

OVER BLACK. Labored breathing.

Super CLOSE-UP shot of eyes, teared up and blood shot. They look DOWN.

CLOSE-UP of splayed out hands covered in blood. The sleeves of an expensive silver suit show blood as well.

DMITRI (O.S.)  
Clean this up Number 2.

CORMAC (V.O.)  
It's specific to me and common for everyone, this wound. We all have it.

MAIN TITLE: The Sin of Virtue

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - NIGHT

OVER BLACK--

TITLE: Eastern Asia, 2172

FADE IN:

The camera does a slow 360 around the room moving up and down to meet the face of each person in the room. An angry blacksmith, female, 50s. Her son, late teens, scared and wary. Katerine, 19, stands next to Cormac, early thirties.

Our hero of the story, Cormac, looks like a street urchin from London who just grew up. He wears dirty jeans, white t-shirt, and an expensive leather jacket that is one size too big.

It is hard to read Katerine. She studies a spot on the floor. She stands calmly in her black uniform of t-shirt, shorts, and boots. With a long braid down her back, she looks like an Japanese Lara Croft. Around her waist is a scarf that was once white. Now it's brownish-orange with touches of red.

CORMAC (V.O.)  
I should have been alive in the old days. When they had guns. After the Last Great War people thought getting rid of guns would fix all our problems. Cure violence or some shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Blacksmith continues her barrage of angry insults. Spit flies. The whole scene is on mute and at 90% speed.

CORMAC (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 In the old days there's no fucking  
 reason why I would be playing bitch  
 to this teenager.

We see a FULL SHOT of the scene. Cormac is holding a lacy black parasol that is obviously Katerine's. He's looks as uncomfortable as a man holding a woman's purse.

Katerine begins talking, very quietly, and the blacksmith is compelled to stop bitching so she can hear her.

KATERINE  
 I believe you misunderstand this  
 arrangement. Luckily, I am willing  
 to explain.

One movement and Katerine grabs the blacksmith's ear and twists, bringing her grunting to her knees. Katerine lets out a small smile and then brings her other hand to the fleshy neck of the blacksmith.

KATERINE (cont'd)  
 This is a time to listen because I  
 don't repeat. You-

Katerine pushes her fingers into the blacksmith's neck.

KATERINE (cont'd)  
 -are an investor. You invest in the  
 safety of yourself, your business,  
 and your family. If you do not  
 regularly put into this investment  
 then you will be fined.

Katerine draws her attention to the cowering son.

KATERINE (cont'd)  
 How old is your son?

Tears are streaking down the blacksmith's red face. She tries to speak but only chokes, spit falling out of her large, thin mouth. Katerine sighs in annoyance and impatiently releases her throat while tightening her grip on the blacksmith's ear. The blacksmith involuntarily leans down further, her hands now on the floor.

BLACKSMITH  
 Sixteen! The boy's sixteen!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATERINE

I'll be gentle with you, alright?  
Come up with it tomorrow.

(pause)

Your son is old enough to take care  
of this business on his own.

She releases the blacksmith and holds out her hand for the parasol. Cormac happily returns it, he's ready to go. They both move for the door. The blacksmith gets to her feet, sloppily wiping her mouth and rubbing her throat.

BLACKSMITH

You little bitch, I'm not giving  
you shit "Chotei-sha"!

CORMAC (V.O.)

That's what they call us, chotei-  
sha. A joke I guess. It means  
peacekeeper. There's no peace here.

The blacksmith looks around quickly, passing over wood dowels and throwing papers to the ground. She comes up with a large and heavy hammer.

CORMAC (V.O.) (cont'd)

But we like it that way.

She holds it over her head and runs toward Katerine. FREEZE FRAME.

CORMAC (V.O.) (cont'd)

This is the mistake other people  
make, coming at her head on. She  
requires more...subtlety.

UNFREEZE. Katerine lowers her head and gives a small, disappointed nod. Her left hand draws a katana out of her parasol. In the same moment, she spins. Flying through the air, she lands on the blacksmith, driving the katana down into the blacksmith's breastbone. She rides the blacksmith to the ground. With the landing the katana drives deeper.

Her eyes finally rise to look into the blacksmith's. We still do not see Katerine's eyes. We only see the look of pain and surprise from the blacksmith. She takes one last look at her son. Tears are steadily falling from both their eyes.

Katherine stands up and takes out the katana giving a sickly sound of sticky sludge against metal. She pulls off the scarf and cleans her sword. Putting the blade away, she walks once more to the exit. Pausing at the threshold--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATERINE  
Have the money next week.

EXT. CITY STREETS/ALLEYS - CONTINUOUS

Katerine walks quickly through the city streets. Through dirty back alleys. Always turning in a seemingly random path. Cormac tries to keep up with her fast pace.

CORMAC (V.O.)  
I'll never understand how someone with such small legs could move so damn fast. She never took the same path twice in a row. Barely knew where we were going with all the back alley paths. But my senses are better than most and I could tell we were approaching his favorite sushi bar. Couldn't avoid the smell o' fish in diff'rent stages of rot.

INT. SUSHI BAR - CONTINUOUS

Katerine and Cormac enter a comfortable sushi bar. The calm, quiet chatter ceases when they enter.

Everyone stops. The exception is a young boy, 14, who runs to the back of the house.

Cormac eyes their surroundings, calculating risk and turning his nose from the stench only he is capable of smelling. The people continue at a small murmur. &Katerine holds her parasol lightly while gazing at a woodcutting behind the wall.

CORMAC (V.O.)  
I never liked the pick-up jobs. This mighta been a cozy night before Dmitri's Chotei-sha walked in. Didn't like mingling with the commoners.

The restaurant owner (Japanese, male, 50s) ENTERS from back of house with a burlap sack. Beyond the tired look of responsibility and the thin veneer of hospitality, he carries himself like an honorable warrior.

Katerine gives him a small bow. The restaurateur returns with a deeper bow and hands the sack to Cormac.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATERINE  
 (giving a farewell bow)  
 Dmitri enjoys your food, you have a  
 good establishment. He'll see you  
 tomorrow night.

Cormac is confused by the show of respect.

EXT. SUSHI BAR - CONTINUOUS

Cormac opens the sack and starts to count it. Katherine gives him a look and he gives a fake smile of obeisance and closes the sack.

KATERINE  
 You always turn up your nose at  
 sushi. Not a fish person I take  
 it.

CORMAC  
 Fish should be fried and  
 with chips...What was with all that  
 bowing? We don't have to bow to  
 anyone down here.

KATERINE  
 If you don't know then I can't tell  
 you.

Cormac shakes his head.

INT. DINGY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Two silhouettes are under the sheets, missionary style. The one on top's breathing gets faster. His breath catches. A GROAN comes out. He rolls over.

TOP VIEW. We see the OLD COWBOY, 50s, white. Gritty, Clint Eastwood type. Next to him is a male, 20s, Japanese.

The Old Cowboy pulls out a metal container of cigarettes. Offers his partner one. His partner takes it. The partner lights the Old Cowboy's cigarette, then his own.

OLD COWBOY  
 That's what I like about you,  
 Yosei. None of that jibber jabber.

YOSEI  
 You don't pay me to speak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD COWBOY

That's my point! My point exactly.  
Women, dey gotta talk atcha.  
Tellin' dey feelin's and the like.  
Not men like you, Yosei. Not men  
like us.

Beat. The Old Cowboy takes another drag. Gets up, puts his pants on.

YOSEI

Should I be ready next week?

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - LATER

Cormac and Katerine travel on separate motorcycles on a dark, mountain road. Both of them are going faster than seems safe. Katerine in the LEAD, Cormac begins to OVERTAKE.

Katerine smiles, enjoying the challenge. She speeds up to overtake, but he pushes her back and into the mountainside. Katerine maneuvers to just barely push him off the road and down the mountain. Cormac stops his bike to prevent himself from going over the side.

It doesn't work.

He skids with his bike, moving his legs, trying to slow himself down before he goes over the side with it. Just at the edge he stops himself. He lays down exhausted as he hears Katerine's bike fade in the distance.

EXT. COMPOUND - LATER

Katerine stops in front of what was once the home of some Japanese feudal lord. She hops off the bike and throws the keys to one of two men dressed in blue suits. Katerine doesn't pause as the second man opens the main door for her and takes her jacket.

We open to...

INT. COMPOUND/MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

A long hall stretches down the center of the room. Low to the floor, Dmitri's men sit at the table drinking and being merry. Women fall into their laps, flirting and pouring for the men.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the head of the table is DMITRI, 40s, white, jolly and flush with sake. He's a bear of a man with eyes that are bright and wise.

Sitting next to him is ANNA, 30s. The most beautiful in the room, she smiles like a person who flaunts that they know more than you. She sits silently and smirks as Dmitri whispers into her ear.

As Katerine crosses the room newer leaders of the gang give her greetings. The older ones know not to bother.

NUMBER SIX

Nice night, Number Two?

He looks her up and down, more interested in her body than her day.

NUMBER EIGHT

Did you leave Cormac in a ditch?

Those who hear laugh.

NUMBER SIX

Hey, does that mean I just moved up the rank?

More laughter.

Katerine gives no response. She stops in front of Dmitri. Dmitri stands up and faces her. He towers over her. Frowning down at her with his arms crossed,

DMITRI

(with a soft Russian  
accent)

Well?

Katerine's eyes are on the empty bottle of sake.

She turns up a corner of her mouth and then brings on a full smile, looking at him directly. They both laugh. Dmitri picks her up in a bear hug and swings her around once.

KATERINE

Alright, alright. I'm getting vertigo up here. I can tell you've had enough sake tonight.

DMITRI

And I'll have more if I please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATERINE

(jokingly)

It appears all the money I get you goes straight to those bottles.

DMITRI

Well, how have you done today?

KATERINE

Any misunderstandings have been dealt with. I'll have to go back to the blacksmith next week.

DMITRI

And yet you show up empty handed and one man down. Where's Number Four?

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - A LITTLE EARLIER

Cormac walks along the dark mountain road.

CORMAC (V.O.)

I was pissed but I didn't blame her. Anyone else would have done the same. That's what we did here. You keep moving forward or you die. You climb the ladder and brake the rungs on the way.

A CAR ENGINE can be heard approaching. A dark blue car pulls up next to him. The back window rolls down. The Old Cowboy looks odd sitting in a car. He leans out...

OLD COWBOY

It can be dangerous in these parts, real dangerous.

Cormac is dirty and bloody.

OLD COWBOY (cont'd)

(looking him over)

You get run over?

CORMAC

You gonna stop bustin' my balls and give me a ride? If not, then piss off.

OLD COWBOY

Touchy, touchy. Get in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Old Cowboy opens the door and lets him in.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Two blue suits sit in the front driving them.

CORMAC

...Almost dropped off the bloody mountain. She's lucky she had the money with her.

OLD COWBOY

Who cares? Dmitri's got more money than anyone on this shit island combined. Protection money's what he wipes his ass with in the morning.

Beat.

The Old Cowboy looks at him and starts laughing his ass off.

CORMAC

What's so bloody funny!

OLD COWBOY

You lost to a little girl! A little girl!

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

A quiet dressing room. Most of the girls are in the main hall.

MARGUERITE, 20s, half white/half Japanese, a pale facsimile of Anna, sits applying makeup to a bruise on her face. Just as she finishes SINSEI, teens, Japanese, walks in.

SINSEI

I don't see why you get to sit here while we're all out there working.

MARGUERITE

Not my fault I'm a favorite. I'm with a Topper. He's not here yet so I can sit back.

SINSEI

Whateva. I can get one a the Toppers. You see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sinsei grabs a hair clip and stomps out the room. Marguerite stares at herself in the mirror, looking carefully at the bruise. She takes a breath and prepares herself. Walks out.

INT. MAIN HALL - CONTINUING

KATERINE

The money was on my bike. One of the Suits has got it. Number Four...

Katerine prepares herself to explain that Cormac is dead.

In that moment Cormac and the Old Cowboy walk in. She sees Cormac.

KATERINE (cont'd)

And see? All your people are here now.

DMITRI

That's my girl! The rest of you should be as good.

The rest of them long since stopped paying attention. The Old Cowboy takes a seat and quickly has a drink in hand. Marguerite sits by him.

CORMAC (V.O.)

She nearly killed me. She nearly killed me and she was gettin' thanks for it.

During the V.O. Dmitri tries to convince Katerine to stay and drink.

KATERINE

I wanted to speak with you on some ideas but I see you're too drunk for that tonight.

CORMAC (V.O.)

No time for revenge. Right then all I needed was the doctor.

Cormac moves through the hall to find the doctor.

DMITRI

Nonsense, let's go talk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He whispers something into Anna's ear and she smiles slyly and leaves. Dmitri stares down the hallway at her for a moment.

Dmitri and Katerine walk down another hallway, the same hallway Cormac needs to follow for the doctor. They chat casually.

DMITRI (cont'd)  
Who's going to my game Friday?

KATERINE  
You mean who's money are you taking tomorrow? Who do you hate most this week?

DMITRI  
(laughing)  
Invite the police commissioner, and the mayor.

They eventually realize Cormac is following them.

DMITRI (cont'd)  
And what are you doing Number Four?

Cormac opens his mouth to speak.

KATERINE  
You're allowing Number Four to shadow me, I suppose he's taking that quite literally.

Dmitri eyes him for a beat.

DMITRI  
Alright Shadow, come with us if it pleases Katerine. Just remember, shadows don't speak.

INT. COMPOUND/HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Dmitri and Anna continue to chat in the background.

CORMAC (V.O.)  
Mum always said we came from posh people. Not royalty, people with real power, politicians. Said our family was full a barristers, even a prime minister. But I never saw that. It was only me n her n all her books.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORMAC (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 The only things she didn't sell to  
 fix her cravings. She said we came  
 from something. I decided to make  
 myself something. I wasn't gonna  
 ride on someone else's power.

INT. COMPOUND/DMITRI'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

The Old Cowboy knocks on Dmitri's door. Anna answers.  
 Wearing quite revealing lingerie, she is completely  
 comfortable in front of him. The Old Cowboy is not.

ANNA  
 What?

OLD COWBOY  
 Hey, Anna...

ANNA  
 (Sigh)  
 What?

OLD COWBOY  
 Is Dmitri back there somewhere?

ANNA  
 No.

She begins to close the door.

OLD COWBOY  
 Wait, do you know where he is?

ANNA  
 I'm not his keeper Cowboy.

OLD COWBOY  
 I know, it's just-  
 (Taking off his hat)  
 There's somethin' important I need  
 to tell'm. Somethin' important.  
 You're the only one 'e's ever alone  
 with and so-

ANNA  
 He's not here, so why are you still  
 talking to me?

OLD COWBOY  
 See, I was hoping-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

To find me alone.

OLD COWBOY

Haha, see. I know you was for more than what's on the surface.

ANNA

Cowboy, what the hell do you want?!

OLD COWBOY

I wanna warn ol' Dmitri 'bout somethin' but I think it might come better from the beautiful woman who has his ear.

EXT. COMPOUND/COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

A courtyard enclosed on three sides. The fourth side, facing the entrance to the courtyard, opens out on a steep hill. Below we can see the city. Small and sparkling, the city looks like a child's board game littered below.

Inside the courtyard, lie wood benches on the sides and in the center is a fire pit. A workbench sits next to one of the wood benches. We can see scraps of leather, feathers, and other objects to makes arrows.

Dmitri takes a nearly finished arrow and sits by the fire to work on it. Katerine places herself on a bench across from him. Cormac stands somewhere between the entrance and Katerine.

A moment passes as Katerine examines her nails, Dmitri works on his arrow. They are both comfortable in their silence. Dmitri is waiting patiently for Katerine to speak.

CORMAC (V.O.)

Bloody talk already.

KATERINE

You're not completely in power yet.

We see Cormac's facial response to this comment. No one would dare challenge Dmitri's power.

KATERINE (cont'd)

You're not in control of the factories, the main producers.

She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATERINE (cont'd)  
Luckily the union leader retired.

FAST CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

The Old Cowboy watches as two suits pummel on a man, 50s, crying in pain. The Old Cowboy snaps his fingers. The suits back up. The Old Cowboy shrugs. He lifts the old man by the hair and cuts the man's throat.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

KATERINE  
And now we have an opening. Now the choice is who should be the next union leader.

DMITRI  
And I'm sure you already have an idea who that should be.

KATERINE  
Arthur Andersen. He's been a middle man administrator for fifteen years without any promotions in the last ten. He appears clean to any outsider though he doesn't have much ambition.

DMITRI  
And why do we want him?

KATERINE  
He's been gambling in your casino for years now and has built up a decent debt. Also, he has a family. He's capable and easily controlled.

DMITRI  
Seems you've done it again my dear. You can approach him.

Katerine stands up, smiles and EXITS. Cormac follows behind.

INT. COMPOUND/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cormac is following Katerine down the hallways, lost in thought. They reach a crossway.

KATERINE

That was a good move tonight,  
following us, but I think you've  
shadowed me enough for the evening.

CORMAC

(snapping out of it)  
Why is it you're never with the men  
in the main hall?

KATERINE

(bristling)  
You can drink and have your whores  
all you want, I have better things  
to do.

Katherine walks off at her usual incredible walking speed.

CORMAC

(sotto voce)  
Bitch.

Cormac turns to go down the main hall and then pauses. Turns back and looks in the direction of where Katerine went. The camera moves past his shoulder and into...

INT. MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

The night is in full swing and everyone is very drunk. Laughter, drinking, and general debauchery ensues.

Then a HIT causes Number Seven, 30s, male, Japanese, to FLY BACKWARDS and into a table full of alcohol bottles.

Everyone pauses and then laughs, grunts, oo's at the man.

Number Five, 40s, black, male, stands up to continue the fight. The Old Cowboy finishes his cup of whiskey.

OLD COWBOY

You better take it outside or  
Dmtri'll have both yer asses.

Number Seven picks himself up and moves carefully to the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGUERITE

Been awhile since we had a someone  
try to move up the rank.

NIMA

If I was them, I'd be at it all the  
time until I was Number One.

MARGUERITE

(scoffs)

Right, you wouldn't get to Number  
Four before you'd be dead.

Marguerite goes outside to see the action.

NIMA

You don't know.

EXT. COMPOUND/FRONT COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The people in the main hall have spilled out to the front  
courtyard. They are holding bets and egging the fighters  
on.

Number Five keeps his cool. Number Seven is nervous but  
ready to take him down.

NUMBER FIVE

This is a mistake, boy.

NUMBER SEVEN

You makin' the mistake, old man.

This pisses Number Five off a bit.

NUMBER FIVE

Shoulda stayed down. You're not  
ready for this.

OLD COWBOY

(to Number Six)

Not gonna step in for the man?

NUMBER SIX

(laughs)

Nope. It's more fun to watch him  
get his ass beat.

OLD COWBOY

(lights a cigarette)

Which one?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Number Six smiles. His fast hands steal the cigarette. He walks away smirking. The Old Cowboy gives him a dirty look as he takes out another cigarette.

NUMBER SEVEN

You gonna stop dancin' and fight me  
or what?

Number Five's boxing moves have kept him out of reach of Number Seven's blows. Now Number Seven is getting tired.

Number Five 'dances' in close and grabs Seven for a head butt. Seven gets hit and backs away quickly. Blood quickly POURS from a wound over his left eye.

NUMBER SEVEN (cont'd)

Fucker!

Five moves in, puts a flurry of punches into Seven. One more to his jaw and Seven hits the floor.

Five DOESN'T STOP. Seven is passed out on the ground and Five sits on him, laying into him more. Everyone watching is wincing at the beating.

He finally stops and stands up.

NUMBER FIVE

I like you, that's why you're not  
dead. Lesson over.  
(to Six and Eight)  
Get the boy to the doctor.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Cormac sits in the dark, still covered in dust and blood. His hands sit on the steering wheel, ready to start the car at any moment. But he's nodding off. He JERKS himself awake.

CORMAC (V.O.)

The street was full  
of black, shadows were hard to see.  
I was beginning to believe she  
wouldn't come. Thought she must be  
leaving the  
compound at night going somewhere  
but my cold fingertips suggested I  
drive back and get some alcohol to  
warm me up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just then a bike is heard O.S. He ducks down low in the car. It ZIPS past him.

Cormac waits a beat and then turns on the car, leaving all the lights out. He follows her down the narrow mountain path.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - CONTINUOUS

The clouds cover up a waning moon. Cormac follows the biker at a careful distance.

CORMAC (V.O.)

It helped my sight was better than others, but if I hadn't driven that road a million times, I woulda died following her in the dark. Maybe it was the beating she already gave me that night that kept me going. I was determined to find out where she was sneaking off.

INT. COMPOUND/DMITRI'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Dmitri and Anna lay in the afterglow of sex.

ANNA

I was thinking.

DMITRI

Yes?

ANNA

I was thinking about your card game.

DMITRI

Mhm?

ANNA

How do you decide who gets a seat at your table?

DMITRI

Officials of the city and my own men of course.

ANNA

Katerine never goes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DMITRI  
Katerine doesn't like to gamble.

ANNA  
Of course she wouldn't. Never one  
to admit a vice...aren't there  
others that could be invited?

DMITRI  
I suppose it's time to allow Cormac  
to a game.

That's not who she meant.

ANNA  
Cormac, right. Why did you ever  
pick Cormac? The Old Cowboy always  
does your recruiting these days.

DMITRI  
I found Cormac running his own gang  
here. Small group but smart. They  
were pushing in on my European  
trade.

ANNA  
And he's still sucking air?

DMITRI  
That's why I picked him up. We  
were taking his men out. Instead  
of using his fists, he used his  
brain. Gave me his contacts and I  
let him and his remaining men live.  
He's bright. Brighter than he  
thinks.

ANNA  
He seems arrogant enough to me.

DMITRI  
Don't under estimate him. That  
would be a mistake.

ANNA  
He reminds you of yourself at his  
age.

DMITRI  
He reminds me of what I should have  
been at his age.

## EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

A woman, tight short dress, heels, small round hat with lace over it gets off her bike and stashes it behind a tree. A breeze passes over her.

CORMAC (V.O.)  
I knew it was her. She always  
smelled of jasmine and spice.

The woman begins to walk into town. The PERCUSSION of her heels is heard loud and clear.

CORMAC (V.O.) (cont'd)  
And I knew that walk.

## EXT. STREET FULL OF BARS - NIGHT

Cormac stalks Katerine like prey. As they walk down the streets, the windows to the bars and night clubs are open to the street. Music SPILLS out of each opening. They pass a TECHNO bar. J-POP comes from the next window. Something experimental and new in the following.

Finally Katerine stops at an UPSCALE JAZZ BAR. The bouncer is dressed impeccably in a blue, pin striped suit. He tips his hat to her. He knows her.

CORMAC looks down at his torn, dirty, bloody clothes.

CORMAC (V.O.)  
I knew there was no way of getting  
in there unnoticed looking like  
this.

He looks across the street at a bar playing some newer version of Brit Punk.

CORMAC (V.O.) (cont'd)  
This was more my style anyway.

He walks right past the bouncer of this club. The bouncer isn't filtering at all.

## INT. PUNK BAR - CONTINUOUS

Cormac goes up to the bar and gets a scotch. Moves to the front of the bar by the window opening. He watches.