

1 INT. MODERN HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

1

ALICE(18) is putting her younger sister to bed. They are in a moderately sized room with furniture and decorations placing the time period to be in the present day.

CELIA(12) is a bit small for her age and beside her bed on a small table within arm's reach is a blue inhaler commonly used for those with asthma.

ALICE
Well then, what story would you like to hear toni-

CELIA
Tell me about the one about Suzume.

ALICE
Again? I've told you that one so many times. Are you sure you don't want to hear another one?

CELIA
I wanna hear about the sparrows.

ALICE
Alright then. Once upon a time...

2 INT. HOUSE - DOORWAY - DAY

2

ALICE (O.S.)
There were two sisters who lived alone at the edge of a great forest.

The elder sister takes the appearance of Alice but older and is standing right before the doorway.

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The older sister Anna was fit and strong so she would work in the field.

The younger sister takes the appearance of Celia but closer in age to Alice though noticeably younger.

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The younger sister Carol was much weaker and lacked her elder sister's stamina so she would take care of the housework instead. The elder sister was a gentle and kind soul who looked after her younger sister. But her
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
younger sister was always complaining
about something or another.

Carol is muttering something aggressively to Anna and she
nods while smiling without changing her expression. Carol
soon turns around and goes back inside.

3 EXT. RICE FIELD - DAY

3

ALICE (O.S.)
During the day, Anna would work until
evening and then return before it got
dark.

Anna is tilling the earth and the sun is at its peak. She
looks up and sees the sun has gone down. She wipes her brow
and leaves the field.

4 INT. HOUSE - DOORWAY - EVENING

4

Anna walks through the door and a sparrow SUZUME greets her
chirping loudly. Suzume flies and lands on her shoulder and
rubs her head against Anna's affectionately. Carol also meets
her sister at the doorway, but she has a frown on her face.

ALICE (O.S.)
Recently Anna had found a young feeble
sparrow near the woods. The bird who
she came to call Suzume reminded her
of her sister. Anna took the little
bird home and gave her food from her
own meals. Eventually, Suzume
recovered and would fly about happily
and sing loudly.

5 EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - EVENING

5

ALICE (O.S.)
Every day Carol would find something
to complain about before it was about
the housework. Recently it has been
about the Sparrow Anna took in.

CAROL
When are you going to get rid of that
sparrow? All it does is eat and make
noise all day.

ANNA
I'll keep her in my room when I'm gone
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA (CONT'D)
and I'll give her some of my meals,
so you don't need to worry about that.

CAROL
Fine
(mumble)

ALICE (O.S.)
After listening to Carol's complaints
Anna would play with Suzume, teaching
her tricks and watching her fly about
happily.

6 INT. HOUSE - DOORWAY - DAY

6

ALICE (O.S.)
Once more during the day, Anna would
go out to work.

ANNA
Remember to leave some food out for
Suzume from my own meal.

CAROL
Yes, yes. Now hurry along.

7 INT. HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - NOON

7

ALICE (O.S.)
Now despite Anna's reminder to set
aside some food for Suzume, Carol did
not remember. She had made some rice
starch for the laundry and left the
bowl open as she left to get the
clothes.

Carol leaves the room. Suzume flutters in and sees the bowl
of rice starch. She looks around and sees nothing else then
starts eating the starch.

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Suzume had grown quite hungry by noon.
And so, she ventured out of Anna's
room looking for her meal. She came
upon the bowl of starch unattended
thinking it was for her and ate it all.

Carol returns to the room and is surprised by the empty bowl.

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CONTINUED: (2)

CAROL

Where did my starch go?

Suzume flew in front of her and bowed her head.

SUZUME

It is I who have taken the starch. I thought it was some food put out for me in that basin, and I ate it all. If I have made a mistake I beg you to forgive me!

ALICE (O.S.)

The sparrow was a truthful bird and anyone else would have forgiven the bird for its mistake but never liked the sparrow and saw this as an opportunity to get rid of her.

CAROL

You stupid bird! That was for the clothes not for eating! I suppose you ate my starch with that tongue of yours! Let's see you try that again without it.

Carl grabbed the bird who had still been kneeling and grabbed the scissors and cut off Suzume's tongue. After this, she shoos her out of the house. Suzume flies away without returning.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Now I have to make more starch.

ALICE (O.S.)

Carol grumbled without a hint of remorse.

8 INT. HOUSE - DOORWAY - EVENING

8

Anna returns home and looks around expectantly. When Suzume doesn't greet her, she looks around the house. She asks Carol about the sparrow.

ANNA

Have you seen Suzume?

CAROL

That dirty bird? No. It must have flown off or something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE (O.S.)

Anna continues to search for her friend, calling loudly in all parts of the house again and again.

CAROL

Fine! I'll tell you what happened if you just be quiet!

ALICE (O.S.)

Carol told her sister what had transpired between her and the sparrow.

CAROL

How horrible! How could you do such a thing!

9 INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

ALICE (O.S.)

Anna is so sad about the treatment of her friend that she cannot sleep. But she makes up her mind to search for her friend the next day and finally manages to get some rest.

10 EXT. WOODS EDGE - NOON

10

Anna searches, calls and whistles for the sparrow dappled in sunlight as the shadows lengthen while she continues to search until late in the afternoon.

ANNA

Suzume! Where oh where does my tongue-cut sparrow stay?

11 EXT. OUTSIDE BAMBOO GROVE - AFTERNOON

11

Near a bamboo grove, Anna finds the sparrow Suzume who bows her head and chirps happily performing the tricks Anna taught her.

ALICE (O.S.)

Near a large bamboo grove Suzume flies down to greet Anna. She spoke to Anna as if nothing were wrong with her tongue and performed her usual tricks with joy. Anna apologized for her sister's behavior and was surprised but happy as to how eloquently she

(MORE)

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ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
could speak without her tongue. The
sparrow opened her beak and showed her
that a new one had grown in the place
of the old one.

SUZUME
Think nothing of it. I am quite well
now.

ALICE (O.S.)
Anna realized that her friend was no
ordinary bird but a fairy. She was
quite happy and had forgotten her
fatigue from searching all day. Simply
happy because her friend was happy and
not bitter from Carol's harsh
treatment.

SUZUME
You must be tired after searching all
day. Come inside and rest.

Suzume leads Anna into her home.

12 INT. SPARROW'S HOUSE FOYER - AFTERNOON

12

The sparrow transforms into a BEAUTIFUL LADY and shows Anna
around her home. It is much bigger on the inside than it
seems like from the outside. It is filled with many rooms all
decorated with luxurious paintings, furniture, and expensive
treasures.

ALICE (O.S.)
Inside her home, Suzume took on a
human form. She shows Anna her home
and introduces her to her sisters.

13 INT. SPARROW'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM- AFTERNOON

13

ALICE (O.S.)
Suzume's sisters serve Anna many
delicious foods and entertain her with
songs and dances.

14 INT. SPARROW'S HOUSE PARLOUR - EVENING

14

The sun begins to set, and the shadows cast grow longer.

ALICE (O.S.)
Though Anna enjoyed the company of
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Suzume and her family, the setting of the sun remind her that she must return home.

ANNA

Thank you so much for such a wonderful evening but I must leave. Please forgive my sister for her actions.

SUZUME

Please stay the night. You are more than welcome to do so and leave in the morning.

ANNA

I thank you for your kind hospitality, but I must refuse. My sister would worry for my sake and I for her if something were to happen to her.

SUZUME

I see. In that case, please take one of these gifts with you.

Suzume claps her hands and two servants return carrying two boxes and place them on the floor. One large, about half the size of Anna and the other small, about the size of a shoebox.

ANNA

In that case, I will take the lighter box, it is quite dark outside, and I don't wish to injure myself on the way home.

15 EXT. OUTSIDE BAMBOO GROVE - EVENING

15

SUZUME

Please feel free to return at any time.

ANNA

I will whenever I have time. I am glad to know that you are healthy and well my friend.

16 INT. HOUSE - DOORWAY - NIGHT

16

Anna returns home and the moon is high in the sky casting a pale shadow on the floor. Moments after walking into her home

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CONTINUED: (2)

Carol lights a candle, revealed to have been waiting for Anna.

CAROL

Where have you been! You didn't come home at your usual time! I've been so worried I couldn't sleep!

Anna smiles when she hears that her sister was worried.

ANNA

Now now, I'm sorry I'm late but I have a good reason for that.

ALICE (O.S.)

Anna tells Carol what had happened, about where she'd found the Sparrow, her luxurious home and even the two gifts.

CAROL

Well then? What was in it?

ANNA

I'm not sure.

Anna opens the small box and finds it full to bursting with gold and precious gems.

CAROL

Wow! So much treasure!

ANNA

With this much money if we spend it carefully it'll last us the rest of our lives.

CAROL

Carefully?! Didn't you say there was another bigger box? Why didn't you take that one instead! You should go back and get it!

ALICE (O.S.)

Now Anna had regretted telling her sister about the larger box. Carol could barely sleep that night thinking of the treasures she could have gained and devises a scheme to obtain them.

17 INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

17

The next morning Carol asks her some more questions about Suzume's location.

CAROL

Oh, sister, I have been so unkind to your friend. Please tell me where she lives so I may apologize.

ANNA

I am so glad to hear that. I can show you the way today.

CAROL

Ah- no I must go there myself. To show my sincerity. You stay and rest today.

ANNA

Hmn- you're right. Yesterday was quite tiring. Very well. The way to Suzume's house is -

18 EXT. OUTSIDE BAMBOO GROVE - NOON

18

ALICE (O.S.)

Following Anna's directions, Carol finds the Grove by noon. Suzume is surprised to see Carol but is polite and invites her into her home.

CAROL

No need to bother with that. My silly sister left behind a large box. I'm here to take it home.

Suzume claps her hands and a servant brings out the large box. Carol immediately hoists the box onto her back with some difficulty because of its weight but manages to do so.

SUZUME

That box is actua-

Carol immediately bolts homeward.

ALICE (O.S.)

Carol doesn't even thank Suzume but leaves as quickly as she appeared. Suzume seemed to want to say something but Carol doesn't listen for a moment.

19 EXT. OUTSIDE FOREST - AFTERNOON

19

Carol trudges through the forest, the box on her back clearly weighing her down but she powers through the ordeal. Stopping and resting before getting back up and continuing.

ALICE (O.S.)

The box was quite heavy and Carol needed to stop often but eventually, her curiosity grew too great and she needed to know what was inside.

Carol puts the box down and stares at it. With a chuckle, she carefully opens it. Out sprouted a number of horrible and frightening demons with large mouths. They surround her except for a small opening.

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Carol expected to see gold and jewels like the other box but instead, many terrifying demons jumped out of the box. They licked their lips and stared at her.

Carol screams and ran from the spot through the small opening.

ALICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Carol had never been so scared in her life and had forgotten her fatigue in fear and ran all the way home.

20 INT. HOUSE - DOORWAY - EVENING

20

Carol ran into the house and into the arms of her sister who came out.

ALICE (O.S.)

When she had gotten home, she told her sister what had happened.

ANNA

You're safe now.

CAROL

That darn sparrow how dare it -

ANNA

Enough! You have no right to blame her for what you deserved! It is your wickedness that has met with its

(MORE)

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ANNA (CONT'D)

reward! You told me you went to apologize but you really wanted that box. If those demons had truly wanted to harm you, do you really think you would have made it back! If you do not change your ways I will leave by yourself, you are no longer the weak child you once were if you could carry that heavy box halfway home and then run the rest of the way!

CAROL

I'm sorry sister please do not leave me. I won't do anything like that ever again.

ALICE (O.S.)

This time Carol meant it. This experience had changed her, and she repented her unkind ways. The two sisters lived the rest of their lives free of want or care, carefully spending the treasure that Suzume had given Anna.

21 INT. MODERN HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

21

Alice has finished telling Celia the story and notices that she has fallen asleep. She quietly turns off the lights and exits the room leaving the door slightly ajar. Alice walks down the hallway and into the living room. In a corner of the room is an altar with a photo of two very old women smiling. Next to the photo is the small box from the fairy tale.

ALICE

(Softly) Good night.