

THE BASTARD

A Russian gangster's wife kidnaps her estranged husband's illegitimate son and murder's the Yakuza affiliated mother in order to protect her own daughter's birthright as sole heir to her husband's substantial legal and illegal business empires. As an adult the bastard son surreptitiously reappears to reclaim his share of his father's fortune.

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バスタード

PART I -BASUTADO

[THE BASTARD]

CARMAN

INTERIOR: 1987, Mount Sinai Hospital, Maternity Ward

FADE IN

A nurse wearing scrubs and a stethoscope walks quickly down the hospital hallway and enters the room of KIKU KIMURA. The new mother is still groggy from the recent birth. The nurse takes a quick look at the chart at the foot of the bed to confirm she has the right patient. The nurse then moves to the side of the bed and checks the woman's IV. She adjusts the flow of the sedative drip. The baby is in a bassinette beside the mother's hospital bed. The nurse bends down to see the baby is sleeping.

KIKU

What is it? Is something wrong?

NURSE/CARMAN

Not to worry sweetie, everything is fine. You have a healthy baby boy. I'm just taking him down for a few standard tests. You get some sleep now, and he'll be waiting for you when you wake up. He'll be hungry, so you better take a nap while you can.

The woman makes an effort to speak, but she reluctantly gives in to the increased amount of sedative. KIKU KIMURA'S eyes close. The nurse bundles the baby boy in an extra blanket and quickly heads down the hall and through the door marked "Stairs." A large man in a dark suit is waiting for her on the landing. Together the nurse and the man work their way down the steps to the basement-parking garage.

The man opens the basement garage door where a black funeral parlour limousine with dark tinted windows is waiting. The back door swings open. The nurse and the large man get in.

Sitting in the back of the limousine is another heavy-set, rough looking man in a dark suit smoking a large cigar. The nurse still holding the baby takes the bench seat facing the back of the limo and the two men. The nurse taps twice on the plexiglass panel that separates the DRIVER from the back of the limousine. The DRIVER in the front starts the engine and takes off for the exit.

NURSE/CARMAN

Jesus Christ, put the fucking cigar out, there's a baby in the car.

NIKKIE

This ain't just a cigar boss, it's a Cohiba Esplendido, thirty-four bucks a pop.

NURSE

I don't care if your sucking on a diamond studded dildo. Put the fucking thing out.

The second man grabs the cigar out of the cigar man's mouth and stubs it out in the ashtray.

LUKA

Don't be an asshole NIKKIE. Do as you're told, the baby's worth more than your stinky cigar.

NIKKIE

Ty che blyad? Suka blyad!
You owe me thirty-four bucks.

LUKA gives NIKKIE a look that says try and collect. Everyone remains quiet as the limo turns onto the turnpike.

FADE OUT

Kiku

INTERIOR: Mount Sinai Hospital, Maternity Ward

FADE IN

A young nurse enters the room of KIKU KIMURA. She takes a look at the chart then moves to the side of the bed to check the seemingly sleeping new mother. She feels for a pulse on her wrist.

NURSE 2

Son of a bitch!

She tries to check the pulse in the mother's neck. Nothing. She presses the code button.

HOSPITAL LOUD SPEAKER

Paging Dr. Black, Room 893...

Paging Dr. Black, Room 893...

Paging Dr. Black is code for a patient in distress. Not something the hospital wants to broadcast to the rest of the mothers on the ward. There's the sudden sound of frantic activity in the hall. The nurse checks on the baby but the baby isn't there. She turns to the door just as a doctor and two nurses rush in wheeling a crash cart.

NURSE 2

HE'S GONE!

The doctor rushes to the bedside and checks the woman's heart. He rips open KIKU'S hospital gown and places the paddles on her Cherry Blossom tattooed chest.

DOCTOR

Charge!

The woman's body heaves up off the bed and lands in a thud.

DOCTOR

Charge!

He tries three times, each time KIMURA'S body is lifted off the bed, but each time the eerie flat digital sound of death continues to fill the room.

DOCTOR
Again God damn it!

No response... the doctor mumbles under his breath.

DOCTOR
What the hell happened? She was
fine a few hours ago.

The DOCTOR sighs in frustration at his failure to save
KIKU'S life. He checks his watch.

DOCTOR
Time of death 8:47 AM

NURSE 2
The BABY'S GONE! He's not here!

DOCTOR
What are you talking about?

NURSE 2
The baby isn't in the
bassinette. He's gone.

FADE OUT

The Driver

EXTERIOR: The home of CARMAN ANTIPOV, the estranged wife of Russian mobster *BOL'SHOY* BORIS ANTIPOV.

FADE IN

The DRIVER pulls up in front of a large house in the exclusive Bel-Air Estates. The two men in suits get out and wait for the nurse and the baby. The woman is obviously in charge. She taps on the window separating the DRIVER from the back of the limousine. The DRIVER slides back the plexiglass panel so he can hear the woman's instructions.

NURSE/CARMAN

You know what to do?

DRIVER

Yes Ma'am. Take the limo to Ralphs Salvage and make sure it's disposed of properly. There's a black Fiat Spider waiting for me. Bring it back to the house.

NURSE/CARMAN

Good. When you get back, you'll be paid. And then I never want to see your handsome *punum* ever again.

DRIVER

Yes, Ma'am.

The nurse gets out of the car with the sleeping baby and heads for the front of the house with the two thugs. The DRIVER starts the engine and heads out to Ralph's Salvage.

It takes a half hour for the DRIVER to get to Ralph's. The whole while he's thinking, *'what the hell have I got myself into?'* He's only a driver for hire. He answers a Want Ad in the Times for a one-day gig. That's all he knew. The whole thing seemed sketchy from the start, but how do you turn down twenty-five hundred dollars for one day's work. It was just too good to be legit, but he needed the money, and twenty-five hundred dollar paydays don't come around too often. He put the whole thing out of his mind. He did what he needed to do to survive, and that was that. Once it was over he'd be gone with twenty-five hundred bucks in his pocket, and hopefully, a fresh start.

The DRIVER enters the front gate of the salvage yard and pulls up in front of a ramshackle building that was badly in need of a paint job, and a few other repairs like a new roof, foundation, and walls.

A grizzled old man with a mop of messy white hair and tobacco stained teeth comes out to greet him. He's wearing filthy jeans and a torn denim work shirt. The DRIVER stops the engine and gets out of the car.

RALPH

Just leave her there; I'll get to it after lunch.

DRIVER

I'm supposed to wait to make sure it gets done.

RALPH

Jesus... everybody's in a fucking hurry these days. You young people got to learn to slow-the-fuck-down, or you'll have a heart attack.

DRIVER

Those are my instructions. You want to speak to the lady.

RALPH

FUCK NO! I don't want to speak to the lady. She's worse than a heart attack.

Grumbling all the while, the old man gets into the limousine and drives it over to a waiting crane standing next to a giant compactor. The old man gets out of the limo and signals the crane operator.

The DRIVER watches as the big black car is lifted into the oversized mechanical vise. In a matter of minutes the shiny black limousine that went missing from the August Brothers Funeral Home last night is nothing more than a large cube of scrap metal. The old man walks over to the DRIVER and hands him a set of keys.

RALPH

Your ride is parked behind the office. If I was you I'd be careful. That's the Tsarina's car, and she's kind of particular.

The DRIVER nods and heads to the back of the building that the old man euphemistically called his office. The car is nice: a metallic black exterior with beige leather seats, black piping, and a real wood panel dashboard. He gets in the Spider and heads back to the house.

FADE OUT

Sato

INTERIOR: Mount Sinai Hospital, Maternity Ward

FADE IN

A youthful looking, expensively dressed, forty-five year old Japanese woman carrying her pretty eighteen-month old granddaughter walks briskly down the corridor followed by two hard-looking Japanese tough-guys. The woman is dressed fashionably in an oriental-inspired high-collared dress with a slit up the side.

Her clothes fit in a manner that emphasises a still youthful body while discreetly covering the elaborate *tebori irezumi* style *Jigoku Dayua* tattoo that wraps around her torso.

The men are wearing black suits, white shirts, and black ties with red Cherry Blossom stickpins.

SATO KIMURA MUONNA is KIKU'S mother and the grandmother to KATO, KIKU'S now orphaned daughter. SATO is not your typical *obaasan* or Japanese grandmother, not unless you call a Yakuza nightclub owner who also runs a stable of high-end prostitutes typical. She is the widow of a murdered Yakuza *Oyabun*, ITO MUONNA, who ran the nightclub and prostitution ring with SATO as his *Chi-san*, club manager.

The idea of an *Onna-Oyabun* or female Yakuza boss is often thought of as a myth created for the movies. They are rare, but they do exist; and if you ever run into one, stay clear because they are a special kind of trouble.

Surviving in a male dominated environment that treats women like property requires a unique combination of female charm, physical toughness, and mental discipline. In simple terms... you don't fuck with *Onna-Oyabun* MUONNA.

KIKU'S DOCTOR is standing behind the nurses' station checking some paper work. He sees SATO and her two bodyguards coming down the corridor so he goes around the counter to greet her.

DOCTOR

MRS. MUONNA...

SATO reaches the nurses' station, hands KATO to one of her bodyguards, and starts in on the DOCTOR.

SATO

What the hell kind of hospital is this? My daughter comes in here to have a baby, and you fucking kill her?

DOCTOR

Now just a minute MRS. MUONNA...

The bodyguard holding KATO puts the child down. Both men take an ominous step forward towards the DOCTOR. The DOCTOR stumbles awkwardly backwards banging into the counter of the nurses' station knocking some flowers into the lap of the nurse sitting behind it.

SATO

You haven't heard the last of this young man. You and your death trap institution will be hearing from my lawyers.

KATO moves beside the DOCTOR'S leg. She tugs on his white hospital lab coat. He looks down at the little girl and smiles. She hits him in the knee.

SATO

Now... where the hell is my grandson?

FADE OUT

What A Mess!

EXTERIOR: The home of CARMAN ANTIPOV.

FADE IN

The DRIVER makes it back to the house faster than he'd expected. Driving the Spider was a gas, and it was sure a hell of a lot more fun to drive than a big old clunky stolen funeral parlour limousine. He parks the car in the driveway and makes his way to the back of the house as instructed when he was hired. The large glass sliding door to the patio is partly open; he assumes, left open for him. He enters the house.

The patio door leads to an eating area off to the side of the kitchen. No one seems to be around, and all he can hear is the muffled sounds of the baby whimpering. He makes his way through the house lead by the baby's cry. He gets to the living room and stops.

The two men from the limo are lying on their backs; pools of blood act as liquid pillows, no doubt from the matching holes in their foreheads. Two Colt Defender handguns lie on the thick pile Persian carpet, one beside each man.

A stout older gentlemen with stylishly cut gray hair and an expensive bespoke charcoal pinstriped suit ruined by the hole in his chest sits opposite the entrance to the room. Behind him is a large marble fireplace. Above the fireplace is an oversized portrait of an elegantly dressed woman that looks like the nurse. A Walther PPQ M2 handgun hangs limply from his right hand. The old man must have caught the two thugs as they entered the room before they could react.

The nurse is lying face down at the other end of the room. Pieces of her skull float on top of an ever-expanding stain that surrounds what's left of her head. She clearly tried to make a run for it but didn't quite make it. It looks like an ambush gone wrong. The NURSE is holding a Colt Defender in her right hand and the baby cradled in her left arm.

She obviously got off the shot that killed the fat guy in the chair, but unfortunately for her, it didn't do the job fast enough. The old man must have got her trying to escape. She attempted to protect the child as she fell but was probably dead before she hit the ground. The scene was a mess.

The DRIVER picks up the crying baby and tries to settle it down. It must be hungry. He couldn't just leave it there. He couldn't call the cops. He was party to something very wrong but he didn't know what. His options were limited. He had to get out of there fast but what the hell was he going to do with the kid? Maybe he could drop it off at the hospital? No that was too dangerous. He could leave it at a church or synagogue? No... he wouldn't do that either.

He goes through the ground floor of the house and finds a laundry room with a plastic basket filled with neatly folded bath towels. He creates a little bed in the basket from the towels and puts the baby in the middle.

He finds a knapsack in the kitchen filled with diapers, formula, and supplies designed for a newborn. He slings the knapsack over his shoulder, picks up the basket, and heads out the patio doors. He puts the baby on the floor on the passenger side of the Spider and the knapsack on the seat. He starts the engine and takes off, never to be seen or heard from again.

The next morning the papers are full of the news:

RUSSIAN BRATVA BOSS BUTCHERED

Gazette Staff Reporter... Russian Mobster BOL'SHOY BORIS ANTIPOV, his estranged wife, CARMAN, and two of her bodyguards were found dead last night in her luxury Bel-Air Estates home. The ANTIPOV'S two-year old daughter, CARLA, was found safe, asleep in an upstairs bedroom.

CARLA ANTIPOV stands to inherit her father's substantial business empire. ANTIPOV'S close friend, lawyer, and business associate, MALCOLM SOKOLOV, released a statement this morning stating he would act as CARLA'S guardian until she comes of age.

MOBSTER'S MISTRESS CROAKS, BABY DISAPPEARS

In a related story ANTIPOV'S long-time mistress, KIKU KIMURA, died due to an overdose of painkillers after giving birth to ANTIPOV'S only son who mysteriously disappeared from the hospital yesterday. A police spokeswoman said the Coroner has ruled KIMURA'S death an accidental overdose. They have no leads on KIMURA'S missing baby.

KIKU KIMURA is survived by a daughter KATO, her mother SATO MUONNA, and the missing baby boy. SATO announced that she has guardianship of the little girl and will use whatever resources she has available to try and find her missing grandson.

FADE OUT

合意

PART II - *Goi*

[THE AGREEMENT]

Malcolm

INTERIOR: Present Day. Parking garage of the Tanoshii Basho Shopping Mall

FADE IN

A vintage dark maroon Bentley S2 Continental Coupé pulls into the parking garage of the Tanoshii Basho Shopping Mall. In the back is seventy-eight year old MALCOLM SOKOLOV, Chairman of The Bolshoy Land Development Company.

The valet parking attendant is familiar with the Bentley and raises the barricade to let it pass through. The driver, RANSOM KONNORS, stops the Bentley in front of the attendant and rolls down the window.

ATTENDANT

You can go right in. He's down on the Gozu Level in the usual spot. We've closed the level so no other cars are on it.

Each parking level is marked with a legendary Japanese creature supposedly making it easier for people to remember where they parked. More likely it's a subtle jab played on the well-heeled Caucasian shoppers who have no idea what these creatures represent. *Gozu*, or Ox-Face, is a creature with a man's body and an ox's face, that along with his partner *Mezu*, or Horse-Face, guard the underworld, an appropriate symbol for the meeting that was about to take place.

ATTENDANT

People are pissed, especially the women. God forbid there's no valet parking and they have to walk up the stairs.

RANSOM hands the ATTENDANT an envelope.

RANSOM

That should cover the inconvenience... what about the cameras?

ATTENDANT

All looked after... technical problems all morning. You know how it is with high tech stuff.

RANSOM

Good. We were never here. Understand?

ATTENDANT

Yes sir, understood!

RANSOM rolls up the window and proceeds to The Gozu Level. In the corner in the back is a black Cadillac limousine. RANSOM pulls the Bentley in beside the Cadillac so the back passenger seat of the Bentley is only inches away from the back driver's side seat of the Caddie. The back windows of both cars roll down.

MALCOLM

MR. MAYOR...

MAYOR

MALCOLM..

MALCOLM

Everything is arranged. My people will make the first payment tomorrow. The package will be waiting in locker 893. The key will be mailed to the post office box you gave me. It's all arranged. You just make sure that bylaw doesn't get passed.

MAYOR

Listen, that bitch MUONNA is working hard to see it gets through Council.

MALCOLM

That's why you're getting paid.. to make sure that doesn't happen. You really don't want to disappoint us CHARLIE, you really don't!

MAYOR

It won't pass. Just make sure I
get the key before the vote next
week. I don't get the key,
there's nothing I can do.

MALCOLM

You'll get it.

The window of the MAYOR'S car rolls up abruptly ending the
conversation.

MALCOLM

Asshole! Okay RANSOM, Take me
back to the office.

RANSOM

Yes sir...

The Cadillac waits until the Bentley pulls out and leaves
the parking garage. Once MALCOLM'S car has safely left, the
MAYOR tells his driver to take him back to city hall. As
the Caddie approaches the exit the chauffeur sees it's
blocked by a large wooden sawhorse with a sign reading "NO
EXIT."

MAYOR

What's going on? Why are you
stopping?

Behind the sawhorse is an older but still trim well-dressed
SATO MUONNA with two large humorless Japanese bodyguards
standing behind her. One of the bodyguards is holding a
large brown envelope.

MAYOR

Fuck! Where the hell did she
come from?

FADE OUT

Just A Driver

INTERIOR: Back office at The Bolshoy Land Development Company

FADE IN

RANSOM KONNORS sits at his desk drawing on a five by seven sketchpad. He's a handsome man with vaguely Japanese features that seem to have been carefully selected out of a mixed bag of desirable traits.

He always wanted to be an artist; to create, to make something out of nothing, but instead he was a driver like his father. Don't misunderstand, he loved his father, and he respected what he did. But still, a driver was really nothing more than a glorified deliveryman; it was a job that neither paid enough money nor allowed enough time for him to acquire the skills needed to actually make his dream come true.

So RANSOM'S artistic aspirations faded to random doodling: more a therapeutic exercise in relaxation than an actual creative process. If a life of creativity was not within reach he would have to settle for his other motivating drive, to get what he was owed.

A very attractive, stylishly dressed Japanese woman stands in the doorway.

KATE

Hay Rembrandt put your crayons
away. It's time. You don't want
to keep CARLA waiting.

KATE KIMURA is an in-house lawyer at The Bolshoy, a land development firm with side interests in influence peddling, coercion, and political corruption. KIMURA being a common Japanese name didn't set off any alarm bells with either CARLA or MALCOLM who long since reduced the tragic death of CARLA'S father to ancient history. The fact that KATE was rumored to be CARLA'S lover helped discourage any busybody that thought some research into KATE'S past might be appropriate.

When speaking with her mother KATE never called CARLA by name but instead referred to her as the *Futakuchhi-onna*: the legendary two-mouthed wife with an insatiable appetite.

The nominal boss of The Bolshoy was CARLA ANTIPOV, a strikingly, sophisticated woman raised by her father's long-time lawyer and confidant, MALCOLM SOKOLOV. SOKOLOV was the real boss who maintained control of all major decisions while CARLA acted as the attractive face of the evil empire.

Their relationship was complicated. SOKOLOV was the only father she ever had. All she knew of her biological father was what SOKOLOV told her, that, a few old photographs, and some ancient newspaper stories found on the Internet.

CARLA both loved and hated SOKOLOV. She relied on his experience but hated the fact he was the one in charge. Her real father built the company and she was his only heir. The Bolshoy was her birthright, and SOKOLOV was nothing more than a hired hand.

KATE

I'm waiting handsome.

RANSOM closes his sketchpad, puts it in the desk drawer, and locks it. KATE and RANSOM head down the corridor to the reception area and up a winding glass and metal staircase to the executive offices.

ANTIPOV'S secretary sees KATE and RANSOM coming up the stairs. She picks up the phone and buzzes her boss.

SECRETARY

MISS ANTIPOV... they're here.

She waits till they approach.

SECRETARY

You can go right in.

ANTIPOV'S office is an elegant collection of classic Bauhaus design, all black leather and shiny chrome: all hard and cold like its occupant. There's no clutter, no papers scattered haphazardly on the black leather desk pad that covers the glass topped piece of sculpture that acts as her desk; no files piled up in an effort to show how hard she works; just a sterile demand for order, power, and respect. This is the office of a joyless hard ass.

The only color in the room is found in the two large de Kooning canvases that dominate the sidewalls: a reflection perhaps of the tortured soul that lay buried somewhere underneath a finely sculpted body that must have taken years on a treadmill to produce.

The boss lady herself stands looking out the expansive glass floor-to-ceiling window that overlooks the city. She may not be a warm and cuddly woman, but she is beautiful in her charcoal gray Valentino business suit. She turns to face KATE, ignoring RANSOM.

ANTIPOV

The package is between the
Wassilys.

She waves a dismissive hand at the two Marcel Breuer Wassily Chairs that stand guard in front of her glass and chrome desk. They're the kind of chairs that say, *'I'm rich, I'm sophisticated, and I want you out of my sight as soon as possible.'* Between the two chairs is a white plastic shopping bag with the words *The Baruku* printed on the side underneath some Japanese letters.

ANTIPOV

He'll take you to Little Tokyo,
the Tanoshii Basho Mall, as we
discussed last night.

She turns to face RANSOM.

ANTIPOV

You enter the mall separately.
Do not go in together. You're
strangers, totally unrelated.
You go to the bulk food store
and buy something, any shit, as
long as it's about the same size
as the package. And make sure
it's in the same kind of
shopping bag.

RANSOM thinks: *'these are not the instructions MALCOLM gave
me earlier.'*

ANTIPOV

KATE will put her package on the
floor so she can pay for the
locker. You do exactly the same
thing at the same time. You put
your package down right beside
KATE'S and pay for your locker.

She looks at KATE.

ANTIPOV

You know what to do.

KATE nods, but she continues anyway.

ANTIPOV

You drop the key. Let him pick
it up. You make a big fuss about
how clumsy you are, distracting
anyone watching while you pick
up his package and place it in
your locker.

RANSOM

Wait a second. MALCOLM didn't
say anything about this. He just
said drop KATE off at the mall
and circle the block till she
comes out.

ANTIPOV

Things have changed. Just do
what you're told, or do I have
to find another driver?

RANSOM

No Ma'am.

She looks back at KATE.

ANTIPOV

On the way out you put the key
in the envelope MALCOLM gave you
and drop it in the mailbox.

She turns back to RANSOM.

ANTIPOV

You can't be seen together
before the actual drop, and you
can't be seen together after. Do
you understand? Or do I have to
go over this again?

RANSOM

No Ma'am, I got it.

ANTIPOV

Stop fucking calling me Ma'am.

KATE

Don't worry CARLA it's a
straightforward exchange.
Nothing will go wrong.

She takes an almost threatening step closer to RANSOM.

ANTIPOV

When it's done you come directly
back here and bring me the
second key. If MALCOLM stops you
and asks about the drop, you
don't mention the switch. Now
get out of here and get it done.
And if you know what's good for
you, nothing better happen to
KATE. I hold you responsible.

RANSOM

Yes Ma'am, nothing will go
wrong.

FADE OUT

WHAT CAN GO WRONG...

EXTERIOR: First Street on the way to the Tanoshii Basho Mall

FADE IN

The drive to the Tanoshii Basho Mall seems uneventful. KATE sits nervously tapping her perfectly manicured fingernails on the elbow rest of RANSOM'S vintage Fiat Spider. Her other hand tightly grips the package for fear it might try to escape.

Neither RANSOM nor KATE speak, both are intent on following ANTIPOV'S instructions to the letter. RANSOM periodically checks the rear view mirror to see if they are being followed. It's not that he expects anything, it's just a habit his father drilled into him, his words permanently etched into his subconscious.

FATHER'S VOICE

*You always check. Never assume.
Never take anything for granted.*

*Most of the time nothing goes
wrong, so you get lazy, you
relax... BAM! You're fucked!*

*Do you understand? Sooner or
later someone is going to try
and screw you, so be prepared.
Always check!*

RANSOM notices a Lincoln Navigator several car lengths back that seems to be shadowing his every move. RANSOM pulls out and passes several cars before cutting back into line. KATE gives him a look of concern.

The Lincoln follows but almost clips a cab as it tries to tuck in behind a Honda Accord. The cabbie leans heavily on his horn. KATE starts to turn...

RANSOM

Don't look! Keep your eyes on
the road ahead.

KATE

What? Is something wrong?
What's going on?

RANSOM thinks, why is she involved in this? This is just the kind of sketchy business his father warned him about. He expected it. He knew who his bosses were, and what they were capable of doing, but KATE was a real estate lawyer, not a bagman comfortable with making illegal payoffs.

RANSOM bided his time. He knew an alley ran from First Street all the way down to Central Avenue and the back entrance to the parking garage adjacent to the mall.

RANSOM waits till the last moment; he pulls into the curb lane just as he approaches the alley.

He turns the wheel hard right into the narrow back street used for truck deliveries. He watches in the rear mirror as the Navigator speeds past, unable to follow.

RANSOM drives into the parking garage, collects the ticket stub from the automated machine, and proceeds down to the *Mezu*, Horse-Head Level. He finds a spot with a perfect view of any cars entering or leaving the level. He backs in so he's facing forward.

RANSOM

Just wait a minute. I want to
see if the Lincoln was able to
follow us.

They sit. KATE nervously taps her fingers while RANSOM scans for trouble. He can hear her breathing hard as if she just ran a marathon in her expensive designer heels. He looks over. Her chest moves up and down in rhythmic syncopation with her tapping. She looks back at him.

KATE

What do you expect? I'm nervous.
You drive like a crazy person.

RANSOM doesn't respond.

KATE

And stop looking at my tits. We
have a job to do.

RANSOM keeps it professional. Someone has too.

RANSOM

Relax... we lost them. You leave first. Use the stairs. I'll hang back but don't worry, I'll be right behind you.

KATE opens the door and stumbles slightly as she gets out of the car dropping the package.

RANSOM

Just hold it together a little longer. It will be over soon.

She gives him a dirty look, more embarrassed than nasty.

KATE

I'm fine. You just do your part.

RANSOM waits till she gets to the door marked *Mezu Horse-Head Stairs*, then he follows. As they go up the stairs he watches the slightly built attractive lawyer struggle with the package but he remains well back. Every so often she turns to look to see if he's there. Her eyes meet his... she's out of her depth. She knows he knows and it makes her even more nervous.

KATE works her way up to Central Avenue and heads for the back entrance of the Tanoshii Basho Mall. The sidewalk is busy with pedestrians: a young Japanese man and woman holding hands walk a few feet behind KATE; a group of teenage girls all wearing private school blazers and too-short pleated skirts laugh and jostle as they snap selfies with each other. A short stocky Japanese businessman rushes past RANSOM as if in a hurry to catch up to KATE.

RANSOM picks up his pace passing the schoolgirls more interested in keeping his partner safe than protecting the package. The man passes KATE without even a glance. RANSOM relaxes a bit, but not much. He must stay alert.

The entire group moves through the doors of the mall together then scatters. KATE seems exhausted from carrying the package in those stupid high heels. She stops to sit on a bench in front of a Japanese Zen garden. She slips off her right heel and rubs her toes, hoping the brief respite will help the swelling go down. The next time she has to commit a felony she'll know to wear more comfortable shoes.

RANSOM still has to put together the second package. He spots the boutique food store ANTIPOV mentioned, *The Baruku*. It seemed to specialize in all kinds of bulk food.

ANTIPOV didn't even offer to pay for the stuff RANSOM needed to buy... cheap bitch. He sees a display of birdseed in bags that look about the right size and weight. He picks up a bag and heads for the cashier. He notices a display of Eatmore Peanut Chews and realizes he's hungry.

He grabs one of the candy bars and places it and the birdseed in front of the young Japanese woman manning the cash register. She's preoccupied talking to a fellow cashier. She puts the birdseed and the Peanut Chew in a clear plastic bag.

RANSOM

Don't you have any *Baruku* bags?

CASHIER

Really? You need a *Baruku* bag for your birdseed?

RANSOM

Yah... actually I do.

Exasperated, the cashier searches under the counter for a *Baruku* bag. She finally finds one and hands it to RANSOM.

CASHIER

Happy?

The bag is black with a white *Baruku* logo underneath red Japanese letters.

RANSOM

It's black!

CASHIER

Yah, it's black.

RANSOM

Don't you have the white ones?

CASHIER

What are you some kind of bigot?

RANSOM

I need the white bag!

CASHIER

The white bags are the old ones. We don't have them any more. The black ones are new. I really don't think your birds will care.

She forgets to charge him for the candy bar, but he gives her the money for it anyway. She doesn't notice. She's more interested in telling her colleague what a shit her boyfriend is. RANSOM takes the Peanut Chew out of the bag, unwraps it, and takes a bite.

RANSOM

Damn... that's a good candy bar!

RANSOM looks around to see if he can spot any trouble. The mall is busy with shoppers, tourists, and school kids just getting out of class. An attendant at the Service Desk continually texts with one hand while handing out brochures to tourists with the other: a mark of singular dexterity if not manners.

He looks for KATE at the lockers but she's not there. The teenage schoolgirls he saw earlier run past him giggling and laughing. One of the girls slams right into him dropping her phone on the terrazzo floor. She bends down to pick it up not bothering to apologize. She gives him a dirty look like it's his fault she dropped the damn thing. She runs off to catch up to her friends.

KATE is still resting on the bench waiting. She looks in his direction and spots the black plastic bag. She is not pleased. He's not sure if her displeasure is because of the bag or the candy bar he's eating. It dawns on him; he should have bought one for her.

He notices the stocky Japanese guy in the business suit looking in his direction. It's the same guy that passed him outside on his way into the mall. If he didn't know better, he could have sworn he saw a red Koi tattoo sneak out from under the cuff of his suit jacket. Not the kind of thing you usually see on a business executive, not unless his business was with the Yakuza.

Ransom checks the locker area and notices the couple that were holding hands are just standing around looking in KATE'S direction.

KATE is about to stand but he casually signals her to sit. She looks puzzled but catches on to his meaning. She sits back down and starts fumbling in her purse as if looking for something. The businessman starts moving towards KATE from one side and the romantic couple from the other.

RANSOM walks quickly to where KATE is sitting as if he's late for a rendezvous with his wife. She stands not sure what's happening. When he reaches her, he grabs her package so that he has both bags in one hand.

With the other hand he hugs her, bringing her close so he can kiss her on the cheek. She's startled by his action but plays along. She's nervous but she's smart. She knows something has gone wrong. He takes her arm with his free hand and leads her to the *Kabuteru Lounge* at the far side of the mall.

KATE

What the hell are you doing?

They continue to walk.

RANSOM

We're surrounded. The big guy in the business suit and the couple holding hands have been tailing you ever since you left the parking garage.

KATE starts to look around. She catches sight of the three people in question all headed in the same direction. They get to the lounge and grab a table. The businessman waits outside the bar on a bench facing the lounge entrance. The romantic couple enters the bar and takes a table at the opposite side of the room.

RANSOM

Order us a drink. I'll be back
in a few minutes.

KATE

You gotta go now? Can't you hold
it for Christ sake?

RANSOM

Just order the damn drinks.

He gets up to leave taking both packages.

KATE

WAIT!

RANSOM stops.

RANSOM

What?

KATE

What do you want to drink?

RANSOM looks at her like she's crazy.

RANSOM

Order me a Trojan Horse.

KATE

A what?

He leans over the table and kisses her on the cheek again.

RANSOM

Order any fucking thing you
want.

He heads to the men's room. He finds a stall and enters. He opens the white *Baruku* bag. It contains a large parcel wrapped in brown paper. He assumes it's cash, a lot of cash, whatever it is, it's valuable, and a whole lot of people seem interested in getting their hands on it.

He opens the black *Baruku* bag and exchanges the birdseed for the package and the package for the birdseed.

He flushes the toilet, grabs both packages and opens the stall door. Standing directly in front of him is the Yakuza businessman with the Koi tattoo. He's holding a Remington R51 Crimson Trace handgun aimed directly at RANSOM'S chest.

BUSINESSMAN

Hand over the white bag.

As RANSOM was about to hand the guy the bag, someone else leaves a neighbouring stall.

BATHROOM GUY

What the hell's going on here?

The businessman swings his arm around catching the poor fellow in the face with the side of his Remington, as he does, RANSOM kicks the businessman in the groin doubling him over in agony. The civilian is on the floor bleeding all over the white tile. The businessman is on his knees groaning in pain.

RANSOM goes directly to where KATE is sitting. She has already downed what looks like a highball of something strong with another sitting waiting for him. RANSOM gets to the table and pulls KATE out of her chair.

KATE

What's going on?

RANSOM

Here... take the package and put it in the locker.

He hands her the white *Baruku* bag.

There's a lot of noise and commotion coming from the area around the men's room. Several people from the bar go to see what's going on. KATE looks at RANSOM.

KATE

What the hell did you do?

RANSOM

Just put the bag in the locker.

She takes the package from RANSOM and with her free hand grabs RANSOM'S drink and downs it in one gulp. They both head for the lockers.

The romantic couple spot KATE and RANSOM moving towards the lockers. They get up and follow, KATE gets to Locker 893 opens it and places the package inside. She puts the money in the slot and shuts the door. The package is safe. She breathes a sigh of relief. Meanwhile RANSOM has locked the black bag in his locker.

KATE thinks: *'this isn't the right scenario, everything is messed up.'*

She remembers she's supposed to drop the key. Not sure it even matters anymore she drops it anyway. It clinks as it hits the terrazzo floor. RANSOM goes to pick it up but stops. He feels the pressure of a handgun jammed up against his kidneys held by the male partner of the romantic couple. His female colleague steps between KATE and RANSOM and picks up the key.

ROMANTIC WOMAN

Now you two just relax and have
a seat on that nice wooden bench
while we quietly leave. Do not
think about following us. It
would be a mistake, your last
mistake.

The romantic couple watch as KATE and RANSOM go to the bench and sit. The two lovers walk hand-in-hand towards the exit like they're just another husband and wife out for a good time on date night.

FADE OUT

The Aftermath

INTERIOR: The office of CARLA ANTIPOV, The Bolshoy Land Development Company

FADE IN

CARLA sits behind her glass and chrome desk. She appears surprisingly calm considering everything that can go wrong did go wrong. MALCOLM sits in one of the Wassily Chairs; lines of anger punctuate the craggy details etched into his well-worn face. KATE KIMURA sits legs crossed in the other chair still a bit unnerved by the day's events. RANSOM stands off to the side as if an after thought; after all, he's just the driver.

MALCOLM

Does somebody want to tell me
what the hell happened? All you
had to do was put the package in
the locker and mail the goddamn
key. How fucking hard can that
be?

KATE turns to answer but MALCOLM isn't finished. He looks up at RANSOM.

MALCOLM

And you... I told you to stay in
the car and circle the block
till KATE came out. GODDAMN IT!
Doesn't anybody follow
instructions anymore?

RANSOM

We were tailed.

MALCOLM

What do you mean you were
tailed?

RANSOM

Somebody knew about the drop. Whoever it was has plenty of resources. They had a whole crew following us, either that, or there were multiple teams involved.

MALCOLM

Goddamn SATO. It must have been her. She'll do anything to see that bylaw gets passed.

CARLA

Take it easy MALCOLM... I'll meet with the MAYOR after the fundraiser tonight and see if I can make another arrangement.

MALCOM gets up from the chair.

MALCOM

Listen CARLA, I hate that you have to be with that clown, but if he gets to be Governor, this Tanoshii Basho business will be small potatoes.

CARLA

I know MALCOLM. I know... you leave the MAYOR to me. After tonight he'll do anything I ask.

MALCOLM leaves the room shaking his head in frustration still mumbling something about incompetence and ineptitude. When he's safely out of earshot RANSOM turns to CARLA.

RANSOM

MISS ANTIPOV, do you want the other key.

CARLA

Now what would I want with a goddamn bag of birdseed?

RANSOM

Well it's not exactly...

CARLA

Do you mind? Go back to your office and wait till you're needed. In fact I got a better idea, go back to the mall and stake out the locker and see who picks up the package.

RANSOM

But...

CARLA

Didn't you hear me? Get over to the mall, before the damn thing disappears.

RANSOM

Yes Ma'am.

CARLA

Didn't I tell you not to call me Ma'am?

RANSOM

Yes Ma'am.

CARLA

Get the hell out of here.

FADE OUT

The Pickup

INTERIOR: Tanoshii Basho Shopping Mall

RANSOM sits on the bench next to the Japanese rock garden munching on another Peanut Chew while keeping an eye on the lockers. It's raining outside and he's still a little damp from the walk from the parking garage to the mall entrance.

He notices a young woman and her two small children make their way to the locker area. It looks like the woman is heading directly to Locker 893. He stands, finishes the last bite of the candy bar and throws the wrapper in the recycle bin. He sidesteps a few shoppers making his way across the mall to where the woman is standing.

She puts the key in the locker and opens it. RANSOM stops. There's no package, just three yellow rain slickers, two little ones for the kids, and one adult-sized one for the mother.

RANSOM

Excuse me Ma'am, but do you
still need the locker?

THE WOMAN

Help yourself young man we're
leaving.

The kids start to argue whether Mario is more powerful than Luigi.

THE WOMAN

Now you two behave yourselves.
We're going home, and if you're
good, Mommy will buy you PEZ.

The last time RANSOM heard anybody mention PEZ was when he was ten years old. Maybe the next time he'd get some PEZ instead of a Peanut Chew. The woman takes one kid in each hand and heads for the exit. The package is gone. RANSOM opens his locker with the key CARLA didn't want. The black plastic *Baruku* bag is still there. He takes the bag and leaves the mall.

FADE OUT

Carla and The Mayor

INTERIOR: The Pink Palace Hotel, The Garden Bungalow Suite.

FADE IN

The MAYOR is sitting on the edge of the king-sized canopy bed putting on his shoes. The bed looks as if it has seen a considerable amount of activity. CARLA steps out of the shower and wraps herself in a towel. The MAYOR puts on his suit jacket. CARLA goes to him. She straightens his tie and kisses him.

CARLA

Are you sure you have to go right now?

MAYOR

My wife is up in the suite and she'll be wondering what happened to me.

CARLA

She saw how you were mobbed after the speech. She'll just figure you're meeting with a reporter or one of your aids.

MAYOR

You know I want to stay, but at this stage of the game we have to be careful. No mistakes, no slip-ups. There are reporters dogging me around every corner. It wasn't easy sneaking out to the bungalow.

CARLA

Okay, if you insist, but you don't know what you're missing. Anyway I wouldn't use that expression any more.

MAYOR

What expression is that?

CARLA

Dogging is Internet slang for people having sex in public. Not a turn of phrase the next Governor should be using.

MAYOR

Really? Jesus, doesn't anybody speak English any more?

She lets the towel drop to the floor.

CARLA

Speaking of sex...

MAYOR

I assure you sweetheart, I know exactly what I'm missing.

He takes on a more serious tone.

MAYOR

And speaking of what I'm missing... there's the matter of a missing key.

CARLA moves to a chair where her clothes are haphazardly strewn. She starts to dress.

CARLA

I told you MALCOLM is a fool. He can't do anything right. You get that bylaw passed then I can oust him from the company. Once I've got full control I can funnel you whatever you need. When you're Governor we'll be unstoppable.

MAYOR

In the meantime I could use the money. You tell MALCOM I don't get the package, the bylaw goes through.

CARLA

I'll tell him; but that bylaw
has to go through no matter
what.

MAYOR

Yah, well we don't have to tell
him that, do we? Anyway I got to
go before I'm missed.

He looks in the full-length mirror and smiles a practised
politician's smile.

MAYOR

Now that's what a Governor
should look like.

He leaves. After the door closes CARLA finds her cell phone
and calls KATE.

CARLA

KATE, where are you?

KATE is naked in bed in CARLA'S penthouse condominium.
CARLA'S bedroom like her office is a cold, monotone
environment, except for the splash of color provided by the
large abstract expressionist canvas that hangs behind the
black lacquer platform bed.

KATE

I'm in bed waiting for you.

CARLA

Good, I'm on my way there now.

KATE

I hope he didn't tire you out
too much...

CARLA

You just be awake when I get
home.

KATE

Did you get the video?

KATE goes over to the desk at the side of the room to fetch her brief case. She opens the case revealing a custom interior that is actually set up with a small digital camera. She flips open the view screen and presses a button. It's a crystal clear image of the MAYOR on top of her. His face is clearly visible while her's is hidden by some strategically positioned bed sheets.

CARLA

I got it.

FADE OUT



PART III -*SHO*

[The Prize]

Sato and Ransom

INTERIOR: The apartment of RANSOM KONNORS

FADE IN

It's been a long day and RANSOM is tired. He looks forward to a quiet evening doing absolutely nothing. He walks up to his apartment on the third floor of a remodelled triplex.

The apartment is big for the rent he pays and for the neighbourhood he lives in, but his landlord, the sweet elderly MRS. SHINIGAMI likes him. If she needs anything done around the building, he's always more than willing to help. Besides... any time she sees him she teaches him a new Japanese word, something that might come in handy one day.

He's still holding the black *Baruku* bag as he turns the key to his apartment. As he enters he notices the lights are on. He hears the sound of people talking in the living room. As he approaches the entrance he sees the ancient MRS. SHINIGAMI serving tea to KATE and an older Japanese woman, the woman looks like what KATE might look like in her seventies.

His apartment is not only big it is stylishly decorated in an eclectic mix of Japanese art, rosewood tables, and soft as butter black leather couches all in perfect Parson's style proportions. Some people spend their money on partying, RANSOM spends it on furniture and art, things that go beyond ephemeral short pleasures.

MRS. SHINIGAMI holds up a cup of tea and gestures for him to take a seat on the black leather couch across from the two rosewood Forbannelse chairs occupied by KATE and the other woman.

MRS. SHINIGAMI

I hope you don't mind my dear?
After all... you're all family.

RANSOM sits and accepts the cup of tea. He places the black *Baruku* bag on the floor beside his foot. MRS. SHINIGAMI bows to each of them and leaves.

SATO

MRS. SHINIGAMI is an old family friend. She was kind enough to let us in while we waited. Our late husbands were business partners.

RANSOM turns to KATE.

RANSOM

Do you mind telling me what's going on here?

KATE

I think our mother should explain.

RANSOM

Our mother?

SATO starts to tell him the story of his birth, about his real mother and father and how the man RANSOM knows as his father rescued him from the carnage following the kidnapping. She explains that CARLA'S mother was determined to protect her daughter's inheritance knowing that BORIS would eventually opt to give his only son control of the family business. CARMAN'S plan was to kidnap the baby and have him put up for adoption as an abandoned child. BORIS got wind of the plan but his attempted rescue ended in a blood bath.

SATO

You are my grandson, and KATO, not KATE is your half sister. I tracked down your surrogate Father, the DRIVER, and we privately kept in touch while you were growing up. It is not an accident that you got a job working at The Bolshoy or that you live here.

Now it's time for you and your sister to take what rightfully belongs to you.

RANSOM is looking directly at SATO. He turns to look at KATE.

RANSOM

Did you know about this?

KATE nods.

RANSOM

And exactly how are a grandmother, a real estate lawyer, and a chauffeur going to take control of a mob-controlled company?

SATO

To start you can give me that *Baruku* bag and then I'll explain exactly who I am, what I do, and who our friends are.

FADE OUT

The Pink Slip

INTERIOR: The office of CARLA ANTIPOV

FADE IN

CARLA sits at her desk nervously waiting for a call from a staffer who's attending the City Council vote on the bylaw to allow the redevelopment of the Tanoshii Basho Mall. The phone rings.

CARLA

CARLA ANTIPOV... yes... yes... that's wonderful, thank you.

No you don't have to come back. Take the rest of the afternoon off. Sure, that's fine, all right, have one for me.

CARLA hangs up, smiles, and gets up from her glass and chrome desk. She heads across the executive lobby to MALCOLM'S office. She stands just inside his office entrance. MALCOLM sits dejected behind his big solid walnut antique desk.

CARLA

You heard?

MALCOLM nods.

MALCOLM

I knew I couldn't trust that God Damn politician.

CARLA

Listen MALCOLM I think it's time for you to go. This scheme of yours just didn't work out. I appreciate everything you've done for me over the years but this is my company, and I intend to run it my way.

CARLA

It needs new blood. Why not retire gracefully. We'll throw a big shindig; even give you a gold watch with your name engraved on the back.

MALCOLM

YEBAT SUKA!

Retire... really, you want ME to retire?

Listen to me YOU SNARKY TIGHT-ASS BITCH! I'm not going anywhere. This is just a minor setback. Shit happens. I helped build this company with your father, and the only fucking way I'm leaving is horizontally in a box.

CARLA remains calm.

CARLA

All right MALCOLM, if that's the way you want it, horizontally in a box it will be.

CARLA turns and starts to leave his office, already planning her next move.

MALCOLM

SUKA! Retire my ass... Who does she think she is?

CARLA doesn't respond or look back as she crosses the lobby to her office. MALCOLM takes the cell phone from his jacket pocket and selects a number.

MALCOLM

It's me... send me something special tonight, understand, something very special. I'm in that kind of mood.

Once CARLA gets back to her office she picks up the phone on her desk and speaks to her secretary.

CARLA

Tell that driver to come see me.
And let me know the next time
MALCOLM needs to use him.

FADE OUT

Collateral Damage

INTERIOR The *Shizukana Basho* Private Club

FADE IN

SATO, KATE, RANSOM, and an elderly Japanese man sit around a low-to-the-floor dark stained bamboo table. The table is surrounded by four chairs with wide flat bamboo bars forming the backs; the seats have no legs forcing the men to sit cross-legged, and the women to sit with both legs to one-side.

Two bodyguards dressed in black suits, white shirts and black ties with red Cherry Blossom stickpins guard the sliding door. The old man is seated at the far end of the table facing the entrance. RANSOM sits with his back to the bodyguards while SATO sits on one side and KATO on the other. No one is wearing shoes.

The door slides open and an attractive young female enters carrying a tray with four glasses and a bottle of *Nabeshima* Sake. She's dressed in an exotic *Yukata* kimono with an *obi* sash tied in a bow in the back. The young woman places the tray on the table. She pours a glass of the Sake, and serves it to the elderly gentleman. He nods. The young woman then serves RANSOM, then SATO, and finally KATE. After serving the Sake she leaves.

RANSOM looks at the old man and then at KATE. She shakes her head ever so slightly.

RANSOM

CARLA had me plant a tracking device under the limo. She wants to know exactly where MALCOLM goes.

SATO

We know. We're the ones that gave her the device, but it's not a tracker, it's a bomb.

RANSOM

A BOMB!

KATE

Take it easy. It's a fake. It can't detonate.

RANSOM

She was going to blow MALCOLM up?

SATO

Both of you...

RANSOM

Why me? She doesn't know who I am, does she?

KATE

No, she has no idea who you are. As far as she's concerned you're just collateral damage.

RANSOM

Son-of-a-bitch!

SATO

Everything has been arranged. Just keep a low profile and do what CARLA asks. KATE will keep an eye on you to make sure CARLA doesn't get antsy.

The old man nods to SATO.

SATO

It's time for you to meet MR. SHINIGAMI.

RANSOM looks at the old man and then at SATO.

SATO

MR. SHINIGAMI is MRS. SHINIGAMI'S brother-in-law, and the *Oyabun* of our humble organization.

RANSOM looks at MR. SHINIGAMI. He stands and bows respectfully to the old man, who nods in response.

FADE OUT

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PART IV - *Sakura*

[Cherry Blossoms]

You Ordered The Special?

Part I

INTERIOR: The Admiral Suite at The Pink Palace Hotel

FADE IN

At two thousand dollars a night for the suite and another twenty-five hundred for the hooker this was going to be an expensive evening, but MALCOLM didn't care. He was still fuming over his confrontation with CARLA. The nerve of that ungrateful bitch after all he'd done for her.

He raised her, treated her like a daughter, and taught her the business. Now she's just going to toss him aside like some disposable appliance that outlasted its usefulness.

What do you expect, her father was a ruthless killer and her mother was a heartless whore with an iceberg for a heart. He'd spent years under the thumb of BORIS ANTIPOV, and there was no way he was going to do the same for his ice princess daughter.

The phone on the desk rings...

MALCOLM

Yes... come right up, The Admiral Suite.

A few minutes later there's a knock on the door. He opens it to reveal an exotic blonde Japanese beauty dressed in a black skin-tight long-sleeved mini dress with a plunging neckline almost to her waist. She wears a black ribbon scarf around her neck that dangles down between her breasts. A small black satin handbag hangs from her shoulder. The dress is without decoration except for a red Cherry Blossom pin just above her left breast.

HOOKER

You ordered the special?

MALCOLM takes in the sight of the exotic beauty.

MALCOLM

I certainly did.

MALCOLM watches as she walks past him through the living room and stops at the bedroom door. She looks back over her shoulder.

HOOKER

Are you coming or do you want me
to perform all by myself?

MALCOLM already feels his seventy odd year old heart pounding out of his chest. The HOOKER gets to the bed, drops her purse on the floor, and turns around.

HOOKER

Unzip me sweetie, so I can peel
this thing off.

She turns her back to him waiting. MALCOLM slowly unzips her dress and as he does he is a bit unnerved. Her entire back is covered in large red and gray Cherry Blossom tattoos.

As he ever so slowly peels off the dress he sees that her entire back and buttocks are covered in the pretty red and gray blossoms. The dress drops to the floor beside her purse. She's wearing nothing underneath.

He carefully turns her around. The red and gray blossoms wrap around her body covering her abdomen and chest. The only parts of her body that aren't decorated are the parts not covered by the dress. The design is completely symmetrical on both sides of the unadorned valley that runs down between her breasts.

MALCOLM

Incredible!

She's completely naked holding the red Cherry Blossom stickpin in her right hand.

MALCOLM

And what's that all about?

HOOKER

Oh this? Well you did order the
special..

She jabs the stickpin into his neck. MALCOLM raises his arms to her neck but by the time his hands wrap around her throat he's already paralysed. He collapses in a heap. She stands directly over the body and looks down. His eyes are as wide as saucers as he looks up unable to move.

HOOKER

SATO says hello. Not to worry,
that little pinprick won't kill
you. It's just to make you more
manageable.

She walks over to the bed, pulls back the covers, and messes up the sheets as if MALCOLM and her had some vigorous sex. She picks up her dress and slips it back on like a snake sliding back into the skin it just shed. She tosses her purse onto the chair in the corner.

She goes over to MALCOLM and looks down at the wide-eyed old man. She takes a deep breath and kneels down unbuttoning his shirt and removing his pants. She drops the pants and the shirt on the chair, picks up her purse, and takes out a syringe. She bends back down over MALCOLM running her long elegant fingers over his body and down under his boxer shorts giving him one last thrill. It was the least she could do.

HOOKER

Like I said the little pinprick
was just to make you more
manageable, however this...

And she holds up the syringe so he can see it.

HOOKER

This I'm afraid will kill you.

She squirts a little liquid from the syringe into the air. She then injects MALCOLM with the rest of whatever is in the hypodermic. She watches closely as his eyes grow bigger until they turn into a blank lifeless stare.

She finds her silk scarf that was still lying on the floor and reties it around her neck. She goes back to the chair and finds the cell phone in her purse. While it's ringing she searches in MALCOLM'S pants for his wallet.

HOOKER

Hi, it's me. I'm finished here.
Have one of the boys pick me up
out front.

She only finds a few hundred dollars in MALCOLM'S wallet, disgusted; she takes half of it and puts the wallet back in his pants. She starts to head for the door but stops. She returns to the chair and looks in the side pockets of his pants. She finds a fat wad of cash in a billfold that must be at least three thousand dollars. She stuffs the whole thing into her purse and leaves.

FADE OUT

You Ordered The Special?

Part II

INTERIOR: The News Room Bar and Grill

FADE IN

The News Room is a trendy restaurant and bar located in the theatre district often frequented by business executives and members of the establishment movie community. The place is laid out like an old fashion newsroom. There's even a glassed-in printing press that prints a daily newspaper style menu where every item is treated like a news story.

Waiters and waitresses are all dressed in 1950 style suits with pleated, cuffed pants, wide-lapelled jackets, and the most hideous wide ties you'd ever seen. Each server wears a fedora with a press pass jammed into the hat's headband.

CARLA ANTIPOV sits alone as usual. The newspaper menu rests in front of her unread. She is not one who enjoys the incessant chatter of inane conversation while she eats. Her evening meal is a time for quiet contemplation of the day's events. Her vice of choice is power. She does have a weakness for abstract impressionist artwork and food that looks better than it tastes, but power is her kryptonite.

A cute young Japanese waitress arrives at CARLA'S table. She's the same woman RANSOM ran into at the Tanoshii Basho Mall who had a fondness for holding hands with her partner.

She's wearing the same reporter's outfit as all the other serving staff. The getup includes a ridiculously wide necktie, tied in a Windsor Knot so that the ends fall at least six inches above her thin waist. The tie is held in place by a red Cherry Blossom stickpin.

The waitress flips open the stenographer's pad she uses to take orders. CARLA doesn't bother to even look up or to acknowledge her presence.

WAITRESS

My name is SUKURA and I'm your server this evening. We have a wonderful salmon dish that you might enjoy and a delightful...

CARLA cuts her off in mid sentence.

CARLA

I'm really not hungry. Just bring me a Scotch On The Rocks for the time being.

WAITRESS

The chef has been working on a new special item that I can get him to make for you. I'm not suppose to offer it to just anyone, but you look like you could use something special.

CARLA thinks the young woman is impertinent but she can't resist something made exclusively for her.

CARLA

What is it?

WAITRESS

It's called a Queen Ann's Lace Salad: very light, you'll enjoy it I'm sure. If not, I won't charge you.

CARLA

All right, bring me the special. And don't forget the scotch.

The WAITRESS heads for the kitchen. She passes through the swinging doors into a beehive of frenetic activity. Several chefs stand yelling instructions to sous-chefs and line-cooks. Waiters come and go placing new orders on racks above each station. They leave with a handful of plates to deliver to waiting customers. The kitchen is organized chaos. The WAITRESS spots the CHEF with the red Cherry Blossom stickpin stuck into his white chef's jacket. He's the same man she was with at the Tanoshii Basho Mall.

WAITRESS

One Queen Anne Special...

The CHEF nods and proceeds to make a carrot salad with mint, feta cheese, and a hot chilli paste called harissa. He reaches into his pocket and takes out a spice jar filled with coniine, the active toxin found in Hemlock leaves, the poison of choice for the ancient Greeks. He sprinkles it generously over the salad and tosses it all together. He adds some more feta cheese and shelled pistachio nuts on top. He shouts..

CHEF

Pick Up, Table 4!

The WAITRESS grabs the dish and heads out into the dining room. CARLA has already finished her second Scotch. The WAITRESS places the salad in front of CARLA.

WAITRESS

Here's your Special MISS
ANTIPOV.

CARLA doesn't notice the WAITRESS called her by name. She just assumes everyone should know who she is. After all she's an important person; soon to become an even more important person. She holds up the empty glass..

CARLA

Another!

The WAITRESS heads for the bar and CARLA starts in on the salad. The WAITRESS waits at the bar while the bartender makes the drink. She watches CARLA devour the salad. She thinks to herself: *'I thought the bitch wasn't hungry.'*

She waits another few minutes and notices CARLA isn't looking too good. She heads for the table with the Scotch. She places it down in front of CARLA. She's white as a ghost and her cheeks puff out like she's going to throw up.

WAITRESS

How was the salad?

CARLA reaches into her purse hanging on the arm of the chair. She rifles through her wallet looking for cash. Her face has turned green. She staggers to her feet almost knocking over the chair. She throws five twenty-dollar bills on the table.

WAITRESS

Are you all right MISS ANTIPOV?

CARLA looks at the WAITRESS realizing she knows her name.

CARLA

How do you know my...

The WAITRESS scoops up the hundred dollars.

WAITRESS

Have a pleasant evening MISS
ANTIPOV.

The WAITRESS heads for the kitchen through the sliding doors, and spots the Cherry Blossom CHEF who has changed into his street clothes. He's holding a woman's coat. She does not stop. She walks briskly through the kitchen chaos to where the Cherry Blossom CHEF is standing. When she reaches him he helps her on with her coat, He takes her hand and they leave through the back door.

FADE OUT

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

EXTERIOR: An elderly news seller stands in front of his street kiosk filled with newspapers and magazines from around the world. Business executives and office workers scurry past all anxious to get to work. Occasionally one stops to pick up a paper. RANSOM KONNORS strolls by and stops.

RANSOM

How are you Harry? It's a beautiful day.

HARRY

The usual MR. RANSOM?

RANSOM

The usual HARRY.

The old man hands RANSOM the Times and the Gazette.

HARRY

I hear congratulations are in order MR. RANSOM. Good to know there's still hope for us working stiffs.

RANSOM smiles and nods a silent thank you to the old geezer. He tucks the newspapers under his arm and looks up at the television in the corner of the kiosk.

The TV weatherman cracks some inane joke that the newsreaders overreact too. RANSOM turns to go to his new office at The Bolshoy Land Development Company.

As he walks away he hears the news...

NEWS READER

Papers were filed in court yesterday revealing chauffeur RANSOM KONNORS as the only surviving relative of the late BOL'SHOY BORIS ANTIPOV. With the untimely death of CARLA ANTIPOV, KONNORS inherits the Bolshoy Land Development Company, a major player in the redevelopment of downtown LA, and the new owner of the Tanoshii Basho Mall.

KONNORS assumes the role left vacant by the recent passing of long-time Chairman MALCOLM SOKOLOV, while his half-sister KATO KIMURA takes on the duties of company President; also announced were the appointments of MR. ENMA SHINIGAMI and MRS. SATO MUONNA to the Board of Directors.

In other news... MAYOR CHARLES LANGLEY announced his candidacy for Governor...

終結

THE END

追伸

Tsuishin

[Postscript]

Some of the names and references used in the book are taken from legendary Japanese mythological creatures and spirits. The names help to describe the personalities of several characters and to define their roles in the story.

Yakuza (Ya-8, ku-9 za-3): 893 or is a losing hand in the blackjack-like card game called ***Oicho-Kabu***

SUKURA: The Cherry Blossom is a symbol of life's fleeting nature and symbolic of sudden death.

MUONNA: A vengeful spirit who has lost her child.

SHINIGAMI: the grime reaper, or God of Death

ENMA: King of Hell

Obaasan: Japanese grandmother,

Oyabun (father): head of a Yakuza organized crime organization.

Onna-Oyabun: female Yakuza boss

Chi-san: club manager.

Gozu (Ox-Face): is a creature with a man's body and an ox's face, that along with his partner **Mezu** (Horse-Face) guard the underworld,

Futakuchhi-onna: the legendary two-mouthed wife with an insatiable appetite.

Baruku shokuhin: bulk food

Tanoshii Basho: Pleasant Place

Shizukana Basho: Quiet Place

Bratva: (brothers, brotherhood) a Russian term used to refer to organized crime groups (i.e. the Russian Mafia)

Ty che blyad? Suka blyad! Russian for What the fuck?
Motherfucker!

YEBAT SUKA! Fucking Bitch!