

TRICKSTER: NIGHT OF THE KITSUNE

(2nd draft, April 2021)

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SUPER: OVER IMAGES OF A RURAL JAPANESE VILLAGE

JAPAN, TAISHO ERA, 1920'S

INT. HOUSE BACKROOM - DAY

In the storage area of a wood farm house TSUNEKO, late 20's, with haunting, piercing eyes, crouches down next to ETSUKO, a girl of thirteen. A loud clamor from outside echoes through the house.

ETSUKO
(frightened)
What do they want?

Tsuneko holds Etsuko close, brushes aside her hair. We see a birthmark below Etsuko's ear.

TSUNEKO
They want me. Men...always blaming
others for their own failings.

EXT./INT. HOUSE - DAY

A mob of ten villagers crowd the entrance of the house. GOZAEMON MONGAKU, 30's, an unassuming merchant, stands in the doorway trying to calm the mob. A villager thrusts a wooden KITSUNE fox mask into his face.

VILLAGER ONE
This is what she is! A FOX-DEVIL!
Shape shifter. You had no money
until you found her in the forest.
You brought her here, made her your
wife and used her fox-devil tricks
to make you rich.

VILLAGER TWO
And make us poor! Tricked us out of
our money! GET HER!

MONGAKU
Please! This is a misunderstanding.

VILLAGER ONE
Move, or we'll burn your house
down!

Mongaku steps aside.

INT. HOUSE

Three men grab Tsuneko and drag her away. Etsuko screams as Mongaku holds her back.

ETSUKO
Dad, do something!

Mongaku stands silently. Tsuneko turns to glare at Mongaku, who makes no move to help her.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Tsuneko's dragged into a large two-story building. Fade to black as her screams fill the air.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Tsuneko's head bloodied and bruised sticks out of the ground. She's alive but buried. Her eyes open to see Etsuko running toward her. A village man grabs and pulls her back.

VILLAGER
This forest demon isn't human. She
can't replace your mom. Forget you
ever saw her.

Tsuneko opens her swollen red eyes, makes eye contact with Etsuko.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DUSK

A hand opens the door of a bamboo cage containing two emaciated feral dogs. The dogs run to Tsuneko's face. They rip the flesh off her face. Tsuneko screams.

LATER

Villager One holds the wood kitsune mask and walks to Tsuneko, her face a mass of raw, red flesh, blood starting to coagulate. He shoves the mask onto Tsuneko's face.

SQUISH.

She lets out a muffled cry.

VILLAGER ONE
Let the blood dry so the mask
sticks permanently to your face.
No more impersonating others!

EXT. VILLAGE - DAWN

A silhouette of a man walking, carrying a long pole-like object wrapped in thick cloth.

INT. MONGAKU'S HOUSE - DAWN

The man in Buddhist monk's clothing unwraps the cloth to reveal an elegant NAGITA long spear.

MONK

This spear - blessed by the high priest. The blade will send any unnatural creature back to the nether world.

The monk offers the spear to Mongaku.

VILLAGER ONE

Mongaku, behead your wife and we'll forgive you. You and your daughter can remain in the village.

Mongaku silently takes the spear.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - MORNING

In the early morning light, Mongaku holds the spear, walks to the middle of the village square.

Mongaku stands where Tsuneko was buried. The nagita spear blade drops to the dirt where Tsuneko should be buried, now only a hole in the ground. She is gone.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

A wide shot of the village next to a vast forest. Tsuneko's screams echo - or do they sound like laughter?

CLOSE UP - MANGA COMIC PAGE

A young woman's hand holds a nib ink pen, draws a modern city street on thick white paper. A couple, drawn in a romantic manga style, stand centered on the page in an embrace. WIDEN TO REVEAL: