umbrella. Light rain falls.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Not all spirits, of course! That
would be impossible, and very

troublesome, I imagine. I would
have crumpled from the stress, already.

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION, JR LINE PLATFORM - DAY

Yasuda standing at the same spot at the station, but it is crowded now. There are several people standing around the platform or sitting on the bench. About a quarter of them are drenched in blood. The screen freezes just as a train pulls into the station.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Only the people who died on the rails,
you see.

Hitaikakushis appear on the blood-soaked people.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Or more specifically, people who
committed suicide on the line.

A large white arrow points to the incoming train.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Um, I don't have to elaborate
On that, do I?

The hitaikakushis and arrow disappear, and the screen slides back into motion.

YASUDA (V.O.)

I was very surprised at just how
many people had died on the rails
here, too, at first.

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION, JR LINE PLATFORM - MORNING

Yasuda standing at ready, with a schoolgirl ghost standing beside him offering him part of a ruined waffle, urging him to eat even as he shakes his head.

YASUDA (V.O.)

I think that the ghosts here are
all just very lonely. They almost all
just want to talk.

The schoolgirl presses closer to him, and Yasuda backs off further, hands raised in a polite 'no thank you.'

YASUDA (V.O.)
And all sorts of people commit
suicide, if you look closely.

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION, JR LINE PLATFORM - AFTERNOON

The ghost of a teenager is wailing on a guitar, headbanging and splattering blood on the walls as people walk by or through him without looking at him. Yasuda is standing beside him looking nervous.

YASUDA (V.O.)
Quite a few young people, actually.
Kind of sad, isn't it?

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION, JR LINE PLATFORM - EVENING

The ghost of a middle-aged woman sits demurely on the bench. Yasuda sits next to her looking awkward.

YASUDA (V.O.)
But lots of older people, too.

The ghost smiles at Yasuda. Yasuda tips his hat politely and smiles back uncomfortably.

YASUDA (V.O.)
Ah, not that it's any less sad if
the people are older, of course.

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION, JR LINE PLATFORM - EVENING

Yasuda standing beside the bench. Four businessmen in similar suits, painted with blood, are sitting around silently. Yasuda looks distinctly uneasy.

YASUDA (V.O.)
Most of the time, it's not too
bad. It's just sometimes that I feel
awkward.

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION, JR LINE PLATFORM - EVENING

Back to the drunk businessman sleeping on the floor. Yasuda crouches down before him, adjusts his cap.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Like now.

YASUDA

Sir? I know it probably doesn't matter that much now, but I still think it might be a better idea for you to sleep on the bench, instead of on the floor like this.

He reaches out to shake the man's shoulder but his hand goes straight through. Sighing, he retracts his hand, mumbling to himself.

YASUDA

This is gonna bug me all night if I just leave him like this..

As he speaks, a man in a similar uniform comes walking down the length of the platform, visible past Yasuda's shoulder, and stops to stare at Yasuda. The man is ISHIDA, 62, the senior conductor and Yasuda's boss.

ISHIDA

Yasuda! What on earth are you doing!

Yasuda immediately springs to his feet, whirling around to face Ishida and stepping into the sleeping businessman.

YASUDA

Nothing, sir! There was, uh, A piece of trash! I picked it up!

ISHIDA

Don't lie to me!

YASUDA

Y-Yes sir, sorry sir!

Ishida walks over to Yasuda and stands in the sleeping business man's head. Yasuda cringes, while Ishida stares at him condescendingly.

ISHIDA

And how many times have I caught you acting strange, now?

YASUDA

Uh, not that many times, sir.
I think.

ISHIDA

Even 'not that many' is more than enough! We can't have passengers thinking that we've hired a madman now, can we!

YASUDA

Yes, sir. - I mean, no, sir! That wouldn't do at all.

ISHIDA

(tsk-ing)

Your father was a very hard-working man. I was hoping his son would be as equally valuable an employee, but you've still got much to work on.

YASUDA

I'll try harder, sir.

Ishida turns and starts walking away; Yasuda gives a sigh of relief. But Ishida suddenly pauses and turns to look at Yasuda, who is startled into standing at attention again.

ISHIDA

And by the way, Yasuda.

YASUDA

Yes, sir?

ISHIDA

You'll be working double shift tomorrow. Yasuhiro is taking the day off.

Yasuda looks hesitant, tugging at his cap.

YASUDA

But sir, I worked double shift just a few days ago, and Yasuhiro's

been taking a lot of days off,
so -

ISHIDA
You're to come here by 10.

YASUDA
But -

ISHIDA
Your father would have complied,
Yasuda. Do you understand?

Yasuda hesitates again. Past Ishida's shoulders, a few ghosts are visible peering at this argument in hopes of entertainment. The drunken businessman on the floor scratches his crotch and snores.

Yasuda eventually bows his head and halfheartedly mumbles,

YASUDA
Of course, sir. I'll show up for
the morning shift.

Ishida gives a firm nod and walks away.

As Ishida vanishes up the stairwell, Yasuda sighs and slumps on the bench, taking off his cap and rubbing his head. The schoolgirl ghost with the waffle approaches him, looking curious.

SCHOOLGIRL GHOST
Why didn't you say no?
(holding out the waffle)
Want a bite?

YASUDA
Huh? - oh, no thanks. And - I'm
not allowed to say no. You know.
Something like that.

SCHOOLGIRL GHOST
Huh?

YASUDA
Well. Yeah. I'm not supposed to.
They'd think I'm being rebellious.

The schoolgirl makes to say something but Yasuda gets up before she can get a word out, slipping his cap back on and walking towards the stairwell, sighing. Along the way, he runs across several blood-drenched ghosts, either greeting them politely or walking through them when necessary.

SCHOOLGIRL GHOST

Have a nice night, Mr. Yasuda!

YASUDA

You too. I'll see you tomorrow.

ROCKER GHOST

Hey man, you gotta listen to me tomorrow, alright man? You gotta tell me how my new -

YASUDA

(walking through him.)

Yes, of course I will. Good night.

YOUNG HOMELESS GHOST

G'night, conductor.

YASUDA

(walking through his outstretched legs with a nod)

You too, sir. Good night.

SAGI, 28, six-foot-four with enormous platform boots, black leather jacket and dark shades, is walking his way with a blood-drenched shirt beneath her jacket.

SAGI

Hey, you.

Yasuda assumes she is a ghost, doesn't pause in his pace, looking distractedly at a ghost who's waving at him from the bench.

YASUDA

Ah, yes, good night to you too, sir, please have a nice evening.

Yasuda walks into her; she isn't a ghost. As they both stumble back a step, Yasuda stares at her dumbly. Sagi

raises an eyebrow, her blonde-streaked hair is red with blood.

SAGI

Watch where you're going.

YASUDA

Ah, no! I'm sorry! - huh?

An awkward pause. The bloodied ghost of a homeless man walks by, giving them odd stare. The screen freezes.

YASUDA (V.O.)

That man is a ghost. He's been here for a few months, now.

Hitaikakushi appears on the homeless man.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Ghosts are distinguished by the blood on their clothes, you see. They don't get new clothes just because they jumped on the rails. But they're also intangible, as far as I know.

A white arrow points at Sagi.

YASUDA (V.O.)

So this person?

A white circle appears around Sagi.

YASUDA (V.O.)

She must be alive.

The screen moves; Yasuda sounds startled and apologetic as he bows deeply to Sagi.

YASUDA

I'm very sorry, miss, it's been a long day. - Though, the rails are now closed, so if you were planning on riding, then I'm afraid the rails won't be open until 5.

SAGI

Oh? Alright.

Yasuda looks up at her expecting her to leave. Sagi stares down at him, looking apathetic. An awkward moment pauses.

YASUDA

Was there anything else I could help
You with?

SAGI

No, not really.

YASUDA

Then?

SAGI

Oh, just thought you looked funny.

Sagi turns to leave, hands shoved in pockets. Yasuda sighs, hand pressed to chest, looking rattled. Behind his shoulder, Sagi is seen heading back towards the stairs. She pauses in front of the teenage rocker ghost, who raises his guitar.

YASUDA (V.O.)

That was close. The last thing
I need is for Mr. Ishida to have
seen that, he'd have thrown a fit.

Yasuda straightens his tie. Behind his shoulder, the rocker ghost is seen strumming on his guitar. Sagi seems to be watching him, nodding in beat with the music.

YASUDA (V.O.)

I wish I could explain this to him
without him bringing up my dad again.
Or labeling me a crazy person.

Rocker ghost plays more enthusiastically. Sagi is still watching. Yasuda straightens the lapels of his jacket, giving a determined nod to himself.

YASUDA (V.O.)

I work just as hard as my dad did,
honestly, and he worked himself to
death last year. I'm gonna die even
sooner than him, at this rate. Dealing
with all these spirits.

Rocker ghost finishes playing, complete with a dramatic fall to his knees. Sagi golf-claps, smirking. Yasuda suddenly straightens up, looking startled.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Wait, though. She was - she was all bloody, wasn't she?

Sagi digs through her pockets for a coin and flips it towards rocker ghost, who pumps his fist.

YASUDA (V.O.)

Maybe she was hurt, I should follow to see if she's alright!

Yasuda turns towards the stairs just in time to see Sagi give the rocker ghost a high-five, which floats straight through the ghost's hand. All three are frozen for a moment, staring.

YASUDA

Uh. You.

Sagi lowers her hand, shoving it back in her pocket.

SAGI

Me nothing. Bye.

Sagi turns towards the stairs to leave. Rocker ghost looks awkwardly from Yasuda to Sagi and back, and Yasuda stands, holding his cap in his hand, before running after her.

YASUDA

Wait, miss!

INT. SHINJUKU SUBWAY STATION, STAIRS - NIGHT

Sagi is walking quickly, pulling a lollipop out of her pocket and sticking it in her mouth. Yasuda walks alongside her, almost tripping over his feet.

YASUDA

Wait, wait - wait, please! I just saw you. You were. That guy. You.

SAGI
(around the lollipop)
You're not making much sense
right now, y'know.

* A *hitaikakushi* is a headband traditionally worn by ghosts
in Japanese folklore.