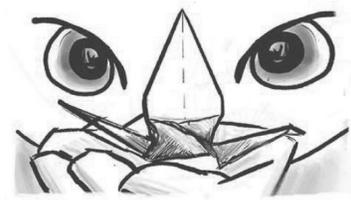


Paper Cranes Outline

The film opens in a dark, void space. Abstract debris flies in the air. A pair of small hands reach out to catch a scrap of paper.

A series of closeups show the process of folding a paper crane, intercut with the film's title sequence.

A young girl raises it upward towards her eyes looking at it in awe.



Voiceover - "As I hold this paper in my hands, I remember an ancient legend... to those who fold a thousand paper cranes, you will be granted a wish."

Black for a Beat. Audio cues the sound of a heartbeat & ringing in the ears.

A young girl (7 years) stands under a bare tree as her mother lay lifeless. Heartbroken, she falls to her knees.

FLASHBACK to before the destruction

(Shown through a series of joyful memories, a lot like watching an old 8mm film reel)

The mother shows the girl a folded crane in the living room of their home.

The two enjoy tea together.

Outside of a kokeshi doll shop, the young girl admires a gift her mother bought her. She holds her new kokeshi friend to the sunlight.

The mother places the girl and her doll into a bike basket.

The mother lifts her daughter's chin to look her in the eyes and kisses her on the forehead.

The mother and daughter bike through their hometown.

A man checks his pocket watch as a streetcar approaches.

A wide angle of a bridge shows townspeople going about their day.

The mother and daughter share an intimate moment watching the sun.

UNTIL...

A bomb explodes overhead

(Slo-motion) The mother and daughter's hands slowly separate.

The mother's hand dissipates into abstract flying paper cranes & transitions the frame to black.

Hold on black for a beat as the sound of rain gently builds.

Black rain creates rings on the water. The city bridge and harbour is a scene of smoke and flames.

A pocket watch lay broken, stuck at 8:15. Shadows of figures remain like photographs on the concrete.

Flickering lanterns reflect in the puddles outside of the kokeshi shop.

Shadows of figures wrap the concrete stairs. Tattered Parasols lay submerged in the mud and rubble.

The camera slowly pushes downward from a bird's eye view.

In the center of a crater, stands a bare tree.

The girl lies alone in the fetal position, underneath the safety of the tree.

A subtle shadow of the mother remains, as though she's cradling the girl.

The girl clenches a crumpled paper crane in her hand. Her struggle ends and her hand slowly opens. She lay lifeless for a beat.

The rain stops and sunbeams glow, The crumpled crane begins to twitch and magically come to life.

It flies away from the hand at rest.

The girl lifts out of her body.

(This will be a stylistic CHANGE in animation style from a 2D to 3D world.)

She awakens in a Spirit World, where her memories are imagined in a childlike interpretation. The magical paper crane will be her Spirit Guide through this world.

(It's color and pattern will resemble the mother's kimono.)

A path of parasol lily pads sit in a matcha tea pond. A wooden ladle is frozen like a boat. In the distance, a giant, broken clock sits half-submerged in the ground. It is stuck on 8:15. A steaming volcano that looks like a tea kettle sits beneath a foggy, sky...clouds hang by strings.

The girl reacts in excitement as she sees a familiar face. It is HER kokeshi doll, now like a giant totem pole!

The girl leaps between the parasol lily pads as one magically lifts her upward.

It flies towards the kokeshi's smiling face. The girl reaches to touch it's cheek. Her kokeshi friend illuminates like a glowing lantern.

Her kokeshi friend illuminates like a glowing lantern.
It smiles and purses its lips, playfully sending a breeze towards the girl.

The girl falls back into the parasol, giggling as she floats away like a dandelion petal in the wind.

The kokeshi and landscape fade away in the distance as the girl waves goodbye.

She enjoys the ride, looking down at the treetops below.

Her joy is interrupted with a THUMP! She's run into a boundary, a set of bars.

The parasol skids down the rails like an elevator's descent.

She looks up and realizes she's behind bars. All she sees is darkness.
Her gasp echoing, as the camera tracks back.

A god's eye view shows the audience she's within a birdcage in a dark, void space. The shadow of a bird silhouettes the foreground.

The girl turns away from the bars, frightened. She stops with a gasp as she sees a shadowed figure in front of her.

Desperate, the shadow reaches out towards her.

Screaming, the girl retreats in fear.

The shadow's crawl towards the girl. Their hands scrape the ground as they desperately continue reaching out.

POV of the girl's legs scooting backwards.

She looks both left and right, as the shadows creep in from all sides

She crouches down in fear as the circle of shadows close in.
The spirit guide crane (her mother's spirit) flies in from above.

The aura of the spirit guide freezes the shadows in their tracks.

The girl hesitantly opens her eyes and sees the glowing spirit guide crane.

It nudges the girl's head up and kisses her on the forehead. It nudges the girl's head up and kisses her on the forehead.

The girl shows relief at this familiar action, it calms her.

The spirit crane grabs a hold of the girl's hand nudging her towards the shadow. As they touch, the shadow illuminates like magic, transforming/folding into a paper crane.

The girl realizes the power she has in this moment.

A sequence transpires, showing her joyfully transforming the shadows into paper cranes.

An eagle eye opens.

Its hairs raise like it's about to hunt its prey. The eagle is made of smoke, internally burning like a furnace.

His talons take off from a branch as he flies aggressively towards the birdcage.

POV of the eagle as it flies around the bars of the cage. It casts an ominous shadow as it passes by.

Meanwhile, the girl, unaware of the threat outside, joyfully folds cranes in the forest of shadows. Kokeshi lanterns light the way like fireflies.

The cranes multiply into an army, like a flock or murmuration.
They shape shift as she skips along, like the train of a dress.

She sees light at the edge of the forest and what looks to be an opening ahead.
She begins to run in excitement.

She emerges from the dark forest into a clearing. The murmuration zooms past as she stops to marvel at the beautiful formations.

SCREEETCH!!! The eagle (still outside the cage bars) squawks in anger. It sounds like a bomb siren, and the girl covers her ears.

POV of the eagle approaching the cage

Its talons clench, with fiery anger. It melts the bars like soldering metal and breeches the cage.

The army of cranes disperse as the dark matter creeps in.

The power of the eagle's wings cause the ground to crumble like an earthquake.
Scared, the girl turns away. A pathway opens, leading to a city atop a hill.

The girl takes off running as a chase ensues. The flock of cranes point her towards the city.

The smoke eagle's feathers break off darting in like missiles or bombs. It begins to set fire to the environment around her. Objects burning downward like giant incense stick torches. Plumes of smoke engulf the path behind her.

She begins to ascend the hill. The path behind falling and crumbling into nothingness as the smoke eagle's shadow looms over her.

POV as she nears the top of the hill. The skeleton of a city can be seen over the horizon.

The girl enters the skeleton city, temporarily sheltered from the threat above.

The smoke eagle dodges the sharp fragments of the city below.

The chase ensues as the ground crumbles and falls behind her.

The girl is forced to the edge of a cliff. She skids abruptly to a stop as rocks fly over the edge.

The cranes zoom passed her head from the forward momentum.

The spirit guide crane (mother's spirit) flies in to lift her chin and instill confidence.

The girl hesitantly peaks over the edge with an uneasy expression. It's a long ways down.

A sharp squawk makes the girl turn back to look.

The camera quickly zooms into her eyes as the fiery bird reflects in her pupil

An epic wide shot shows the smoke eagle rising. The girl gets the courage to take a leap of faith.

The smoke eagle dives and misses.

The cranes swirl around her like a vortex and gently help her land.

She stands into frame as the cranes fly to populate the bare tree.

They cocoon her from the eagle overhead.

As they fly to the branches the scene paints the memory of how things were before the bomb.

She runs excitedly towards the tree

She stops abruptly, stunned.

She's shown what happened to both her and her mother when the bomb was dropped (in the third person).

Her mother's form remains ghostlike. (linking the spirit guide crane with the mother)

The girl realizes she is the final shadow to transform.

An extreme wide angle of the environment shows the smoke eagle making one last effort to dive for the girl.

The cranes are still shielding her from the outside force.

Bird's POV as it nosedives like a bomb.

The girl smiles in peace and understanding, fearless of what's to come.

The girl reaches out for her mother's hand as a gust of wind from all her cranes help connect the two.

The mother and daughters' hands re-connect, creating the magical 1000th crane.

BOOM!

The figures interlocked shape-shift into a paper crane atomic bomb

The smoke eagle dissipates into paper cranes

The paper crane bomb begins to shapeshift again into wings unfolding... it's like a lotus flower unfolding and reaching for the light

Closeups of cage bars bend and break.

The bomb finishes it's shapeshift to form a mega-crane.

She breaks the boundaries of the Spirit World (the birdcage)

The transformed Mega-Crane settles on a broken bar

She looks back at the cage she's broken. (Beat) Then turns to look towards the sky.

She lets go and ascends, like a shooting star in the night sky.

A distance clock can be heard creaking to a move again. TICK....TICK...

Black for a beat.

The sounds of nature builds into the sounds of a bustling city.

A shooting star appears in the night sky and a glowing object floats down in frame.

It is a future time and distant place.

A new child stands near a window in awe of the glow.

POV (The audience's perspective)

The child opens the window as small hands reach out for what magically folds into a paper crane.

Voiceover *"And my wish, I leave to you."*

