

# **Killing Immortal**

by

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FADE IN

ROLL OVER CREDITS: Dancing jellyfish, bright blue and red reeling and bouncing, stationary then rolls back to life.

Ocean view, donut-shaped rock formation surrounded by sea, framed by high chalky white cliffs. Wave sounds pulsate.

INT ORIENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Loud angry voices ensue. A frightened GIRL (9) cowers and jumps and runs through a doorway. She bumps a Buddhist shrine, and paper oriental screens.

The voices become louder and she looks around and dives under a basket crib. She can only see feet and legs. A geta rolls close to her.

A harsh MAN gurgles and growls with anger. His bare feet come closer to the basket crib. He presses briefly on top of it.

A baby cries for a moment and then silences. The little girl shrinks under the pressure to the basket crib. The man's feet pound away to the hall. The pace of one barefoot and one geta come close to the basket crib. The girl hears soft crying and she waits for silence.

The girl jumps up when it is quiet and removes the wet paper from the baby's blue mouth and nose. She performs cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the baby's color comes back to pink and it cries. The girl covers her mouth gently and grabs the baby and goes through the window opening.

EXT GARDEN - NIGHT

She races down the paths between junipers and hides with the baby until it quiets down. She walks swiftly to a street. The child begins to cry again.

EXT BEIJING MONASTERY - NIGHT

She leaves the baby on the outside steps. She kisses the baby's forehead and the child stops crying. She slowly gets up and wraps on the heavy wooden doors and turns quietly into the shadows.

A kindly MONK opens the door and looks from side to side. He looks downward gently picks up the bundle and goes back inside.

INT ORIENTAL HOME - NIGHT

The girl swiftly enters the home through the window opening and lays down on a straw mat and brick pillow. She lays still but is breathing quickly, her eyes flutter and she goes to sleep.

Distant voices mingle with breezes from the open window.

EXT BEACH - DAY

She dreams of walking on a beach and picks up some sand and water in a jar. She examines it closely. Through the jar can be seen ocean creatures and a distorted sign, "Beijing Harbor Beach." They fill the screen.

CUT TO:

INT LAB - DUSK

MIKO, girl (25) is hunched over petri dishes in a cluttered lab with the sound of waves crashing. She is in lab coat and gets up from her stool as she checks her watch.

MIKO  
Stay safe, little ones. I will be  
back in a jiffy.

She turns off the light and closes the door. The screen is blank momentarily as the neon glow of aquarium lights take over. On the door a chinese symbol for "Fushi" (immortality) is framed.

The DOOR SQUEAKS as it shuts.

OFF CAMERA a SUITED MAN loudly collides with Miko.

MIKO AND SUITED MAN ONE  
AHG!

SUITED MAN ONE (O.S.)  
Excuse me, Miko?

MIKO (O.S.)  
Just leaving, I don't know you.

INT LAB HALLWAY - DAY

Miko tries to pass by, the Suited Man tries to block her passage in the hall.

SUITED MAN ONE

Miko, the honorable scientist, we know you.

MIKO

That's me, make an appointment with the front desk. Unless you want to sing Karaoke, later. I can see you then, or you can see me.

SUITED MAN

Thought you were a man, don't have time to worry with appointments. Where are you headed now?

MIKO

Out, to the beach. Who cares?

A distant phone rings, both pause.

SUITED MAN ONE

We do, may we accompany you?

MIKO

Sure, but don't get in my way. And I'll expect you at Karaoke later. You gotta sing. The place is called 'Kibarashi'. You go down the dark street right there and look for a sign with a lighted microphone. I'll be there. I still have to walk the beach to record anything that has washed up on Beijing Harbor Beach today. Kung hi! (Cheers!)

Miko brushes past the Suited Man. She carries a waterproof drawing pad and sharpie on a kumihimo (lanyard.)

EXT LABORATORY - Dusk

Miko gets on her scooter.

MIKO

(shouts)

Meet me there in an hour.

She puttters off, her pad flapping with the breeze.

EXT WHITE BEACH - SUNSET

Miko parks her scooter and walks decidedly on the white beach, she looks at the beautiful sunset reflected on the water. The sunset peeks through an eroded hole in a distant coral island.

Others gather to watch the sun's spectacle. Miko stops to catalogue a shell. She writes on her waterproof pad. She freezes.

Miko discovers a BODY as it moans and coughs some sea water. She tries to administer CPR, but with no avail. Quickly she seeks the help of some of the sunset admirers.

She runs to them waving her hands. The OTHERS return with her and they discover the body has disappeared from the beach.

MIKO

It was just here. I tell you. WTF.

The others turn and look again at the sinking sunset the colors offer a momentary flash of green light, then darkness.

One of the others, SLADE (30) comes forward and touches her on the shoulder as Miko continues to stare at the empty spot.

SLADE

Evening, M'am. Name's Slade.

Miko jumps.

SLADE (CONT'D)

Sorry to startle you, I saw the body, it edged away and ran.

MIKO

Was it a male or a female?

SLADE

Really? A man.

Miko shakes her head.

MIKO

Too much research.

SLADE

Nine times out of ten a body recovering will not make it far.

MIKO

I'm, on my way to Karaoke, but let's try to find this body, I mean man.

Slade puts his arm around Miko. She looks down at his arm and pushes it gingerly away. She continues to write as they continue to walk up the dune to the street. Slade grabs her arm to hurry her up.

SLADE

Let's go.

EXT BEACH TOWN STREETS - NIGHT

Miko gets on her scooter.

MIKO

Meet me at the end of Harbor St.,  
there is a neon sign with a  
microphone on it.

She putters off.

INT KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Miko is performing a song with her jellyfish costume. There are two Suited Men at the bar, they raise their glasses to her. Slade walks in the door and the BARMAID greets him.

BARMAID

Evening, can I help?

Slade moseys over to the bar, wet from sweat, trying to calm down.

SLADE

Hit me.

BARMAID

With what?

SLADE

Gin, straight up.

BARMAID

For a minute, I thought you meant  
to literally hit you.

The barmaid scoffs.

SLADE

By the way, have you seen any tall  
men come in her rushing to the  
bathroom, well, nude?

BARMAID

We we haven't had streakers here in  
a millennium.

SLADE

No, like someone from the baths,  
changing, like quickly.

BARMAID

No.

SLADE

(to Suited Men)

Howdy, gentlemen, do you know Miko?

SUITED MAN

Uh, yeah, do you?

SLADE

Well, we briefly met earlier.

SUITED MAN

Keep it that way.

Microphone squeaks with feedback.

SLADE

Yeah, right. Uhm, have you by any chance seen a strange guy running into here, uhm, well undressed and dazed?

The two Suited Men look at each other and shrug their shoulders and begin again to listen to the "Immortal Jellyfish" song that Miko is squeaking.

LAWRENCE (60) comes from a table and sits next to Slade.

LAWRENCE

She's great... I have a, oh excuse me, my name is Lawrence. I have an outside bath, Onsen where she should entertain tomorrow. She would kill.

SLADE

I'm not her agent, BTW, have you seen a body in any of these parts?

LAWRENCE

How odd. No not tonight.

In the corner a couple is kissing. Miko notices them as she sings. She clears her throat to get everyone's attention.

MIKO

Heh, everyone listening?

The couple continue their serious necking. Miko walks to them - tapping MAURICIO on the shoulder. VIOLET shakes her head and sits back.

MIKO (CONT'D)

Haven't you just been on the beach, lying there, unconscious?

Slade walks up to the couple. Mauricio is shaking his head.

SLADE

Heh, didn't I just see you on the beach?

MAURICIO

Who wants to know?

SLADE

Just thought that, well you're not him.

MIKO

(to Slade)

He sure looks the same from the back.

Miko, rattled, approaches the bar, readjusting her costume, handing the microphone off to the next singer.

LAWRENCE

Violet, what are you doing here? I thought -

VIOLET

Opps, sorry Father, uh, Lawrence, this is Mauricio.

LAWRENCE

I don't care who he is, Violet, get on home.

Violet leaves with Lawrence. Slade continues to the bar. In a few minutes, Mauricio also leaves.

SLADE

Miko that guy wants you to meet him tomorrow, at lunch, do you know him?

MIKO

Figures, I mistake the boy's identity, and then get asked about by the old man. What happened to that body?

SLADE

That's hypothetical, I presume. Yeah, he wants you to sing at his bar.

Miko wipes her forehead with a bar towel.

SLADE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'll help you find him.

BARMAID

Heh, Miko, your regular?

MIKO

(to Barmaid)

Yeah, juice!

(to Slade)

Sure, I just wonder, why don't they die?

SLADE

What, the body? Or you're famous jellyfish? Great song.

MIKO

Thanks, yeah the body.

SLADE

Same difference.

Miko takes the straw from the juice box and taps it and rams it into the tin foil hole at the top. She takes a glorious sip, throwing her head back.

MIKO

Ah, good.

SLADE

So, what brings you to these parts, I mean to study items found on the beach here in Beijing?

MIKO

I research, too much, I think.

SLADE

Coroner?

MIKO

(snortles)

No, jellyfish, that don't die, too.

SLADE

Oh, oh, so that's the getup.

MIKO

Yeah, trying to find a good way to get the message and the immortality cure out to the public. And?

Miko takes another slurp and makes a loud gurgle sound. The juice box echoes empty.

MIKO (CONT'D)

Refreshing.

SLADE

(gawfs)

Hm, well how did end up here? Studying?

MIKO

What, on bodies?

SLADE

No, but you can start anytime.

Slade steps back and motions to himself.

MIKO  
(giggles)  
Stop, I was given a scholarship to  
study biogenetics here as and  
adjunct to the University.

SLADE  
Daddy didn't mind?

MIKO  
I think he was glad to get rid of  
me.

SLADE  
They let a girl in?

MIKO  
Hmph, cancel that body study, BTW.

SLADE  
No, well.

The Suited Men make their way from the other side of the  
bar.

SUITED MAN ONE  
Miko Chang?

MIKO  
Yes, thanks for meeting me here.

Miko condescendingly nods to Slade.

SUITED MAN TWO  
Sure, we're here to make an offer.

Miko motions Slade to get out of earshot.

MIKO  
Shoot.

Miko adjusts her costume uncomfortably.

SLADE  
Oh by the way, Lawrence said to  
meet him at noon tomorrow at the  
Onsen. Catch you guys later.

Miko waves and and continues her dissertation.

MIKO  
I don't date, but I'll listen if  
its about my study. Yes, the one  
about the *Turritopsis dohrnii* or  
immortal jellyfish which may unlock  
our ability to live forever. Yup.

The men in suits just stare.

SUITED MAN ONE

Well, no confusion. Yes, that's the goal. We'd like to offer you several thousand for the patent, when you do perfect your technique.

MIKO

Oh now I'm raw.

They are startled by a commotion past the screen doors, outside in Chaoyang Park.

They run and see Mauricio and Slade entangled in a fist fight, undeftly attempting martial arts.

EXT CHAOYANG PARK - NIGHT

MIKO

Stop!

She flales across the street to the park and separates the two feuding men. Violet stands close by staring at Miko and drifts into the night.

Miko helps Slade get up.

MIKO

What are you doing?

SLADE

I swear I didn't look at her.

MIKO

Go home, go home everybody.

Miko gets on her scooter and buzzes off, still in costume.

INT MIKO'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miko flicks the light off and lays down to rest. There are pictures of jellyfish all along the walls.

A clatter is heard from the closet. BODY/STEVE whispers at the open closet door.

STEVE

(whispering)

Miko, psssst.

Miko jumps up from the bed.

MIKO

Who is that? What are you doing whispering?

Steve tip toes to her bedside.