

Damsel

By J. C. Young

BLACK

VIRGINIA (VO)
(Haggard whisper)
Pain lets us know we're alive.

FADE

INT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A blue-steel .38 revolver lay on a concrete floor in an abandoned UV-lit office. A woman's hand, with a bloody bandage around the wrist, reaches out and picks it up.

VIRGINIA (VO)
I'm sorry, Ma.

The cylinder flips open and the empty shell casings spill onto the floor. Her fingers grope over the spent brass. A single unused bullet is found.

VIRGINIA (VO)
Sorry I was never your perfect
little angel...

Trembling fingers carefully put the solitary round back and closes the cylinder into place.

Sprawled on the filthy floor is VIRGINIA WILLS (20-30s), a disheveled young woman with dirty blonde hair, in jeans and a sullied leather jacket. Her back is against a block wall.

VIRGINIA (VO)
Your little girl still ended up in
the gutter.

Turning the cylinder, she lines up the bullet behind the pin and thumbs back the hammer.

VIRGINIA (VO)
One bullet... One's enough.

Her reddened eyes stare at the instrument of death in her hands: the grip, the trigger and finally the barrel. She gazes into the blackness, where the bullet waits.

BLACK

VIRGINIA (VO)
And Lily... I'm sorry we never got
to meet. I tried to make it right.

There's a loud metallic BANG.

TITLES - MONTAGE

Silent clips from home videos show little Virginia at her birthday. Kids she barely seems to know, gather in the backyard as she opens her gifts, including a baby doll. Later, she sits with it under a tree.

Some boys playing guns run by. One grabs the doll and threatens it. She pleads and cries. Another boy fights with him until it breaks. The boys run away, leaving her alone.

BLACK

VIRGINIA (VO)

Sometimes all a girl has is hope.

EXT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

A Mercedes sedan idles at the curb of a brownstone. Waiting by the car door is CAESAR MENDOZA, dressed stylishly for a night out, his breath billows into the air as he chats on his phone. Several other well-dressed Latinos stand around a second car behind him. The younger Caesar turns to them.

CAESAR

Call her down... Fuckin' freezing.

One of the men nods and pulls out his cell phone.

INT VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT / BATHROOM - NIGHT

Out the window, the city skyline can be seen. Off-screen, a CELL PHONE plays a NEW YORK, NEW YORK ring tone.

Two small white pills lay on the marble counter. Showered and made up, Virginia stands before the mirror, in her lingerie. She grabs a small crystal figurine off a nearby shelf and uses it to grind the pills into powder.

Leaning down, Virginia snorts up the grains. Sitting up, she wipes her face, trying to avoid her reflection.

EXT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Wearing an open overcoat over a high-cut dress, Virginia comes out the door and past Caesar, who's on the phone.

CAESAR

We're comin', all right? Tell
Uncle Keno that Virginia's just...

INT MERCEDES - NIGHT

Virginia poses herself in the seat as Caesar and a
bodyguard pile in.

CAESAR

Where you been?

VIRGINIA

Making myself beautiful...

CAESAR

And high. You think I don't know
you got another OC refill already?

(To the driver)

Vamos!

EXT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

The sedan pulls away from the curb and glides into traffic.

VIRGINIA (VO)

The Oxycontin would kick in soon,
so I wouldn't care. Mom used
whiskey to numb herself. She
always wanted me to do better.

INT MERCEDES - NIGHT

Caesar is back on his phone as Virginia settles into her
seat, preferring to watch the outside world blur by.

VIRGINIA (VO) (CONT.)

I did manage to do one thing Mom
wanted. I found a rich man. Caesar
Mendoza was the son of Javier
Mendoza, a Central American drug
lord. Daddy died in some Podunk
Spic prison. His brother Keno runs
the outfit now. But, someday I
could be Mrs. Central American
drug lord. Having my meds provided
instead of hustling was a benefit
of having Caesar as a boyfriend...

She watches him. He is engrossed in conversation.

CAESAR

We'll do that tomorrow, okay? It's important to me, but family first, right? So, we'll do it tomorrow...

VIRGINIA (VO)

Maybe the only benefit...

EXT UNCLE KENO'S HOME - NIGHT

The Mercedes cruises through the manor gate, walled by security fence and cameras. Other cars are parked nearby.

INT MERCEDES - NIGHT

From outside, the driver opens the rear door. Virginia shifts in her seat to get out. Caesar turns to her.

CAESAR

I know Mama can be... difficult.

VIRGINIA

Your mother isn't...

CAESAR

Yes, she is, Virgie. I know her.

He leans toward her, placing a hand on her exposed knee.

CAESAR

She couldn't wait for me to get out of her house. Now, all she asks is when I'm going to bring her grandchildren.

Moving closer, he kisses her cheek, then her neck.

CAESAR (CONT.)

Don't worry...

Virginia nods. He grins as he pulls away.

CAESAR (CONT.)

No kids anytime soon, eh?

INT UNCLE KENO'S HOUSE / ATRIUM - NIGHT

A crowd mingles as a quartet plays classical pieces with a Latin flare. Virginia is the only Caucasian in a circle of women engrossed in conversation. None are speaking English.

In the center is GRISELDA (20s), a pretty, but shy and bookish-looking girl and CARLA MENDOZA (50s), Caesar's mother, the royalty among the peasants.

CARLA*
 (*Subtitled Spanish)
 Have you set a date yet?

GRISELDA*
 Diego hasn't really asked yet...
 he's waiting for the right time.

Virginia takes a glass from a server and has a sip. The women glance across the room. Caesar and several young men stand around KENO MENDOZA (50s), a mature heavysset man, uncomfortable in his conservative suit. One of them is his son, DIEGO MENDOZA (25), looking like a GQ model. He waves.

WOMAN 1*
 Look at him... He is quite a prize.

CARLA*
 My nephew is very special.

Carla shifts her gaze to Virginia, who also watches Diego.

CARLA
 Virginia, how are you and Caesar?

Virginia is startled at someone speaking to her in English. They wait for her reply. She takes a long, slow drink.

VIRGINIA
 Good. Caesar and I are going out...
 having fun. He's... very special.

She finishes her drink, gauging their faces.

VIRGINIA (VO)
 They know I'm lying.

CARLA
 Maybe after Diego and Griselda are
 married, you won't be far behind?

The women smile politely, but a couple can't hide a cynical smirk at the comment.

VIRGINIA (VO)
 Mamacita Carla Mendoza hates
 everything about me. She wants
 Caesar to settle down and marry a
 nice chica... not some gringo trash.

Virginia smiles back.

VIRGINIA
A girl can hope.

Caesar steps up from behind, slipping his arm around her.

CAESAR
I hate to interrupt the girl talk...
Can I pull you away for a moment?

VIRGINIA
Just for a moment...

INT UNCLE KENO'S HOUSE / HALLWAY - NIGHT

Caesar escorts Virginia out of the atrium. They stop just around the corner. She lets out an exaggerated sigh.

VIRGINIA
God... Rather be back in lockup...

CAESAR
You want to get out of here?

Her eyes light up. She grabs a hold of his tie.

VIRGINIA
We leave now; I'll blow you.

CAESAR
I was more thinking we'd go out
somewhere... Some drinks. Dancing.

VIRGINIA
Really?

Energized, she moves against him, gazing into his eyes.

CAESAR
We haven't been out in long...

Virginia plants a hard kiss on him. But, he doesn't return it. He backs away and looks around for who's watching.

CAESAR
Not in my uncle's house, okay?

VIRGINIA
Then, let's go Romeo...

CAESAR

We have to wait a moment. Diego and Griselda are coming, too.

Her smile fades into chagrin.

VIRGINIA

I'm going to get very drunk.

INT FIERA CLUB - NIGHT

Caesar, Virginia, Diego and Griselda walk down a staircase into the packed nightspot. Virginia sways to the music as a server directs them to a booth. Diego and Griselda take their seats, but Virginia's eyes are on the dance floor.

As he talks to the SERVER, Caesar points to his guests. She nods and heads to the bar.

CAESAR

Virgie... take a seat.

VIRGINIA

Let's dance...

CAESAR

Come on, baby... A drink first.

She looks over at Diego and Griselda.

VIRGINIA

You guys wanna' dance, right? It's why we're here, isn't it?

GRISELDA

I'm not real good, Virgie...

VIRGINIA

Diego, will you dance with me?

DIEGO

Sure.

GRISELDA

Diego?

DIEGO

Come on, Zelda... we all will.

Diego escorts the ladies. Caesar chooses to take a seat, glaring at Virginia. Ignoring him, she lets the lights and music wash over her, as they move to the crowded floor.

Diego tries to look Griselda in the eye, but she won't meet his gaze. Virginia slips between them, her back against Diego. She moves closer to Griselda, who recoils.

VIRGINIA (VO)

At least with Diego, I could have some fun...

Virginia sways her hips against Diego, his arm around her waist as the three continue to dance. He pulls Griselda closer to them. Virginia smiles invitingly.

Caesar looks to see who is watching as Virginia writhes between Diego and Griselda. Caesar takes a long drink.

Virginia laughs as Griselda gets free of Diego and storms off. Diego pursues. At the table, Griselda grabs her drink and takes a large swallow, before heading to the restroom.

DIEGO

Baby... where you going?

CAESAR

Let her go. Sit.

Diego eases into his seat. They watch Virginia, now dancing suggestively with another girl. She smiles at them.

DIEGO

She is a hot one.

CAESAR

She's dangerous, cousin. Not one to have a family with.

DIEGO

Fuck family. We're young... Look at her. A woman wants it that much...

CAESAR

She will get it, from somewhere. Women all got their secrets. You got a good thing going, Diego.

INT FIERA CLUB / LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Griselda stands at the sink. She dabs at her eyes with a tissue. Virginia enters. She sees her and approaches.

VIRGINIA

Zelda? Hey... it's just having fun out there... you know. Right?

GRISELDA

Yes, fun... No more fun with my
Diego, understand? Or me.

Griselda manages to glare at her through reddened eyes.

VIRGINIA

Off limits... Got it.

GRISELDA

Thank you, Virgie... Virginia.

VIRGINIA

Don't worry, tough girl... I won't
run off with him. Diego's nice...
but, Caesar's the man I'm with.

Virginia grins. Griselda smiles, nods and then exits.
Virginia looks at herself in the mirror.

VIRGINIA

Smooth move, girl...

She fishes into her small bag and pulls out a pill bottle.

INT FIERA CLUB

Caesar and Diego stand as Griselda approaches the table.
Diego gives her a peck on the cheek. She smiles, and then
gives him a passionate kiss. As they take their seats, two
uniformed police officers appear out of the crowd.

CAESAR

Oh, man. What's this shit?

The cops approach the table. From behind them, steps NICK
PARKE (30s), a plainclothes detective. He's clean-shaven in
a crisp shirt and tie under his overcoat.

DET. PARKE

Mr. Mendoza, good evening...

CAESAR

And what can I do for our city's
finest tonight, officer?

DET. PARKE

Parke. Detective. Eighth Precinct
narcotics. And, this is a search
warrant for the proxy owner, you.

He holds out the document, Caesar takes it.

CAESAR

For?

DET. PARKE

An undercover agent made narcotic buys from one of the staff. We'll be looking for more substances.

CAESAR

Some bus boy sells weed in the alley and you couldn't wait 'til morning to shut the place down?

DET. PARKE

Your attorney can bring that up. Right now, you're closed.

Caesar nods. The three stand and gather their coats.

INT FIERA CLUB / BATHROOM - NIGHT

Virginia stands up quickly as someone POUNDS on the door.

FEMALE COP 1 (OS)

Police! Search warrant.

VIRGINIA

Shit.

The door bursts open; both a male and a female officer step in. Virginia wipes loose pill grains onto the floor. She's quickly swept up with the other occupants and escorted out.

EXT FIERA CLUB - NIGHT

Patrons and workers mill about in the cold. Club-goers are dispersing, but some stay as onlookers. Caesar's Mercedes idles at the curb, as he waits for Virginia.

INT FIERA CLUB / ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Virginia moves along with the last of the patrons being escorted out. As she reaches the doorway, her heel catches.

DET. PARKE (OS)

Whoa!

Before she can stop her fall, Parke grabs her arm and pulls her back to her feet. She stumbles back a step.

DET. PARKE

We okay?

VIRGINIA

Dandy...

EXT FIERA CLUB - NIGHT

Virginia exits the club, Parke following through the crowd.

DET. PARKE

I know you?

VIRGINIA

Don't think so...

DET. PARKE

Name?

VIRGINIA

Virginia... Virginia Wills.

DET. PARKE

Ms Wills... you appear to be under
the influence of something.

VIRGINIA

It's a club with a bar... I'm legal.

DET. PARKE

Just alcohol? No E? Meth?

She stops and stares at him with wide, dilated eyes.

VIRGINIA

I'm going home. You busting me?

DET. PARKE

No, ma'am... Just don't drive.

CAESAR (OS)

Virgie... let's go.

DET. PARKE

Here...

He hands her his business card. Caesar steps behind her.

DET. PARKE

If you need help to kick whatever...

Caesar puts an arm around her and turns her to the car. She tears the card and drops the pieces on the sidewalk.

CAESAR

Don't you think you've done enough tonight, detective?

Parke watches them get into the sedan and as it pulls away.

DET. PARKE

A litter bug, too.

He leans down to pick up the torn business card, but the pieces are not there. He looks around, and shrugs.

INT VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is centered on a king-sized bed. A simple dresser and floor lamps sit along on a wall. VOICES come from downstairs, as shadows play in the light from the stairs.

VIRGINIA (OS)

What was I supposed to do, huh?

CAESAR (OS)

You couldn't keep your mouth shut?

Virginia plods up the steps, her pumps in hand. Caesar walks after her, his tie loose and shirt collar open.

VIRGINIA

He was a cop. Cops ask questions. I never said anything.

CAESAR

And what was that shit with Diego?

VIRGINIA

Where the hell did that come from? We were dancing. Christ!

She throws her handbag on the bed.

CAESAR

He's my fucking cousin! He's Keno's son, you get that? People see you, it gets around.

VIRGINIA

Zelda was standing right there. You think I'm going to grab his dick and hump him on the floor?

CAESAR

Grinding on him like a goddamned
stripper pole...

VIRGINIA

Probably more than he gets out of
her. Be like humping a dead fish.

Caesar slaps her. Stunned, she steps back.

CAESAR

Lay off Zelda! I will not have you
acting like a whore in front of my
family!

She hits him with a pump. He slaps her again. Virginia
swings at him, but he grabs her wrist. She yelps.

VIRGINIA

What? I can only be a whore with
you? Is that it? Huh?!? Prick!

He glares at her, hard. She tries to pull free, striking
him with her free hand, until he grabs both wrists.

VIRGINIA

You act all ashamed of me, but you
still like fucking me, don't you?

Caesar shoves her back, knocking over a lamp. She squirms
as he grabs a handful of hair and presses himself against
her. Virginia struggles to push him off, but then he kisses
her. In a sudden flurry, she is kissing and embracing him.
They fall onto the bed; grappling passionately.

FADE TO BLACK

INT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Caesar descends the stairs, buttoning his shirt. Virginia
saunters behind in a silk robe. At the door, he pulls her
to him. As they kiss, he strokes a bruise on her cheek.

VIRGINIA (VO)

The only time Caesar was any good
in bed was when he was pissed.

CAESAR

I'll call.

He opens the door. His sedan idles at the curb; a bodyguard
standing by the fender. She watches him leave.

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her cell phone is RINGING as Virginia returns. She flops onto the bed and pulls it out of her bag.

VIRGINIA
Hey, that was quick. Sure...

INT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Virginia comes down the stairs and opens the door. Diego is standing on the porch. She kisses him and pulls him inside.

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Silhouetted in the darkness, Diego sits up. He opens his cell phone and checks the time.

DIEGO
I need to go.

Reclining beside him, Virginia runs her hand down his back.

VIRGINIA
What happened with Zelda?

DIEGO
Nothing happened with her. I dropped her off at her house.

VIRGINIA
She still pissed at me?

DIEGO
Not that. She's saving herself.

Virginia laughs. Diego is indignant.

DIEGO
I think it's sweet.

VIRGINIA
You think it's sweet she plays nun while you fuck your cousin's girl?

DIEGO
Don't say that. I'm marrying her. What we have is fun until then.

Virginia withdraws her hand.

VIRGINIA

She gets you, I get Caesar...

DIEGO

He's good with the business.

VIRGINIA

You could be, too. Keno's your father; not his.

DIEGO

My father chose Caesar as his second. I'm not turning against him or my father. It's business.

He stands and gathers his things.

DIEGO (CONT.)

We are about sex. I come to you to forget my father's business. And then you act just like them.

Virginia slips out of bed and into her robe. She approaches Diego, wrapping an arm around his waist. She lays her head against his back.

VIRGINIA

We don't have to talk about that stuff anymore...

He turns around and takes her hands.

DIEGO

I'm not the man you want... and I need to be the man Zelda wants.

VIRGINIA

We can talk about anything else...

Diego picks up his jacket. He fishes out a bottle of pills.

DIEGO

I can't get you these anymore.

He hands them to her. She nods, looking at the bottle. He steps into his pants and slips on his shirt. Diego kisses her cheek and descends the stairs. She watches him go and hears the front door OPEN and SHUT. Her face reddens.

VIRGINIA

Goddammit!!

She hurls the pill bottle across the room.

VIRGINIA

Fuck!! Fuck you!! You do-good son
of a bitch!! You and your little
cold ass whore!! GOD DAMN YOU!!

She knocks over a lamp and tosses her bag, shoes and
anything in arms reach as she SCREAMS.

VIRGINIA

Could have it all! And all you
want is that little bitch!?!

Growling in rage, she whirls to see the pill bottle on the
floor. The lid has come loose and pills lay scattered. She
drops to her knees and gathers them up.

VIRGINIA

Son of a bitch... Any man in that
whole fucking family got any
balls?! Jeezus...

She scoops the pills into the bottle and walks to her small
den with a bar by the stairs. She takes a glass and grinds
two pills on the counter before pouring herself a drink.

VIRGINIA

No balls! None of'em...

She snorts the powder and slams down the drink. She hurls
the glass at the wall, then drops to the floor, sobbing.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Diego was at least a good fuck.
I'll miss the extra meds.

EXT ST. MARIA'S THRIFT STORE - DAY

In an alley, a truck pulls up to a drop-off at a local
charity. The driver takes a box out from the back and hands
it to an older woman at the door. As she looks through the
old clothes, he slips her a roll of cash.

DETECTIVE 1 (OS)

Butt's gone numb. I was gonna' go
get some coffee. You want some?

DET. PARKE (OS)

Won't be long...

From an unmarked police car up the alley, Parke watches as
the woman hand the driver a box with "A Gift of Thanks for
Your Donation" on the side.

The man gets in his truck and drives away as she tosses the clothes box into a donation bin.

INT ST. MARIA'S THRIFT STORE - DAY

In the back room, a group of Latinos sort clothes and house-wares into wheeled bins. Suddenly, a half-dozen uniformed officers and several detectives, led by Parke, burst through the loading dock doors.

DET. PARKE
N.Y.P.D.. Search warrant. Nobody
move. Just put everything down.
(Points to a side door)
Check in there.

The woman from the dock rushes in behind them.

CHARITY WORKER
You have no authority to be here.

He hands her a copy of a warrant.

CHARITY WORKER
Our workers are all documented.

DET. PARKE
If we look, we won't get some hits
on duplicate social security
numbers? I'm not here to...

POLICE OFFICER 1 (OS)
Looks like that tip you got was
pretty good, detective.

Parke turns. The uniformed officer holds up a bin containing the Gifts of Thanks boxes and baggies of powder.

DET. PARKE
Officer, I don't know anything
about any tip. But, if you found
illegal narcotics in the process
of your search for undocumented
workers, then we'll have to
confiscate them.

CHARITY WORKER
This ain't no ICE bust.

DET. PARKE
Just have a seat over there,
Mother Teresa.

Parke turns to the officer.

DET. PARKE

Process that stuff. Run any IDs
you find. They come back clean and
got a green card, cut'em loose.

The uniformed officer nods.

EXT. ST. MARIA'S THRIFT STORE - DAY

The alley is lined with police cruisers. A few handcuffed
Latinos are marched into a police van, at the loading dock.

INT. KENO'S MANOR / STUDY - DAY

A wall-mounted plasma TV flips between a soccer and Luche
Libre as Keno reclines on a leather couch. He's dressed
casually, but his thugs are wearing jackets and ties.

The door opens and Diego and Caesar enter.

DIEGO

Popi, we have a problem..

CAESAR

St. Maria's got raided.

KENO

How come you didn't hear this? You
said we're wired in at Narcotics.

CAESAR

Vice didn't go in for drugs. Cops
got an illegal alien warrant.

DIEGO

Once they were in, whatever was in
sight became probable cause.

KENO

Miho, go down to the courthouse.
Find out if there's any more of
these 'alien' search warrants.

Diego nods and turns, but Caesar puts out a hand.

CAESAR

I called someone in the D.A.'s
office we do favors for, Uncle.
They'll check for us.

Keno nods. Diego casts a glance to his cousin.

KENO

Bueno. But, we have something else to think about. Where did they get the idea to hit Maria's at all?

INT POLICE STATION - DAY

In the eighth precinct office, Parke and a uniformed officer escort a handcuffed Latino to a holding cell. A couple of vice detectives make note as he comes back.

DETECTIVE 2

One of Mendoza's, Parke? A guy like that can't help us much.

Nick looks at some notes stacked on his desk.

DET. PARKE

Some Nicaraguan working at St. Maria's to pay off his coyote. Just another cog. But, we keep taking the cogs off Mendoza, he'll grind to a halt sooner or later...

DETECTIVE 2

Well, you can keep grindin'. Mendoz's got juice in this town.

DET. PARKE

We'll see...

DETECTIVE 2

Speakin' of juice, you been getting some good advice on Mendoza. You find a snitch?

Parke glances up and grins.

INT RESTAURANT - DAY

Virginia sits at a table in the fine dining room, reading a menu. A few patrons and servers bustle through the midday rush as Caesar enters from the back.

The seat next to her has a stack of shopping bags in it. He goes around to the next empty chair.

CAESAR

What's all this?

She looks up at him and sips at a Margarita.

VIRGINIA

Oh, hey...

She leans forward as he bends down to give a quick kiss.

CAESAR

So, what is all this?

VIRGINIA

I walked from Neiman's.

He takes a seat. The waiter approaches and sets a place for him, with a menu and a water glass.

WAITER

Wine this afternoon, sir?

CAESAR

Too early.

Caesar waits as the server to fill his glass and walk away.

CAESAR

Four days of bond hearings from the St. Maria thing and Keno has been up my ass every one of them.

VIRGINIA

He or you in trouble?

Caesar takes a sip of ice water. He shakes his head.

CAESAR

No... can't touch us. But, Keno wants to be sure that everyone who got picked up has been taken care of. Get'em bail... an ACLU attorney... Cover the bases...

VIRGINIA

And no one talks...

She takes a full drink.

CAESAR

Yeah. And that's the other thing. We always know what Narcotics is up to. Now, they suddenly know where to show up.

VIRGINIA (OS)

Cee Zee?

CAESAR (CONT.)

They knew about the charity... and the guys at the trucking company say there's some people been poking around.

He exhales sharply and grabs a roll from the bread basket.

VIRGINIA

Caesar? I...

Caesar bites off a chunk of the roll.

CAESAR

You needing a refill?

She glances to see if anyone is watching them, then nods.

CAESAR

No.

VIRGINIA

No?

CAESAR

No. Jesus, Virgie... I'm sorry your stomach hurts, but you ain't taking O.C.'s for your stomach anymore and we both know that.

VIRGINIA

I can take a smaller dose. You can give'em to me each day... ration'em.

CAESAR

I'm not babysitting you. You're a big girl. Gotta' get past this. You ain't gettin' no more.

She tries to be resolute.

VIRGINIA

I can get them, then.

CAESAR

We'll see.

He drops the roll on the table. His phone buzzes. He glances at it.

CAESAR

Ai. There's too much goin' on... I
can't even eat. Get some help,
Virginia. Stuff's fucked you up.

Caesar fishes in a pocket and puts some cash on the table.
She watches him leave, then takes her cell phone out of her
bag. She flips it open and dials.

VIRGINIA

Davy? Hey, it's V. I need to see
you about my prescription. Can you
call me back?

EXT STREET CORNER - NIGHT

RAYSHON BENNET, a skinny black teen in a reverse-color
Yankees jacket and another teen talk as they glance at the
passing traffic. The kid palms Rayshon a folded bill. He
pockets the cash and passes back a small packet. The kid
nods and heads on up the street as a cab pulls to the curb.

VIRGINIA (VO)

I left messages with all six O.C.
dealers I knew. None called back.
I'd have to get my meds carry out...

RAYSHON

Check you later.

VIRGINIA (OS)

Ray... Rayshon.

Rayshon looks over at her, sitting the cab. He glances to
see who's watching, as he saunters over.

VIRGINIA

You never returned my text.

RAYSHON

Yeah, well... I knew I didn't have
what you need, girl.

VIRGINIA

You got no O.C.? Don't shit me. I
only got like five or six left.

RAYSHON

Can't help you.

VIRGINIA

No one will. Nothing?

He puts his hands up and walks away from the curb.

RAYSHON

I can't help you, V.

VIRGINIA

The Mendoza's call you, Ray? So, who gets you your O.C.?

RAYSHON

My source? That ain't somethin'...

VIRGINIA

Is it Richie? I'll go to him.

RAYSHON

Richie's uptown. Good luck with that shit.

VIRGINIA

Yeah, thanks for nothing.

Rayshon watches the cab pull away, and then takes out his phone and makes a call.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Virginia ascends the stairs, pumps in hand. She drops them and her handbag on the small wet bar.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Caesar had me cut me off. Kids on the corner wouldn't cross him.

She pours a splash of bourbon in a glass and crosses her darkened den with it to the terrace. Opening the sliding door, she closes her eyes and lets the evening breeze blow through her. A bedspring SQUEAK comes from the next room.

VIRGINIA

Caesar? Baby?

She drinks a sip and goes back to the bar. Picking up her bag, she looks at a pill bottle inside. Next to the bottle is a small pistol. She opens the bottle and takes a pill.

VIRGINIA

Hey... baby. You been waiting long?
I went uptown...

She grinds the pill on the counter with the glass bottom, then snorts the grains and slams the drink down her throat.

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Virginia's silhouette appears in the doorway of the pitch-black room. She leans seductively against the doorframe.

VIRGINIA

I wish I knew you were coming.

As she steps in, the lights come on. A Latino THUG sits on the edge of the bed, a length of wire in his hands.

She gasps and backs out of the doorway. He stands up.

INT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Virginia grabs at her handbag. She holds it up.

VIRGINIA

Here. It's all a got.

The thug shakes his head as he closes. Her eyes widen as she realizes he intends to kill her. The thug watches the handbag fall to the floor. Looking back up, he freezes.

The automatic is in her hand. It BOOMS twice, sending him stumbling back. He falls in a heap in front of the bed.

Virginia whirls to run. But, another KILLER has come out of hiding, and blocks her escape. She swings the gun up.

CLICK! It jams. She pulls the trigger again, nothing.

He slashes at her with a gleaming razor blade. She retreats to the terrace, trying to free her pistol's jammed bullet.

INT/EXT TERRACE - NIGHT

As she backs away, the killer lunges. His slash cuts deep into her forearm. She shrieks and drops the gun. He kicks it and the pistol slides off the patio to the street.

Virginia punches at him, but he grips her arm at the hideous gash. She grimaces as he sadistically squeezes the wound, trying to bring the blade to her throat.

Bent over the guardrail, Virginia is waning as he presses down, the steel edging closer. Suddenly, she explodes in panic and twists away. Off-balance, the killer pitches over the rail and plummets to the pavement.

INT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Gripping her bloodied arm, Virginia stumbles inside. She nearly collapses as she reaches the bar. She grabs a hand towel and wraps it around her forearm.

VIRGINIA (VO)

O.C. was in my system. I could feel my arm throbbing, but it was becoming a distant drumbeat. The pain would come soon enough.

Virginia dumps out her handbag and grabs at her phone as it tumbles out. She frantically dials.

OPERATOR (VO)

Nine-one-one. What's your emergency?

VIRGINIA

Yes! I have a emergency!! I got attacked in my house... some freak crazies! They broke in. Must be junkies... I shot one of them!

OPERATOR (VO)

Ma'am... someone's in your house?

VIRGINIA

Yes! Goddamn! Two nut jobs just tried to kill me!! One's laying in the middle of the damn street!

Virginia dashes back to her bedroom.

VIRGINIA

I shot the other guy! He was...

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Virginia looks down at the dead man on her floor. One of the bullets hit his thigh, but the other impacted his chest above the heart. She looks at his face.

OPERATOR (VO)

Are the intruders still there?
Ma'am, I can't locate a cell phone. Where are you calling from?

INSERT FLASHBACK - EXT KENO'S MANOR HOUSE

Virginia and Caesar are silently exiting the house from the party with Griselda and Diego. She glances over to the man holding open the door for them. It's the man on her floor.

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Virginia stares down at the crumpled body.

OPERATOR (VO)

Ma'am? Are you there? I need to know where you are. You there?

Virginia closes her cell phone.

VIRGINIA (VO)

They weren't junkies after cash. They were two of Keno's cholos.

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Virginia rushes out of her apartment building, her handbag slung over her shoulder. A small crowd has already gathered around the body of the gangster on the sidewalk.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Spectators meant I couldn't get my gun back. I didn't see it. If I was lucky, someone took it.

In the distance, a SIREN wails. The onlookers don't seem to notice her, as Virginia heads up the block and crosses at the intersection. A moment later, two police cruisers roll up, followed by an ambulance.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Maybe Mamacita Carla was tired of dropping hints...

At the corner, Virginia watches police block off the sidewalk. She takes out her cell phone and dials.

VIRGINIA

Caesar? Baby? It's me... Something just... I was... Someone broke into my place! Just now... They attacked me!

She glances up as a police officer rings the buzzer.

VIRGINIA

No... No, I'm okay.

(Rubs her wrapped arm)

I got cut... but I don't want to go
to some ER. Can you come get me?

INT MERCEDES - NIGHT

Caesar sits in the back, on his cell phone.

CAESAR

Of course... where are you? Right up
by the coffee shop? I'm still
taking you to a clinic, okay? I'll
be there real soon. Love you, too..

He hangs up and presses another key on the phone.

CAESAR

She's waiting for me... corner of
Eighty-ninth and Park. Don't fuck
up this time.

Caesar closes the phone and takes out a cigarette. He leans
toward the driver, who hands him back the car lighter.

CAESAR

Wait about ten minutes. Then, go.

The driver nods. Out the windshield, the red lights swirl
in front of Virginia's apartment; less than a block away.

EXT STREET - NIGHT

In front of the closed coffeehouse, Virginia pulls her coat
sleeve down over the bandage. She stamps her feet and blows
her billowing breath onto her hands. She glances up at a
convenient store on the opposite corner.

VIRGINIA

Shit...

Checking for oncoming traffic, she darts across the street.

INT STORE - NIGHT

A tone sounds as she enters the cramped mini-mart. KWAN
(20's), a young Asian man, glances at her as he tries to
see what's happening through the window.

KWAN

Was there a fight?

VIRGINIA

A jumper, I think... Any coffee?

KWAN

Last pot. Not fresh...

VIRGINIA

It's warm. All I care about.

Virginia goes past the snack displays to a narrow stand with a pair of coffee makers on it. She pours the dark remains into a large cup and adds several creamers. Out the window, a sedan jerks to a stop at the curb.

KWAN (OS)

That your building?

VIRGINIA

Don't think so.

She takes a sip and grimaces, and then takes another. Outside, she sees two men get out of the sedan.

KWAN (OS)

Don't see many this neighborhood.

Virginia watches the two men as she moves to the counter. One of them keeps a hand under his jacket. Kwan jerks his thumb toward the activity outside.

KWAN

Jumpers. Don't see many here.

Virginia nods and fishes into her pocket. She puts a couple of crumpled bills on the counter. One of the men outside heads to her building, the other crosses the street; towards the store. He pauses for a car to pass.

VIRGINIA

Mr. Kwan, I use your bathroom?

Kwan points. Virginia heads to the back and exits through a beaded curtain just as the thug enters the store.

KWAN

You see the jumper?

The thug glances around, holding the door open.

KWAN (OS)

Hey, you. In or out. I not pay
Edison to heat the whole block.

Sneering, the thug turns and walks back out.

EXT ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

In the dimly lit lane, a metal door cracks open. Virginia peers out and checks both ways. She eases the door shut.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Dumb junkie girl. Of course,
Caesar was in this. Just 'cause
you fuck and suck a guy, don't
mean he owes you anything...

Her breathing is rushed as she heads up the alley, checking back to the street behind her. After a few more steps, she tosses the coffee into a dumpster and keeps walking.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Where do you go when everyone you
know knows your mob boyfriend?

CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A teary-eyed, pre-teen Virginia faces away from the door and pulls the blanket up to cover her head. Outside, a BANG and a CRASH are heard, followed by muffled yelling.

MARTY (OS)

Leaving!?!

DEBRA (OS)

Let go!!

MARTY (OS)

You're not goddamn leaving! Get it
in your fucking head, bitch!

DEBRA (OS)

Let... me... go, you damned drunk!

MARTY (OS)

Get back here!!

The door opens and light floods from the hallway. DEBRA WILLS (30's) storms in. She's dressed in a short, black cocktail waitress outfit; her mascara has run down her cheeks. She shakes Virginia, but the girl stays still.

DEBRA

Virginia. Virgie? Get up, sweetie...
Mommy's taking you to Grandma's.

Behind them, a shadow appears in the doorway.

DEBRA

Marty and Mommy are a little mad
at each other... we're gonna' visit
your Grandma for a while.

MARTY (OS)

Not goin' anywhere... You got that?

DEBRA

We're going to my Mother's.

MARTY

Your Mom don't care. Nobody cares
about you... or your kid.

The door SLAMS shut behind them. Virginia's mother lies
down behind Virginia, an arm around her. Virginia opens her
eyes. She can hear her mother SOBBING in the dark.

BLACK

EXT STREET - DAY

Virginia slumps asleep on a bench in a bus shelter; her
arms wrapped tightly around her handbag. A heavysset elderly
woman sits down next to her, jolting her awake.

A bus arrives. As people board, Virginia roots in her bag.
She can't seem to find what she's looking for. A moment
later, the bus pulls away from the curb - leaving her.

MONTAGE - CITY STREETS

As the new day starts, Virginia takes to panhandling on the
sidewalk as commuters pass by.

VIRGINIA

You help me? Short for the bus and
I need to get to my aunt's house,
she's got pneumonia...

My grandma's in the hospital...

My kids' waiting for me at the
doctor's across town...

She accepts change and a few bills from several people.

VIRGINIA (VO)

People all know bums lie about what they need money for, but some give'em money anyways. I think it's a power trip for those people, so they can think 'I will stoop to help this poor soul.' You do what you gotta' do, even if it's mortifying. But, I'd rather bum for bus fare than whore myself in an alley for twenty bucks.

INT CITY BUS - DAY

The doors open and Virginia steps in. She's carrying a fast food bag and a drink cup. She pays the fare and walks down the aisle, sipping on her soda. She takes a seat by the window and starts to eat as the bus starts off.

INT LIVING ROOM - DAY

ALDO (50's), a fat Italian, sits in a recliner watching ESPN while Debra Wills mills about the kitchen, wrapping dishes in newspaper and packing boxes. She's little heavier and her hair has grayed.

There is a KNOCK on the door. Aldo glances up, and then looks into the kitchen.

ALDO

You gonna' get that?

Debra hurries past as the KNOCKING continues. Aldo uses the remote to turn up the TV volume.

DEBRA

I got it, okay Aldo? Turn that damn thing down.

Debra opens the door. Virginia stands on the cluttered porch, her hands tucked under her arms for warmth.

VIRGINIA

Hi, Momma.

Debra simply stares at her daughter, like she's a ghost.

ALDO (OS)

Who the Hell is it?

DEBRA

Nobody.

She shuts the door. Virginia steps up and stops her.

VIRGINIA

Momma, please...

Debra gets right up to the opening. She grits her teeth.

DEBRA

I got nothin' for you, understand?

EXT PORCH - DAY

Virginia struggles to keep the door open as Debra pushes.

ALDO (OS)

Jesus! It's freezin' out there!
Shut the goddamned door!

VIRGINIA

Momma, I'm trouble... real trouble...

DEBRA

Only time I ever see you is when
you're in trouble! I can't keep
fixing you. I got my own life.

Her words stop Virginia cold. She relents and her mother
shuts the door.

INT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Debra opens the door again. Virginia is just stepping off
the porch. She stops and looks back.

DEBRA

I'm not giving you any money.

VIRGINIA

This ain't about dope, Ma.

Debra looks at the neighboring houses for witnesses as she
steps onto the porch.

DEBRA

Then, what? Law after you? Another
boyfriend? I had hopes for you.

VIRGINIA

I had hopes for you, too.

DEBRA

The Hell does that mean?

Aldo appears at the doorway behind Debra.

ALDO

What the fuck you doing? Who the fuck is that?

VIRGINIA

That the best you could do, Ma?

ALDO

Ma? Who she's talking about? Me?

DEBRA

It's nothing... Go sit down.

He steps out onto the porch.

ALDO

You got something to say to me?

VIRGINIA

Yeah. I'm her daughter, fatman! Go back inside, sit down and shut the fuck up! This ain't about you!

ALDO

You say this in my house?

DEBRA

Aldo, please...

ALDO

Fuck her... fuck you! Get inside.

He grabs Debra by the arm.

ALDO

Fuckin' daughter. Is that how you raised her? Disrespectful little bitch. Get your ass inside! Goddamned ice bucket out here.

Debra doesn't fight. She looks back at Virginia as she goes inside. Virginia nods to herself and heads up the sidewalk.

ALDO (OS)

Let's go! Move it!

EXT STREETS - DAY

The bus stops in a predominately black neighborhood, at a corner with stores, bars and a pool hall. Only a few locals mill about in the cold. Virginia gets off the bus.

INT POOL HALL - DAY

Virginia comes out of the bright afternoon into the dim establishment. A few regulars are scattered around the hazy room, a couple shoot pool; others sit alone at the bar.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Red's Billiards didn't offer an after-school program, but I was here every afternoon 'til I dropped out my senior year. I did pretty good hustling pool...

She saunters past a pool table and rolls a loose ball across the felt.

VIRGINIA (VO)

...or turning an occasional trick. Mom and her boyfriends never asked where'd I been, when... or if I came home to crash. They never asked where I got money.

INT POOL HALL - BAR

Virginia takes a stool. She fumbles in her bag and comes out with a cigarette. A lit match appears before her. Holding it is RED (50s) a heavy-set, black man. He nods as she uses it. Taking a puff, she glances to the back of the room, where an elderly black man shoots pool with a Latino.

VIRGINIA

Thanks, Red.

(VO)

Don't ask how he got the name.

RED

Old Man's in a game.

VIRGINIA

I saw. Thanks...

RED

Usual?

Red pulls out a bourbon glass. She holds up her cigarette.

VIRGINIA

This'll do me.

Red nods and leaves the glass in front of her. He goes back a classic Ali fight playing on a TV above the bar.

RED

Let me know, you change your mind.

Virginia takes another drag and exhales slowly. She glances at the TV. Behind her, the Latino and a friend shuffle out.

CHARLIE (OS)

Buy you a drink, little lady?

CHARLIE (60s) is overdressed in a suit and tie, grayed moustache and his salt and pepper hair is cut short. He sets down a handful of wadded bills and picks out a ten. He pockets the rest. Red steps over and sets down a glass, pours a splash of Johnny Walker in it, and takes the ten.

CHARLIE

Put the change toward my tab.

RED

Tab's thirty-two bucks...

CHARLIE

Take the change off that. I'll even up later. I got company here.

(He turns to Virginia)

So, how's life treating you?

VIRGINIA

Shit... like you say, Charlie, life don't treat. I always pay.

They both smile. He salutes with his glass, she her smoke.

CHARLIE

Amen.

(Drinks)

So, what brings you down from your gilded palace uptown?

He notices the bruise on her cheek.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

And who did that to you?

VIRGINIA

Don't overwhelm me here. More than one question's too much.

(Takes a drag)

The answer to both is Caesar.

Charlie nods. He takes a quiet sip while she exhales smoke.

CHARLIE

Last time you were in here, you needed money and a place to sleep. This the same deal now?

VIRGINIA

I could use both, but I really need something else...

INT TOWNHOUSE - DAY

A collection of police mill about the crime scenes: the thug lying in the bedroom, blood splatters on the floor, shell casings from Virginia's pistol.

Parke walks into the room. Another detective glances up.

DETECTIVE 3

Who're you?

DET. PARKE

Parke, Narcotics...

DETECTIVE 3

Mendoza's girl ain't here.

DET. PARKE

Attempted robbery or...

DETECTIVE 3

Don't know yet. We knew where she was, it would help.

INT CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The one-bedroom should feel smaller, but with scarcely any furniture, the room seems expansive. Virginia sits on the couch, looking at the bandage on her forearm. Charlie emerges from the bedroom. He hands her an old wooden box.

CHARLIE

Here it is. Haven't shot it in three years. Just keep it clean.

Virginia lays it on the table and opens it; inside is a perfectly preserved .38 revolver.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Smith and Wesson policeman's special, six-inch barrel, thirty-eight caliber. Circa nineteen hundred and twenty-six.

VIRGINIA

Damn gun's older than you.

CHARLIE

Take good care of it, and it'll outlive us both.

Uncertain, Virginia lifts the weapon out with both hands, its blue steel glinting.

VIRGINIA

I said I needed a gun... this is an antique. Afraid I'll break it.

Charlie takes it from her and holds it in his right hand.

CHARLIE

This thing is solid. All right...

He opens the chamber; the cylinders are empty.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

This here opens it up. Let's you dump out the old and put in the new. Normally, you gotta' do'em one at a time...

Charlie reaches into the box and pulls out a speed loader.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

But, these things here hold all six and drops them in together.
(Inserts the loader)
Push the button and viola.

With a flick of the wrist, he snaps the cylinder in place.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

She's ready to go.

He turns the pistol over in his hand, holding the grip out for her to take. She holds it properly, feeling the weight.

VIRGINIA

Six bullets? The one Caesar gave me held a lot more.

CHARLIE

Girl, you need more than six bullets, you're in more shit than any pistol gonna' get you out of. Them boys out there just piss bullets 'til they hit somethin'.

Looking down the barrel, she aims at a spot on the wall.

VIRGINIA

Safety?

CHARLIE

Ain't none on a revolver. You're the safety. Don't pull it, less you mean to use it. Squeeze the trigger and don't squint. Just let your breath out when you shoot.

She puts the pistol into her bag, closes up the box and holds it out for him.

VIRGINIA

Won't need this.

CHARLIE

Take it. There's a rag and a brush in there to keep it clean. And you better use'em. Now, you gonna' tell me what this is all about?

VIRGINIA

You talk to Debra?

Charlie sighs, gets up and goes to the kitchenette.

CHARLIE

I haven't talked to your Momma' in a couple a' years. She don't come down this way since she's got herself a new husband.

VIRGINIA

He's a piece of work...

She lights a cigarette. Charlie pours himself a drink. He holds up an empty glass for her. Virginia shakes her head.

CHARLIE

I can't say shit on that. Debbie was my third wife...

VIRGINIA

And you were her second husband... so fucking what? At least you were faithful to her. Slut...

Charlie pulls up a kitchen chair and seats himself near her, putting his glass on the coffee table.

CHARLIE

I was faithful to you. I knew how your Momma' was, and it killed me to see her treat you the way she did. It's why I stuck around.

VIRGINIA

You're like the only man... shit, the only person, who never wanted anything from me. Everybody else wanted my money or to fuck me.

CHARLIE

You didn't exactly make it hard for them not to. I'm just glad to see you without your eyes being glazed. Now, what's goin' on?

Virginia sighs and speaks silently. Charlie nods.

VIRGINIA (VO)

I told the old man everything. No reason not to. I'd be dead a long time ago without him. He did the best he could for an old pool shark to keep me out of trouble, but I was dumb enough to keep looking for it. And here I was again, confessing my sins to him after hitting bottom. I owe him and all because my mother used to sleep with him. God knows why he liked me so much.

INT CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Virginia sits cross-legged on the quaint room's small bed, dressed in one of Charlie's shirts. Charlie enters with a folded bath towel and sets it on the foot of the bed.

CHARLIE

Thought you might want to shower
before bed, clean up that scar.

Self-consciously, she puts her hand to her arm.

VIRGINIA

Thanks, Pop. Really.

CHARLIE

If I knew you'd listen, I'd tell
you to hop a bus. That boyfriend
of yours family is a bad bunch.
Not much dirty stuff they don't
have their hands in. Might be good
to get away, start over; somewhere
they don't know you.

He sits at end of the bed. She takes her cigarettes from
the nightstand and lights another, glaring at the far wall.

VIRGINIA

I just want everyone to leave me
the fuck alone.

She takes a drag on her smoke.

VIRGINIA (CONT.)

Everybody's always in my fucking
business. And here you come with
what I should do. I don't need
your goddamned advice... Dad.
Advice on life from a old man who
hustles pool so he can drink
another night. I just want to get
my head together... figure out
what to do. Then, I'm gone.

Charlie nods. She glances to the gun box on the nightstand
by her purse. A pill bottle has rolled out of her bag.

CHARLIE

I'm gonna' leave you alone. You
wanna' stay, stay. Otherwise, do
what you want.

He gets up and fishes in his pocket. He drops a few bills.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Here. Ain't no other money in the
house, so don't bother looking.

Charlie walks out. Virginia waits a moment, then tamps out her smoke, and grabs the pill bottle and the towel.

INT CHARLIE'S BATHROOM

As the shower runs, Virginia stands at the sink. She stares at her steam-covered reflection and her bruised cheek.

VIRGINIA

God, girl... you look like shit.

She glances at the bandage on her arm, and looks through the medicine cabinet. Finding a roll of ACE bandages, she sets it and the tape aside and tears off the old dressing. The cloth is bloody, but the wound is sealed.

VIRGINIA (VO)

The blade had cut skin and some muscle. And even though I was cheating on him, Caesar's turning on me cut pretty deep, too.

Virginia looks at the bottle, then spills some in her palm.

VIRGINIA (VO)

One Oxycontin would take the edge off for about twelve hours...

She pours all but one back in the bottle. She downs it with a handful of water. She looks back to the bottle.

VIRGINIA (VO)

But, two of them ground up, could make me numb for four.

She steps into the shower as steam reclaims the mirror.

INT CHARLIE'S BATHROOM - SHOWER

Virginia washes away the dried blood from the gash in her arm and scrubs her face. She lets the hot water run over her head, streaming down her cheeks.

VIRGINIA (VO)

No matter where I end up, I always wanted a long, hot shower. I used to think it could wash away the alcohol. The pain. The whoring.

Running her hand over her arm, she grimaces. A new trickle of blood has started. She turns off the water.

INT CHARLIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

The wound re-banded, Virginia snatches up the bottle. She struggles with the lid and shakes out two pills. Wrapped in the faded towel, she puts the pills on the sink edge and grinds them up. Taking a last look at her reflection, she bends down to the sink and snorts the grains.

INT CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Virginia lays on her back, on top of the covers, the oversized towel covering the middle of her body like a corpse on a slab. She stares at the ceiling, smoke lingering from the new cigarette between her fingers.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Don't feel anything anymore... If I get an ache, a twinge, the O.C. turns it off. The rush wears off, but I'll be asleep by then. I'll take my last two in the morning.

FADE TO BLACK

INT APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

The lights flip on. In a Mets t-shirt and scrub pants, Detective Parke rifles through the medicine cabinet. He turns on the cold water and pops open an aspirin bottle. Shaking out two, then three pills, he throws them into his mouth; along with a handful of water from the tap.

GIRLFRIEND (OS)

That bad a day?

DET. PARKE

Just expecting worse tomorrow.

INT CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The door cracks open. Charlie enters, wearing an old robe and carrying a coffee mug.

CHARLIE

Good morning... got some toast out here an' some bacon...

The bed is empty and the covers made. The ashtray is empty and the towel hangs off the headboard.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

Dammit, girl... Can't even have
breakfast with her old man...

He sits on the edge of the bed, shaking his head. On the nightstand, Virginia's purse and cigarettes are gone, but the wooden box was left. He looks in the drawer, taking out an old hotel Bible. He flips the pages. A note falls out.

VIRGINIA (VO)

"Pop. I.O.U. the hundred bucks you
had stashed in here, V."

He tosses the Bible against the wall, but then laughs.

CHARLIE

Goddamn... you little bitch.

He laughs more as he walks out.

EXT SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Virginia walks through morning pedestrians, and into a busy downtown subway station.

INT SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Passing the turnstiles, Virginia is met by hoards of commuters and street performers.

INT SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Virginia sits in a corner and watches everyone getting on and off. The last pile in and the train lurches forward.

VIRGINIA (VO)

I've totally lost it. I must have
been numb for too long. Why else
would I do this? I've got a little
cash and a loaded gun. I should be
on a bus headed out of town.

She glances out the window as the train rattles along.

VIRGINIA (VO) (CONT.)

Instead, I'm heading uptown for a
goddamned O.C. refill.

EXT TENEMENT BLOCK

Virginia stands on the curb, opposite a small brownstone. A mixture of hard-looking youngsters hang on the stoop, a couple turn their eyes to her. Exhaling, she crosses the street, her eyes staying forward as she climbs the steps.

BABY BANGER 1

Hey, man. Check her.

BABY BANGER 2 (OS)

Hit me some of that...

The young men watch her pass. As the door closes behind her, one of them takes out a cell phone.

INT TENEMENT HALLWAY

All of the doors in the hall are boarded over, except one, which has a new hardened security door. Virginia climbs to the top of the steps and looks at the ominous entrance.

VIRGINIA (VO)

The wanna'bees weren't just hanging; they were lookouts for Richie. Cheap labor and they get to feel like big time.

She fishes out the .38 and checks the load. Satisfied, Virginia takes a moment to try different places to conceal it, but puts it back in her purse. She steps up and knocks.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Richie's a chemist. He pays Keno protection to sell, so Caesar had a direct pipeline for my meds.

Footsteps can be heard on the other side of the door.

LUCY (OS)

Yeah?

VIRGINIA

I need to see Richie...

LUCY (OS)

No Richie here. Fuck off.

VIRGINIA

I need some O.C.

LUCY (OS)
Go down to the corner, junkie...

She grits her teeth.

VIRGINIA
I'm with Mendoza...

Silence. The door cracks open and a Glock 40-caliber auto is pointed at her through the opening.

LUCY (OS)
Mendoza send you?

VIRGINIA
I'm with Caesar. I came to see
Richie, score some O.C.

The Glock withdraws into the darkened apartment.

LUCY (OS)
Get in...

INT RICHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The aging studio is lit by shaded windows and dominated by a kitchen island, a cluster of couches and an old projection TV. Bookshelves, filled with unread books, line one wall up to the water-stained ceiling.

VIRGINIA
I know it's early...

LUCY is a petite, pale brunette, wearing only a bra and panties under a short open kimono. The gun in her hand still points into the hall as Virginia slips inside.

VIRGINIA (VO)
Someone told me that little Miss
Lucy and Richie were cousins. If
they are, rumor was they're more
the kissing kind.

Lucy shuts and bolts the door. She points to a couch.

LUCY
Richie!

Virginia nods and sits. She places her purse on the couch next to her. Lucy saunters to the kitchen. She discards the gun on the counter and looks in the fridge.

LUCY

So, you're Caesar's girl, huh?

VIRGINIA

Yeah...

LUCY

Heard about Saint Maria's? They say somebody snitched.

VIRGINIA

Caesar doesn't talk business much.

A door on the far end opens and RICHIE silently slithers in. He's very tall, rail thin and pale. His white blonde hair goes past his shoulders, which are etched in prison tats. He wears only a pair of baggy medical scrub pants.

RICHIE

Virgie... Surprise, surprise.

VIRGINIA

I know... I need my script refilled.

RICHIE

And he don't know you're here. I gave him a bottle last week...

She takes out her pill bottle. Lucy takes a jug of juice out of the refrigerator as Richie eases across the room.

VIRGINIA

I hurt my arm, okay?

She holds up the bandage for him to see. Richie nods and takes the bottle from her.

RICHIE

Losin' a baby's tough stuff.

VIRGINIA

Hey. I didn't cut myself. I don't do that shit.

RICHIE

Relax... We're friends here.

Richie disappears into the back. Lucy pours a cup of juice, has a sip and leaves the cup on the counter. She takes a seat opposite Virginia, not bothering to adjust the kimono.

LUCY

You lost a baby?

VIRGINIA

Last year... miscarried. She lived
for a day.

LUCY

That's sad...

Virginia nods. Lucy pulls her legs under herself and turns
to face Virginia, her arm draped on the back of the couch.

LUCY

You're pretty, Virgie...

Lucy strokes Virginia's hair. Virginia withdraws slightly.

LUCY

Your baby would have been pretty.

VIRGINIA

Thanks...

Lucy moves closer, looking into Virginia's eyes.

LUCY

Caesar never talked about you... I
wondered what you'd be like.

Virginia glances to her handbag. She turns to face Lucy.

VIRGINIA

I'm just me. Richie seems... cool.

Lucy is a few inches from her, eyes glancing up and down.

LUCY

He's... very Zen. Maybe you could
hang with us a while...

VIRGINIA

I don't know... maybe...

Richie emerges. Lucy slips off the couch and back to the
kitchen. As he passes, Lucy runs her hand across his bare
chest. He doesn't acknowledge it as he walks to the couch.

RICHIE

One-fifty is the friend discount.

Virginia reaches out to take the pills, but the number
makes her stop. She rummages through her handbag and comes
up with a few bills and Charlie's hundred-dollar bill.

VIRGINIA

Shit... Wasn't even thinking...

(To Richie)

Can I buy like twenty off you?

She holds up the big bill. Richie looks put out. He pops the top and shakes out a handful of pills. Lucy walks up behind him, putting a hand on his shoulder.

LUCY

Rich... she's cool, okay?

He grins and pours them back in and caps the bottle.

RICHIE

Yeah... For my man, Caesar.

VIRGINIA

Cool...

Virginia stands, takes the pills and gives him the hundred. He folds the bill and tucks it into Lucy's bra strap.

RICHIE

You can take a hit here if you want. Crash in our room...

He nods toward the back door. Lucy looks at her from behind Richie and smirks.

VIRGINIA

Don't know... Can I get a drink?

Richie escorts her as Lucy pulls a glass out of the sink for her. Virginia uses the bottom to grind two pills on the counter. Lucy points to a selection of bottles.

LUCY

Poison?

VIRGINIA

Whiskey's fine...

Richie's phone BEEPS. He takes it out of his scrubs pocket as Lucy pours a splash of whiskey into the glass.

INSERT - CELL PHONE

The text message reads, "From: C. Mendoza - Seen V?"

INT RICHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Richie glances up and types an answer. Richie purses his lip and glances at Virginia, who is snorting the pill grains off the counter. The phone BEEPS a reply.

RICHIE

We got company comin'.

VIRGINIA

You got business... I need to go.

RICHIE

Na... You're cool. We could... get somethin' to eat.

He tosses Lucy the phone. His gaze never leaves Virginia.

RICHIE

Call down to my little bro and his buds. See if they want anything...

LUCY

Chinese?

RICHIE

You like Chinese?

Virginia takes a drink.

VIRGINIA

I should go...

BEEP. Lucy glances to the cell phone.

INSERT - CELL PHONE

The text message reads, "On the way. Hold her!"

INT RICHIE'S APARTMENT

Lucy looks at her pistol on the counter as Virginia heads for the door. Lucy dials the phone.

RICHIE (OS)

There's a place about two blocks up that has a kick-ass General Tso's chicken.

LUCY
(Into the phone)
You guys come on up...

Virginia puts a hand in her bag as she takes quicker steps.

VIRGINIA
Maybe next time...

RICHIE
Sorry, V. You can't.

As Virginia reaches the door, Lucy snatches up her Glock.

LUCY
Far enough, bitch!
(Into the phone)
Get your ass up here!!

Virginia freezes in place. Lucy tosses down the phone to grab her gun with both hands.

RICHIE
Your old man wants to talk to you.

Richie sidles up beside her. He puts a hand on the door. She doesn't look at him, but at the floor. She nods.

RICHIE
He's the boss. Nothing personal.

VIRGINIA
Same here...

Richie puzzles at her comment as she whirls around, the .38 in her right fist. She belts him across the temple with it. A SHOT rings out, thudding into the heavy door.

LUCY
Stop!

Richie reels back. Virginia wraps an arm around his neck and plants the pistol to his head. She backs up against the door. Lucy moves closer, aiming her Glock.

VIRGINIA
Back off!!

Suddenly, there's a POUNDING at the door.

BANGER 1 (OS)
Hey, Richie!

LUCY
 Bust the door!! This crazy bitch
 in here has Richie!

INT TENEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

The bangers pull weapons, but aren't sure what to do.

BANGER 1
 It's a goddamned bank door! What
 we supposed to do?

LUCY (OS)
 Just get the fuck in here!

The bangers all kick at the door. It doesn't budge.

INT RICHIE'S APARTMENT

Virginia stays behind Richie, whose calm is unnerving. Lucy
 seems even paler, a cold sweat on her face.

RICHIE
 This is fucked up, V. Caesar just
 wants to talk to you. No one was
 gonna' shoot you.

VIRGINIA
 Shut up.

LUCY
 I will. I'll fucking shoot you in
 the fucking heart! Junkie slut!

Virginia locks back the hammer on her .38.

VIRGINIA
 Shut it! You think I won't?!?

RICHIE
 This about you bangin' Diego?

VIRGINIA
 Least he ain't my cousin...

LUCY
 Second cousins. And fuck you!!

The POUNDING on the door becomes rhythmically louder.

RICHIE

There's nowhere to go.

Virginia glances around the room. The high windows are barred and there's only one other door.

VIRGINIA

Come on...

She nudges Richie forward, staying behind him.

LUCY

You ain't moving, bitch!

Lucy shoots just over Virginia's head.

BANGER 1 (OS)

Shit!!

Lucy sights in on her.

VIRGINIA

Crazy whore!! Jesus!

Virginia puts the .38 over Richie's shoulder and shoots. The bullet slams into Lucy's shoulder. The Glock CLATTERS to the hardwood as Lucy spirals, her legs giving way. She slumps to her knees and begins to SHRIEK.

RICHIE

Luce!!

VIRGINIA

Move!

Virginia puts the gun back on Richie's temple and shoves him toward to the backroom.

BANGER 1 (OS)

Richie!!

The POUNDING on the door becomes deafening and it begins to vibrate. Lucy grips her wound, SCREAMING like a banshee, her eyes fixed on Virginia.

LUCY

Kill her!! Kill her!! Fucking
kill... her!! Now!!!

Keeping Richie ahead of her, Virginia skirts Lucy, kicking the gun away. She backs toward the opposite door. Still on her knees, Lucy turns to face them, eyes aflame with rage.

INT RICHIE'S BACKROOM - DAY

This room is half lab / half crash pad. A pair of mattresses and several comforters lay in the far corner, next to a low table covered in liquor bottles. On the right wall are shelves of various boxes and pill bottles and a workbench with scales and pharmacy equipment.

The door is kicked open and Virginia leads Richie inside. She looks around the nest. The walk-in closet is missing its door. A wall of clear vinyl strips close off a Crystal Meth still. Several WARNING! labels can be seen through the transparent barrier.

RICHIE

She don't die, she'll be coming
for you... if she does, then I will.

She drags him to the curtained window. Virginia bats the fabric aside. Richie squints as the streaks of sunlight burst in. Just beyond the glass is the fire escape.

VIRGINIA

You two can get in line...

Virginia lets him go. She keeps the gun on him and kicks at the window. Behind the curtain, the glass SHATTERS and falls away.

INT RICHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The big door buckles. The door frame gives as the gang bangers rush in. Lucy has managed to crawl to her Glock, holding it in her left hand. They look down at her.

LUCY

In back! She busted the window.

Richie's brother helps her to her feet. The rest move to the door, pointing their weapons ahead.

LUCY

One of you go to the alley! Watch
the fire escape!!

His brother nods and jogs back out.

BANGER 1

I got it!

INT APARTMENT BACKROOM - DAY

Virginia kicks a few more times to clear the glass. Richie steps back and sits on a mattress.

RICHIE

Lucy's special to me, V...

VIRGINIA

She was going to shoot me... or you.

She looks down to the alley. As she does, Richie reaches his hand under the blankets. He takes hold of something.

RICHIE (OS)

You're fucking Caesar's cousin and ratting on Keno... you're the one with the death wish.

Virginia notices the silence and glances at the door.

VIRGINIA

I'm not a rat.

RICHIE

No position to argue, V. You shot my girl and put a gun to my head.

She backs to the window, her eyes on the door.

VIRGINIA

I didn't kill your crazy cousin.

RICHIE

Second cousin...

Richie whips a sawed-off shotgun from under the blankets. As he raises it to her, Virginia kicks at him. Her foot connects, knocking him sideways.

The shotgun BOOMS, spraying the lab equipment with shot. A Bunsen burner pops into flames as he stumbles back.

The door bursts open and several bangers open fire with pistols and submachine guns. Virginia drops behind the mattresses. Richie stumbles backwards to his bodyguards as bullets rip up the walls and bedding.

RICHIE

Shoot her!! Shoot!!

Virginia, hunched behind the shredded mattress, sights a target and shoots twice.

The .38 rounds hit one of the teens and he sprawls back, the TEC-9 in his hand spraying bullets erratically. Several shots penetrate the vinyl curtain and puncture containers in the Meth room.

Bullets obliterate the liquor bottles behind her, showering Virginia in powdered glass as she struggles to empty her pistol and put in a new speed load. Richie retreats behind the bangers, ratcheting a new round into the shotgun.

She pops up and fires. They duck into the doorway, but her shots aren't at them. They punch into the closet wall, pinging and ricocheting into the Meth lab canisters. Richie looks up as a HISSING gas tank rolls across the floor towards them. He glances to see the Bunsen burner aflame.

RICHIE

Ah, sh...

INT RICHIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lucy, pistol in hand, staggers toward the back room.

LUCY

Shoot you fuckers!! Kill her!!

A split-second later, a fireball erupts. The door is blown off its hinges and flies into her as the gas tank explodes.

EXT ALLEYWAY - DAY

As the detonation erupts, a concussive blast hurls Virginia out the broken window, the curtains wrapped around her. She collides with the fire escape rail and drops to the deck.

EXT FIRE ESCAPE - DAY

Smoke rolls out the window. Under the dark fabric, Virginia wheezes and coughs. Staggering to her feet, she grabs the rail to pull herself up. She sheds the curtains, which are still smoldering, and stumbles down the steps.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Ears ringing, couldn't see dick
and wishing the O.C. would kick
in. My back's on fire and I could
feel glass in my hair.

EXT ALLEYWAY - DAY

The fire escape ladder descends to the ground, under Virginia's weight. She steps to the pavement groggily.

BANGER 1 (OS)
Richie!! Richie!!

Virginia suddenly bolts awake. She glances up to the street corner. A moment later, Richie's brother comes running, looking up at the billowing smoke. Virginia is not to be seen, but the fire escape ramp is slowly ascending.

BANGER 1
Goddamn...

He pulls out his cell phone and dials. Virginia peers out from behind a dumpster.

BANGER 1
Yeah. There's been a fire! There
is a fire... My brother's apartment!
This crazy bitch... broke in and...

CLICK. He stops talking. Behind him, Virginia has the .38 to the back of his head. He raises his arms.

VIRGINIA
Hang it up. Don't play tough.

The kid closes the phone. She takes an automatic pistol off his belt and tucks it in her waistband.

VIRGINIA
You got a car, sport?

BANGER 1
Yea...

VIRGINIA
Let's see some keys.

He lowers one hand and pulls out a keychain. She takes it.

BANGER 1
Black Gallant around the corner.
Take the fucker... You kill Richie?

VIRGINIA
You can go upstairs and find out.
I just want the car.

She points. He heads out of the alley, Virginia following.

EXT TENEMENT BLOCK - DAY

At the corner, Virginia spots the car. She keeps the gun leveled on the kid, who looks anxiously at the tenement. He doesn't wait before running inside. She watches for a moment, then jumps into the car and drives away.

INT/EXT MITSUBISHI GALLANT - DAY

Virginia dials her phone as she zips the sports car through the street. As it RINGS, she shakes the glass chips from her hair and wipes the soot off her face.

INT APARTMENT - DAY

A cell phone BUZZES on a tabletop. In back, a figure enters the room. Someone can be heard shuffling off a coat and taking off shoes. The phone BUZZES and vibrates. The figure approaches and picks it up. It's Griselda.

GRISELDA

Diego? Your phone is ringing.

DIEGO (OS)

Is it?

GRISELDA

You got it turned down. I don't recognize the number.

Diego comes in from the next room and takes the phone.

DIEGO

One of my father's business associates... I'll call'em back.

INT MERCEDES - DAY

Caesar, glances out the front and side windows, his hand gripping the arm rest. His cell buzzes and he quickly takes it out. He glances at the screen as he opens it.

CAESAR

Yes, uncle - what?

KENO (OS)

(Filtered through phone)
What is with all this heat?

INT KENO'S DEN - DAY

Uncle Keno paces in front of his couch, a soccer match on mute flickers on the TV behind him.

KENO

Cops are staking out our places of business... found two of my people dead in Virginia's condo. You're paying for that for place.

CAESAR (OS)

(Filtered through phone)
I'm fixing it.

KENO

My Southern connections can't wait. I put out a contract. That will be the end of it.

INT MERCEDES - DAY

Caesar looks out the windows again.

CAESAR

We need to fix this in-house, Keno, or they won't take us seriously. Just let me do this. I know where she is and I'm almost...

EXT TENEMENT BLOCK - DAY

Up the street, the brown stone has smoke rolling from the roof as police and fire crews fill the street. The Mercedes comes to quick stop.

CAESAR (OS)

Christ.

INT MERCEDES - DAY

Caesar folds up the phone and puts his forehead against his balled up fist. He lets out a sigh.

CAESAR

Go past and don't stop.

EXT TENEMENT BLOCK - DAY

A few spectators look on as the firefighters roll up hoses and clear their equipment. Parke exits the building and meets with a uniformed officer and Richie's little brother.

POLICE OFFICER 2

We put an all points on the car.
Kid says a woman took it from him
at gunpoint.

DET. PARKE

Same woman he says started the
fracas upstairs?

BANGER 1

Junkie bitch was stone crazy!

DET. PARKE

One woman?

POLICE OFFICER 2

Medium build blonde, about five
six and mid-twenties.

BANGER 1

You gonna' cut me loose? They took
my brother away two hours ago.

DET. PARKE

Homicide talk to him yet?

POLICE OFFICER 2

Yeah. They think this is a deal
gone bad.

CASH (OS)

Some junkie chick flips out and
it's fuckin' Baghdad in there.

Homicide Detective CASH is a stout middle-aged man who's managed to hold on to his looks. He squints at Parke.

CASH

I know you?

DET. PARKE

Parke. I'm in Eighth Narcotics,
following up on a case.

CASH

Not your district. Mendoza?

Parke nods. Cash glances at the kid and jerks his thumb.

CASH
We're done, kid. Hit the bricks.

The kid turns and walks away.

CASH (CONT.)
Tough stuff losing family... but
don't get it in your head that
you're gonna' do something.

The wannabe keeps walking, never acknowledging the comment.

DET. PARKE
You guys are saying a bad deal?

CASH
Richie's a drug cooker, so we
might be looking at robbery.

DET. PARKE
One woman? And they let her in.

CASH
I've seen crazier. Somebody got a
beef with Mendoza? Could this be a
hit? Someone tried to hit Caesar's
girl a couple of days ago.

DET. PARKE
Virginia.

CASH
Yeah. After she stopped cussing
and before she blacked out, the
meth head they put in the EMS
called the shooter Virginia.

Parke looks back up at the tenement, where a wisp of smoke
still lingers.

DET. PARKE
Either a war is starting or the
Mendoza's are fighting each other.

CASH
Neither of those bode well.

DET. PARKE
Yeah. We need to find this girl.

EXT ST. MARIA'S THRIFT STORE - NIGHT

Coming up the alley where Parke was staked out, Virginia looks at the darkened, taped-off building. A sedan is parked at the loading dock and some lights are on inside.

She recognizes the car as she gets closer. Staying behind it, she reaches into her bag and takes out the gangbanger's auto and her .38 revolver. She sticks them into the waistband of her slacks and untucks her blouse to cover.

Cautiously, she steps up to the back door. It opens.

INT ST. MARIA'S THRIFT STORE - NIGHT

The receiving and sorting area seems much bigger empty, the bins and chairs still sitting where their occupations left them during the bust.

As Virginia crosses the room, rays of light from the soup kitchen cut through the black. From behind the door, a shadow breaks up the light beam. Her voice cracks.

VIRGINIA

Diego?

DIEGO (OS)

V? In here...

She reaches in her purse and takes out her pill bottle. Slipping the top off, she takes two out. She looks at them in her palm.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Some part of me kept saying I need to stay straight... don't get fuzzy. The rest was screaming 'shut it off!' 'shut it off!'

Sighing, she grinds the pills on a nearby tabletop.

INT KITCHEN / ST. MARIA'S - NIGHT

Virginia is wiping her nose as she enters. Diego stands by the kitchen prep counter, still dressed from his day. He puts his hands on his hips. She grins as she saunters over.

DIEGO

Was beginning to think you weren't gonna' show...

VIRGINIA
Should be half-way to Vegas.

Two gunnies lean against the counter and a refrigerator across the room. Suddenly, she's a deer in headlights.

DIEGO
Caesar told me to bring them. He said you shot Manuel.

VIRGINIA
Baby, Caesar has gone fuckin' loco, all right? He sent them cholos to kill me!

She starts backing away, her hand going for her waistband.

DIEGO
You got a problem, V. The dope's gone to your head. Manuel was told to come watch you. The Syrians have been moving in and Caesar wanted you safe. I want you safe.

He reaches for her hand, but she withdraws. She bumps into the door, her eyes on the men in front of her.

DIEGO
We can't let you go, V. You're gonna' hurt someone or yourself.

Panicked, she whips out the automatic. The two men draw out matching H&K submachine guns. Diego grabs for her wrists.

VIRGINIA
They're gonna' kill me!

DIEGO
Stop it!

She tries to aim, but he moves her arms. One of the gunnies cocks his weapon. He looks back at them.

DIEGO
What are you doing?

One of the gunnies steps toward them as Virginia squirms and struggles. Diego lets go to block him and she scrambles across the floor, beside the prep table.

DIEGO
Put that down!

The thug's HK chatters and flares as he sprays bullets. Virginia shrieks and stumbles to the tile. She glances back to see Diego pirouetting away from her, the lead slugs tearing into him from the reckless strafe. He collapses.

VIRGINIA

Diego!!

She clammers to her feet, trying to stay low. The second thug turns and sprays bullets across the kitchen. The rounds ricochet and spark on the metal tables, cookware and heavy stove as she runs for cover.

THUG 2

Esa manera!

The first gunny is still looking at Diego, in shock at his horrible mistake. Virginia pops out from behind the prep area storage and fires the automatic, missing both men. The second answers with dozens more bullets from his H&K.

THUG 2

Fuego!!

Shots tear into the storage unit Virginia hides behind. She yelps and jumps back. The man charges forward, under the cover of the gunfire. Virginia can see the shadows growing.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Oh God... please... make it stop.

The room goes silent but her HEARTBEAT begins to thump louder and louder. Her eyes start to glaze. Time slows.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Then, I could feel the O.C. in my blood and nothing else.

She slides onto her stomach, holding the automatic under the table and fires. The bullets tear into the gunny's legs. He staggers and drops to his knees. She stands.

As Virginia comes around the table, the man is cursing and yelling, but his voice is a distant drone.

VIRGINIA

Sorry, amigo. No habla.

She flatly puts the pistol to his head and shoots.

VIRGINIA (VO)

I had no idea what his last words even were. And I didn't care.

The first gunny swings around, finally able to turn away from Diego. It's too late as she pumps the automatic, each shot thundering into him. He convulses and falls. Virginia walks to the downed man and stares down at him.

The automatic is locked open and empty. She lets it drop and she steps over him toward the door. Someone GRABS her leg. She whirls around, the .38 drawn. It's Diego.

DIEGO
Virgie... don't go...

She puts away the gun and kneels beside him.

DIEGO
Hard to... to breathe...

VIRGINIA
Just sit still okay?

She goes through his pockets and pulls out his phone. She opens it and dials.

OPERATOR 3*
(*Filtered through phone)
Nine-one-one. What is your
emergency?

She places the open phone on his chest. He looks at her, but she shakes her head.

DIEGO
Help please... I've been shot.

OPERATOR 3*
You're been shot, sir?

DIEGO
Yes... please hurry. St. Maria's
soup kitchen...

OPERATOR 3*
Sir, can you...

Virginia closes the phone and leaves it on his chest.

DIEGO
I'm sorry, V.

VIRGINIA
Why, Diego?

DIEGO

Poor Virgie. Caesar said not to trust you. Then, you get me shot. Guess he was right, huh?

VIRGINIA

I gotta' go now...

DIEGO

Popi called... the hit on you... I wanted... to find you first.

VIRGINIA

Thank you.

She kisses his forehead and then, goes through his pockets. She takes a money clip from his vest.

DIEGO

No. They won't stop, V...

EXT ST. MARIA'S - NIGHT

Virginia pushes open the fire door with her back, nervously pointing her .38 into the alley. She tries to catch her breath. Her panting soon turns to tears. She glances back at Diego lying on the kitchen tile, then turns and runs.

A moment after she disappears around the corner, a pair of headlights comes on.

FAYED (VO)

Stay with the woman.

EXT NEUVO VISTA CLEANERS - NIGHT

Virginia hangs on a corner, watching the cleaning service back entrance. A number of young women, mostly Hispanic, filter out the door as they head home for the night.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Nuevo Vista was a full service shop. They could drop off a girl to clean your house...

Moments later, a couple of prostitutes walk in the door.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Or maybe more. They were also a hooker delivery service I knew Keno used. If there was a contract, there'd be nowhere safe. Keno had to be the one to stop it.

INT NEUVO VISTA - NIGHT

MADAM VASQUEZ, a petite middle-aged Latina opens the door for the prostitutes. Virginia comes in behind them.

MADAM VASQUEZ

Que?

VIRGINIA

Are you hiring? I do windows.

MADAM VASQUEZ

No! You no come in...

Virginia pushes her way inside. The madam backs away from the door, the other girls scramble back. Two other young women are already inside, sitting in a worker lounge area. Virginia recognizes a girl in a leather jacket. ROSA (20's) is a Latina with a number of piercings.

VIRGINIA

Rosa?

ROSA

Virgie... hey!

They hug. The madam steps in between them.

MADAM VASQUEZ

No one here. Just maids. Get out.

VIRGINIA

Honey, I'm not stupid.

(To Rosa)

Any of you do dates with Keno Mendoza?

The name silences the room.

ROSA

Virgie, why are you here?

VIRGINIA

I need to see Keno Mendoza. And I know he has girls to the house.

ROSA

Senora Vasquez drops off me and
Serena... it's his night tonight.
(She points to a girl)
Then, they bring us back.

Virginia pulls out Diego's cash wad and rolls off a series
of bills and holds them out for the madam.

VIRGINIA

This is yours. Just take me, too.
I'm an extra girl... A gift to Keno.

MADAM VASQUEZ

No. Get out. I not go against
Senior Mendoza.

Virginia holds out several more bills.

MADAM VASQUEZ

No money. You no go. Yo no quiero
muerte'! El hombre est loco!

Virginia leans closer and whispers.

VIRGINIA

Keno no muerta. Not if I muerta
him first and yo est muy loca.

Vasquez looks in Virginia's eyes, then sees the .38 in her
waistband. Warily, she crosses herself and takes the money.

EXT KENO'S MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

Madam Vasquez pulls up to a side door in a mini-van. An
armed bodyguard greets her. Serena and Rosa get out first.
Wearing Rosa's leather jacket with the collar turned up,
Virginia hangs back and avoids eye contact.

The guard gives Madam Vasquez an envelope. She checks the
cash and nods.

MADAM VASQUEZ

Buenos nochas.

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

The girls enter an elegant master suite. The bodyguard
looks Serena over with a smile, and then exits. They set
down their bags.

ROSA

He didn't even ask about you.

VIRGINIA

Just another hooker... So, what's with the luggage?

SERENA (OS)

Luchara!

ROSA

Keno has his little... fantasies.

Rosa and Serena pour the contents of the bags onto the bed; leotards, tights, knee and elbow pads, and wrestling masks.

ROSA (OS)

We dress up as luchadoras and he watches us wrestle; turns him on.

VIRGINIA

Kinky old fart. Always the quiet ones, huh?

ROSA

He's not that quiet. Serena lets me win, so I have to fuck him.

VIRGINIA (VO)

A lot of working girls like doing fetish stuff. It pays more, and it's not about sex. But, kinks are even lower on the list of respect than guys who pay for regular sex...

Rosa playfully tosses one of the lucha libre masks at Serena. The girls giggle as they undress.

VIRGINIA

What about the loser?

ROSA

Oh, he makes the loser watch... sometimes join in...

VIRGINIA

So, nobody wins...

INT KENO'S DEN - NIGHT

The formal office has had the furniture moved aside. A thick gym mat has been placed in the center of the floor.

Keno reclines on the leather couch in satin pajamas and robe. One of his bodyguards stands by the door to the hall.

KENO
Almost bell time!

Keno leans over to a mini-bar and taps a pair of ice tongs on a brandy bottle, like a bell. The far door opens and the girls enter; Virginia and Rosa are barefoot in the tights, pads and the masks. A wristband covers Virginia's bandage. Serena wears an oversized ref's shirt and tiny briefs.

KENO
This is new. You have on my shirt.

SERENA*
(*Subtitled Spanish)
I'm referee tonight. You just sit back and watch.

KENO
The defending champion has a new challenger, eh? Let's take a look.

Virginia has tucked her hair under the mask, but she's still cautious when she steps forward and turns in place.

KENO
Nice...
(Takes a drink)
Is your face as lovely?

ROSA (OS)
Luchadoras can't show their faces, remember? The mask is sacred.

KENO
Of course. Mask versus mask, then?
If Rosa wins, you show your face.

Virginia nods.

KENO
Then, let's go. Luchara!

The girls pad onto the mat. Serena stands in the middle as the other two ready themselves and stand close to whisper.

VIRGINIA
The bodyguard stays?

ROSA
Just one. Keno don't trust us.

VIRGINIA

Just like we talked... right?

SERENA

Si... Luchara!

Serena steps back and Rosa and Virginia come to grips. They grapple and strain while Keno and his bodyguard watch. The contest goes to the mat and the masked girls thrash back and forth, rolling across the floor.

KENO

Su demasiado rápido... slow down...

Heeding his instructions, Rosa changes pace by wrapping up Virginia with her legs and a stranglehold.

ROSA

How you doing?

VIRGINIA

(Out of breath)

Coulda' been fun... if I hadn't had the shit kicked outta' me today...

ROSA

You be okay... just play for show.

Virginia squirms loose and pins Rosa down by pressing her chest on Rosa's head and shoulders. She looks at Keno.

VIRGINIA (VO)

He watches us like a lion watching gazelle... You see guys like that in strip clubs. Quiet. Predatory. Wait, old man. Real show's coming...

Rosa rolls Virginia off and they become a tangle of limbs. Keno adjusts his robe and leans forward, gazing intently.

KENO

This new girl's good...

As they struggle, some of Virginia's blonde tresses spill from under the mask. Rosa grabs a handful of Virginia's hair and pulls her down, gripping the locks as she pins Virginia to the mat. Serena jumps in and counts to three.

SERENA

El victora est Rosa.

KENO

Bad girl Rosa, using a rudos move.
But, our mystery girl has to give
up her mask now.

Virginia stands and shoves Rosa, which starts a scuffle. Serena steps in to break them up. When she does, Virginia nods at her, then reaches under her ref shirt. The .38 pistol had been tucked into Serena's waistband. Virginia draws the gun and hides it behind her back as she turns.

KENO

Be a good sport now.

Keno grins as Virginia quietly nods and saunters over.

VIRGINIA

Ready to see your mystery girl?

She pulls off the mask. Keno's lecherous smile vanishes.

KENO

Virgie? Que demonios?

Virginia pulls up the .38, whips around and fires two shots into the bodyguard's head.

KENO

Aiii! Cabron!

Keno reels back as the bodyguard lurches and collapses onto the mat. Keno scrambles across the couch toward his desk, but Virginia pounces on him. She plants the gun to the back of his head. He freezes.

KENO

Assassin!

She pulls him back to a sitting position on the couch.

VIRGINIA

Hold still! Goddamn son-of-a-bitch! You put a fucking hit out on me? Me!?!?

She throws the mask at him. He looks away. Behind her, Serena and Rosa look at the dead man on the mat. They step back as the blood seeps toward their bare feet.

ROSA

Fucking loca punta! You said you wanted to see Keno!

VIRGINIA

I'm seeing him. Get your shit and get going.

The hookers pad off the mat and dash back to the master suite. Virginia turns back. Keno's resolve has returned.

KENO

Virgie... what is this? You come to kill me now? You know you won't get out of this house alive.

VIRGINIA

Maybe...

She steps to the hallway door and locks it, pointing the pistol at him. Keno stays still, but not relaxed.

VIRGINIA

Maybe you won't either.

KENO

You wanted me dead, I'd be dead.

VIRGINIA

Cancel the contract on me.

KENO

I can not do that.

VIRGINIA

You're the fucking boss...

She plants the pistol to his temple.

KENO

I cancel a contract, I look weak. Might as well shoot, punta. In my own house... no less. Bad enough Caesar ever brought you here.

Virginia grimaces and slaps him with the pistol.

VIRGINIA

Screw you, asshole! A minute ago you wanted to fuck me...

Gritting his teeth, Keno tries to hide the pain from the new gash on his forehead.

KENO

That how you value yourself?

VIRGINIA

A hit for Christ's sake!! I would have gone away, if you wanted me to stay away from Caesar.

KENO

You talk.

VIRGINIA

I talk? To who?

KENO

Caesar. He tell me you were talking to the police.

VIRGINIA

The Fiera got raided. Cop hassled me because I was high!! Jesus!!

Keno glances to his desk and points.

KENO

I show you.

VIRGINIA

Don't get up.

She walks around to the desk, pistol pointed at him.

KENO

Second right drawer...

Virginia pulls it open. On top of some papers is a zip-lock bag with a business card in it.

INSERT - BUSINESS CARD

It's Detective Parke's card, but now Scotch-taped together. "St. Maria's" is written on the back in pen.

INT KENO'S DEN - NIGHT

Virginia tosses the baggie at Keno. He catches it.

VIRGINIA

What the fuck is that?

KENO

Caesar says that cop gave this card to you.

VIRGINIA

And I tore it up. See?

KENO

What I see is one of my businesses written on it. Same one was busted four days ago. A lot of my people arrested... a lot of product lost... at a time when the Arabs are moving in on us. My partners are worried I can't keep up my end.

VIRGINIA

So someone had to pay...

KENO

You get this, what will you think?

VIRGINIA

I might think someone set me up... but I'm not you.

KENO

Doesn't really matter if you snitched or not. My partners see that and I take care of you, they're reassured.

Virginia discards the knee and elbow pads as she roots through Keno's desk.

VIRGINIA

Practical fucker...

KENO

I don't keep drugs in here.

VIRGINIA

You knew about me being pregnant?

KENO

Caesar told me. I know it was an accident and he didn't want it. My brother would have told him, be a man and do the right thing. Then, Carla... Even if it was a bastard, she'd say no abortion. It's a sin.

Virginia stops and looks at him. Across the room, Rosa and Serena return. They're dressed in their street clothes. Rosa lays Virginia's things on the couch.

KENO

He hoped you'd O.D. Would be a way
out for him. No baby... no abortion...
and all the sin would be yours.

She finds a manila envelope with her name. She opens it and
takes out various medical forms and an ultrasound photo.

VIRGINIA

But, I cleaned up...

KENO (OS)

He never saw that coming. Did he?

He smirks. She looks at the ultrasound photo and the blurry
mass where her stomach was. She can hear the SWISH-SWISH of
the baby's heart from the monitor in her head.

DOCTOR (VO)

Heart's good and strong... looks
like a girl...

VIRGINIA

Lily...

KENO (OS)

What?

Virginia pockets the ultrasound and walks around the desk.

VIRGINIA

Her name was going to be Lily.

She hands the pistol to Rosa.

ROSA

What now? He'll kill us.

VIRGINIA

If he moves, shoot...

Virginia slips her jeans over the wrestling tights and
throws on her blouse and sweater. She steps into her shoes.

VIRGINIA

He never wanted me clean, Keno. He
could control a junkie. But, he
had no say in what happened to
Lily. He played God with my...

There's a POUNDING on the door. The noise startles Rosa and
the .38 erupts, hitting Keno in the stomach.

BODYGUARD 1

Keno!

ROSA

Aiye! Shit!

KENO

Muerte!! Assassins!!

ROSA

Shit! Shit!!

Virginia snatches the gun from Rosa. The pounding on the door gets louder.

BODYGUARD 1

Keno! Open up!!

The two girls scurry back behind the desk. Virginia turns and shoots twice through the door.

VIRGINIA

We'll kill him! Stay out! I'll shoot the fucker dead right...

KENO (OS)

Bitch!!

Virginia turns just as Keno swings and hits her in the side with a fire poker. The impact doubles her over as he comes down with it across her back. He strikes her again and again. Serena and Rosa are screaming.

KENO

Kill you! Whores!! I kill you all!

He kicks Virginia and she flops over onto the bloodied mat on her back. He swings back, but Rosa jumps on him.

ROSA

Stop!!

Keno thrashes, tossing Rosa off. She lands on the tile with a THUD. Virginia crawls across the mat and grabs her pistol, just as Keno wallops her with the poker. Serena screams. Virginia rolls over and fires twice. Keno staggers back, gripping his neck, and flops onto the couch.

SERENA

Madre dios!!

Virginia looks at the doorway as she struggles to stand.

VIRGINIA
We have to go... NOW!

Grabbing her bag, Virginia fishes out her O.C. bottle as she corrals the girls back to the bedroom.

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Locking the door, Virginia stops to grind two pills on a dresser and snort the grains.

EXT KENO'S MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

A back door opens and the two prostitutes stumble out onto a patio. Virginia is behind, shoving them forward.

VIRGINIA
Let's go! Andele. Move!

As the women run to the gate, a man appears in the door. He carries a submachine gun. The girls scream as they dash down the drive. Virginia doesn't react to them as she aims.

He and Virginia raise their arms and fire at the same time.

Her shot catches him the shoulder and his muffled burst of bullets goes wide. Stopping to reload, she turns to see Serena - lying sprawled on the cold concrete.

Rosa is looking at the fallen girl, then Virginia. She yells, but Virginia isn't hearing anything as she goes by in a daze. Rosa drops to her knees, shaking Serena's body.

Virginia looks back one last time to see Rosa crying over her friend's body.

EXT CITY STREET - NIGHT

Virginia shuffles along, her breath puffing out in smoky clouds. She grips her side as she plods on, ignoring looks of occasional passersby. The headlights of a car sweep over her and a HORN sounds.

FAYED (OS)
Hey you... need a ride?

She wearily glances to a Mercedes sedan. In the back seat, FAYED AL SADIR, a handsome young Syrian grins at her. She lets out her breath as the mobster's car glides to a stop.

VIRGINIA

You think I'm hooking, jerkwad?

FAYED

I doubt many work the street when it's this cold... and they are injured. You are Caesar's woman?

She stops walking and reaches into her coat pocket.

FAYED (CONT)

No need for that. I am only wishing to talk with you.

VIRGINIA

And you just knew I'd be walking down Buchanan at one fucking AM?

FAYED

I have people watching you. I heard about the lab. And we were watching Keno's house.

VIRGINIA

You know a lot about Caesar.

She saunters toward the car, her hand still inside the pocket. Fayed puffs on a cigar.

FAYED

He and I are in the same business. It is important to know one's competitors. I know him; his business, and I know you. Get in.

VIRGINIA

The blood'll stain your seats.

FAYED

A price I'm willing to pay. Come. We shall talk of your boyfriend.

He opens the door and she gets in, flopping onto the seat.

VIRGINIA (OS)

Ex-boyfriend. You haven't heard?

INT STOREROOM - NIGHT

In the back of a Mediterranean restaurant, Virginia sits on a metal food-serving cart. She's stripped to the waist, save for a sports bra.

MUSTAFA, a young Syrian finishes a set of stitches on her bruised ribs. She holds her arm up, out of his way. Fayed enters, talking on a cell phone.

FAYED

(*Subtitled Arabic)

*I have the package. We're tending to it. Have your people ready.

She grimaces and nods as the young man ties off the suture.

FAYED (CONT.)

*Keep your eyes on him.

He closes his phone and puts it away.

FAYED

My cousin, Mustafa was fifth in his class at Yale. Very talented. Once I settle his immigration papers, he's going have a private practice in midtown.

Mustafa wraps her waist with a broad bandage and hands her a small plastic bottle.

MUSTAFA

Vicoden. Take two now, for pain.

She glances at the labeled bottle and then glares at him.

FAYED (OS)

Word is that Caesar doubled your contract. You really stirred up a hornet's nest with Keno.

VIRGINIA

I need O.C.

(No response)

Oxy-con-tin. I had some in my bag.

Mustafa glances to Fayed, who nods. Mustafa snatches the bottle from her and stomps off, muttering curses.

FAYED

I want to help you. I can give you anything you need.

Virginia hops down off the table with a grunt. She glances at the bandage before slipping her blouse back on. Seeing the bloody stains, she tosses it off and picks up her .38.

FAYED (CONT.)

More guns. Better guns. Ammo.

She pops the cylinder and checks the load. Ignoring him, she slips it into her jeans' waistband and pulls on her sweater, which is not as stained.

FAYED (CONT.)

Body armor?

She stops with a sigh and looks at him. He smiles warmly. She leans forward, reaches in his jacket for his pack of cigarettes. Fishing one out, she slips it into her lips.

FAYED

Caesar's wronged you... You. A woman who he...

Virginia looks at him as she takes out a matchbook from Red's Bar, and then strikes one to life.

FAYED (CONT.)

...he obviously underestimated. I would not do you such disservice.

She lights the cigarette. Taking a drag, she pockets his cigarettes as Mustafa arrives with a bottle.

MUSTAFA

Oxycontin. Please to take two.

Virginia shakes out three pills and puts them on the cart.

FAYED

But, you are now a marked woman.

VIRGINIA

They think I'm a rat.

She uses the bottle to grind the pills into powder. Still holding her cigarette, she leans over and snorts the grains. Mustafa makes a face and walks away.

FAYED

Nasty.

She grins at him and dabs at her nose before taking a drag.

VIRGINIA

You flirting with me, Fayed?

FAYED

I'm saying you won't die if
there's no one to kill you.

VIRGINIA

And you plan to get all of them?

FAYED

You killed Keno. And that means
Caesar is left in command.

She gives him a cynical smirk.

VIRGINIA

He wants me dead and since I was...
so close, you figured I want to
help you.

FAYED

Outside this place, is there
anywhere you can go where someone
won't put a bullet in you?

She tosses away the cigarette and pulls out her revolver.

VIRGINIA

That include you?

Several of Fayed's men draw guns on her. Virginia shrugs
and points the pistol at her head. Fayed raises his hands.

VIRGINIA

Maybe, I'll just save you the
trouble.

She glares and thumbs back the hammer.

FAYED

This helps no one.

VIRGINIA

Like I give a fuck...

FAYED

Don't give him the satisfaction.

She exhales a laugh and lowers the gun.

VIRGINIA

Satisfaction?

He shrugs.

FAYED

I didn't know what else to say...
and after you've already left all
that blood in my car.

VIRGINIA

Let me sleep on it.

INT HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Diego lays in bed, a pair of IV's in his arm and an oxygen
hose clipped to his nostril. He rouses as the door opens.
The room is out of focus for him. He can hear VOICES.

BODYGUARD

Diego, its Caesar...

Diego manages to nod. Caesar pulls at his shirt cuffs.

CAESAR

Leave us. This is family.

The bodyguard nods and goes out into the hall. Diego tries
to sit up as Caesar approaches.

CAESAR

No, don't get up, cousin.

DIEGO

Ooo... Hola'.

Caesar manages a grin.

CAESAR

Even as a boy, you were strong.

He pulls over a chair and sits on the edge of the seat.

CAESAR

We have a problem, you and I.

Diego nods.

CAESAR (CONT.)

Things have gotten out of control.
You let down your guard, and now
look. Look at what has happened.

Diego tries to speak, but only a small sound comes.

CAESAR (CONT.)

You said yourself, fuck family, just get a piece of that. It's okay... I've known about it for a while. You banging her kept her happy and I knew where she'd be.

Diego closes his eyes and sighs.

CAESAR (CONT.)

Keno is dead, Miho.

DIEGO

Pa... pa... Popi?

CAESAR

That bitch came right into his house. She shot him in the head.

DIEGO

Popi...

CAESAR (CONT.)

He was weak, Diego. You know that, right? That's how she got him. He was weak for whores... and it cost him everything. He let her walk right in. Tomas said she was with some whores and walked right in!

Caesar leaps out his seat, pointing a finger at Diego. Tears are welling up in Diego's eyes. He doesn't notice as Caesar moves the Nurse Call button off the bed.

DEIGO

Vir-gie? I...

CAESAR

You are like him, Diego. You let a woman corrupt you. That's why you dishonor your fiancé'... That's why you couldn't do what needed to be done! You're just like him!!

Diego begins to the shake his head, slowly.

CAESAR (CONT.)

My father trusted Keno, as I trusted you. So, now it is up to me to make things right. I'm going take our vengeance for Keno out on her when I see her next...

CAESAR (CONT.)

I'm going to show our southern friends we mean business and I'm going to get the respect for my father's name your father lost!

Caesar steps closer, grabbing Diego by his jaw and glares at him. Diego freezes, a tear streams down his face. His eyes have turned to icy fear.

CAESAR

We need a fresh start, Miho.

Caesar grows even closer, sitting on his cousin's legs.

CAESAR (CONT.)

It's what we need; a fresh start.

He fishes into his jacket and pulls out a small baggie. In it are a syringe and a vial. Diego squirms, but Caesar holds him fast.

CAESAR (CONT.)

No option keeps our dignity. They will see you and know that you were weak... She bested you.

He takes out the syringe and fills it from the vial. Diego exhales hard, his breath staggered. Caesar pouts.

CAESAR (CONT.)

This way is best. It won't hurt.

Caesar turns and injects the needle into the IV tube. Diego resigns himself to what's coming. Caesar leans forward and kisses his cousin's forehead.

CAESAR (CONT.)

Now, take your rest.

The drugs are already affecting Diego as he lies back in the bed. Caesar tucks the medicine back in the bag, stands and walks out.

INT STOREROOM - DAY

Virginia sleeps on a small cot, among several others, where some of Fayed's men sleep. Mustafa enters, with a bowl of soup, tea pot and cup on a tray. He sets it on a nearby table. He notices her hung up jacket and pats the pockets.

VIRGINIA (OS)
Find anything?

MUSTAFA
First do no harm...

Virginia sits up.

VIRGINIA
What?

MUSTAFA
Hippocratic oath. A doctor swears
that he will not hurt someone in
his care. I don't wish you to have
the Oxycontin.

VIRGINIA
Believe me, the O.C. helps.

MUSTAFA
It will not be enough, someday.

Fayed enters, smiling.

FAYED
Good. You are awake and better.

VIRGINIA
Awake I will agree to.

Fayed turns over the cup and pours her some tea.

FAYED
A little something to fortify
yourself with. Things to do. We
must prepare for tonight.

VIRGINIA
Tonight?

FAYED
Yes.

He holds out the cup. Virginia sits all the way up and
turns to sit on the edge of the cot. She sips at the
steaming drink, letting it ease down.

FAYED
I have called your boyfriend...

VIRGINIA
Ex-boyfriend.

FAYED

He has been trying to sell the rest the product from St. Maria's. He has agreed to my offer, but won't say where until a half-hour before. Do you know the possible meeting place he would suggest?

VIRGINIA

He didn't talk about business.

FAYED

A private place he'd feel safe?

She takes another sip and nods.

VIRGINIA

That will cost you.

FAYED

Name your price.

VIRGINIA

I want you to give me a ride.

EXT CEMETARY - DAY

Fayed's Mercedes pulls to a stop on a drive path through rolling hills of markers and tombstones. The rear door opens and Virginia steps out, carrying a small bouquet of flowers. She crosses the lawn as Fayed watches from inside the car. He lights a cigar.

FAYED

Keep it running.

EXT GRAVESITE - DAY

Virginia walks up to a small stone that reads, "Lillian Ann Wills, November 3, 2008 - November 4, 2008"

VIRGINIA

Hey, Lilly... It's your Mom.

She kneels down and places the flowers on the stone, reading the etching. She runs a hand through her hair.

VIRGINIA

Shit. I missed your birthday... aww. I'm sorry, honey. Dammit.

She sits on the ground and takes out a cigarette. Lighting it, she takes a puff and glances back to Fayed.

VIRGINIA

Your momma really screwed up.

She exhales the smoke with a sigh.

VIRGINIA

People are supposed to want babies... and be happy when one's coming. I didn't want a baby. You were gonna' ruin everything.

Virginia takes another puff.

VIRGINIA (CONT.)

I saw your little heart going whoosh-whoosh-whoosh on that machine... so hard and so fast... You were squirming' around, like you knew I was watching. Showing off.

Another puff.

VIRGINIA (CONT.)

Then, that night when my belly hurt so bad. They told me your little heart stopped... I knew it was my fault. I made you come down from Heaven, and you spent your one day in a goddamned plastic box. Never even got to hold you.

She takes a last drag and tosses the butt.

VIRGINIA (CONT.)

But, wasn't all my fault. Your Daddy had a hand in this, too. So, I'm gonna' go talk to him.

She has a last look at the stone and lets out her breath.

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Fayed's Mercedes, followed by an SUV, pulls through the gate. A pair of Mendoza's SUVs sit at angles in front of the building, flanked by gunmen. The Syrians pull to a stop. Several of Fayed's people climb out of the truck and from the front of the car.

The opposing gunmen acknowledge each other. A Syrian opens the back door of the Mercedes and Fayed steps out. He takes a puff on his cigar. He strides to the front of his car.

FAYED

Here is my show of good faith,
Mendoza. I stand before you. No
middlemen... no intermediary. Just
two businessmen...

The PA speaker crackles.

CAESAR*

(filtered through PA)
And your other gesture is that
you've brought the money.

Fayed looks up at the PA speaker mounted on a post. Caesar stands at a large window overlooking the lot below.

FAYED

This is trust? I come here at my
own personal risk to do a favor
for a competitor.

CAESAR*

Buying my product for sixty cents
on the dollar is only doing
yourself a favor.

Fayed takes a puff on his smoke.

FAYED

You could find another distributor
who would offer such a price
knowing how much heat is on you.
But, there is none.

CAESAR*

Let's see the cash then, Sadir.

FAYED

And this mystical product?

CAESAR*

Open it up!

The warehouse doors open. Inside the massive structure is a single St. Maria's semi-trailer. The truck backs slowly out, between the two parked SUVs. One gunman approaches the back and unlatches the door. The Syrians raise weapons.

FAYED

You would go to this much trouble
for a trick?

The truck doors open. The trailer contains a single pallet
of St. Maria charity boxes. A gunny pulls one of them out.

FAYED

No. Choose another, please.

CAESAR*

Now, where is the trust?

The gunman looks up at Caesar. His boss nods and the man
pulls another box off the stack. Fayed makes a gesture at
one of his thugs. The Syrian takes the box and opens the
container and pulls out a wrapped bundle. He sniffs at it,
then tears a small hole and examines the contents.

FAYED (OS)

Of course I trust you. But, maybe
somewhere along the line...
something happened to it?

The gunny nods and gives the box back to the Mendoza thug.

CAESAR*

You wish to check others?

FAYED

Of course not. If there is a
problem, I know where to find you.

CAESAR*

Your turn, Fayed...

FAYED

I wanted you to be put at ease.

A Syrian walks to the Mercedes and opens the back door.
Several of the Mendozas raise weapons, as Virginia climbs
out. She carries a briefcase and strides toward Fayed.

INT OFFICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Caesar comes to the windowsill, and glares down at his
guests in the parking lot. He drops the PA microphone.

CAESAR

What is this? What is this!?!

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Fayed spreads his arms in a shrug.

FAYED
This is your money, my friend.
Exactly as you requested.

CAESAR
No! You snake, this is your idea
of a joke?

Caesar disappears from sight. Fayed turns to her, smiling.

FAYED
He must hold a special place for
you in his heart...

VIRGINIA
You always do business this way?

FAYED
Only with special people... soon.

She nods. The fire exit door BANGS open and Caesar storms across the lot - a small chrome automatic in his hand.

CAESAR
You come here to insult me?

FAYED
A gift... someone told me you have
been searching for this woman. I
have brought her to you.

Caesar does not acknowledge Fayed; his eyes fixed on her.

CAESAR
Buenos nochas, Virginia...

VIRGINIA
Caesar.

CAESAR
We have unfinished business.

VIRGINIA
I know.

CAESAR
And Diego will not be joining us.

She lets his words wash over her and she nods. He puts his pistol into his coat pocket.

FAYED

Then, we have a deal? And I won't even ask for the amount of the contract you had on her.

CAESAR

Appears you've clinched it.

FAYED (OS)

Excellent. Then, we shall unload.

Caesar glances up at Virginia, but something else catches his eye. Behind her, something glimmers. Across the street, he can make out a silhouette on the fire escape of neighboring building. The form holds a rifle.

Caesar steps to Virginia, using her to block the sniper.

CAESAR

This was unexpected.

VIRGINIA

I went to see Lily today.

CAESAR

Lily? Oh... Lily, yes. It's been what, two years?

She nods. Over her shoulder, the gunman moves into the light - holding a rifle clearly pointing at Caesar. Virginia's hand slips under her jacket.

VIRGINIA

Keno told me about... what you did...

The sniper releases his safety.

CAESAR

I see...

VIRGINIA

I can't forgive you...

He glances up at the sniper's shadow again. Virginia grits her teeth and grips her hidden pistol... just as Caesar steps up and embraces her. Her eyes widen.

CAESAR

I'm sorry, V.

She can't hide her puzzlement as he pouts. In her bewilderment, she finds herself embracing him. Fayed glances at the sniper, and then back. He reaches down.

FAYED

No!

Virginia looks over at him as the Syrians draw weapons.

CAESAR

I'm sorry, to have to do this.

Caesar pulls the automatic from his pocket and brings it up to her temple.

CAESAR

Kill these camel-riding fucks!

The parking lot erupts in gunfire as both sides spray bullets. Each side dives for cover as Caesar pulls Virginia with him toward the warehouse.

EXT FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

The sniper adjusts his aim, but Virginia blocks Caesar.

SNIPER

(Filtered through radio)

No shot... I have no shot.

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Fayed's bodyguard listens on an earpiece radio. He shakes his head at Fayed.

FAYED

Then, kill them both! We're done with the woman.

The bodyguard mumbles a reply into a throat microphone.

Virginia reaches under her jacket as Caesar continues to back toward to the doorway. She pulls out the .38, but he sees her movement. They each seize the other's wrists as they try to bring weapons to bear. One of Caesar's thugs pops up from behind the SUV and grabs Virginia.

BOOM!

The loud crack of the rifle creates an instant ripple of silence. The impact snaps back the thug's head.

Caesar and Virginia fall away from each other as the man collapses to the concrete. In a flash, Caesar is scrambling to the warehouse. Virginia struggles to her feet.

A Mendoza gunny makes a grab for her. Virginia can't pull up her gun fast enough. The thug's shot punches through her jacket, but not her. She quickly pulls the trigger, striking him in the chest twice.

INT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Virginia ducks inside as the melee continues outside. Glancing around the dark, cavernous structure, she spots a staircase. Flickering shadows are accompanied by fleeing footsteps as Caesar dashes up. Huffing out her breath, Virginia turns and pursues.

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Between the sniper and the chatter of submachine guns, the Mendozas are struggling to hold the line at the SUV's.

A spotlight mounted on a truck swings up and shines on the sniper, the glare nearly blinding. Several Mendoza gunnies open up on the hapless rifleman and he's shot to pieces.

At the back of his Mercedes, Fayed reloads his pistol while a bodyguard sprays cover fire at the SUVs.

FAYED

Stupid bitch. She couldn't just die or get out of the way...

INT OFFICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Caesar reaches the top of the stairs. He glances back when he hears someone coming after him. He bolts to the office. Caesar passes the window he had called down from. In the lot below, muzzle blasts can be seen from the firefight.

At the office door, a bodyguard stands ready.

CAESAR

Watch the stairs!

THUG 5

You told me to keep an eye on...

CAESAR

Go to the stairs!

The guard nods and races off. Caesar watches him before going inside the office and bolting the door.

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Fayed pops up and fires several shots at the pockmarked SUVs. The Mendozas are retreating to the warehouse. His bodyguard pulls out two grenades from his belt.

FAYED

That's what I'm talking about.

He takes one. The two men nod, pull the pins and throw. The baseball-sized bombs bounce inside the warehouse door.

INT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

At the top of the stairs, Virginia watches the doorway. Trying to catch her breath, she spots the gunny peeking out. She jumps back, firing a wild shot on reflex.

The thug pulls back, but then jumps forward - spraying the stairwell. Virginia ducks below the landing. The thug leans over, looking down, just as the grenades EXPLODE.

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The blasts rip through the thin metal building. Two remaining Mendozas stagger out and are gunned down.

INT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Startled by the blast echoing through the metal stairs, the gunny stumbles back to the doorway. Crouching, Virginia clasps her hands over her ears, but the bang has her disoriented. She forces herself to peer over the landing, then brings up the .38 and fires twice.

INT OFFICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The gunny flops to the floor, his submachine gun clatters to the concrete. Virginia peers into the UV-lit office and the double doors ahead. She grabs up the submachine gun, her head still ringing. She tries the door, locked.

VIRGINIA

Caesar!

She clumsily rakes the door with bullets.

VIRGINIA
Cee Zee? You son-of-a-bitch!!

Virginia holds the trigger, pouring bullets in the doorknobs and locks, until the weapon is empty.

INT OFFICE - NIGHT

The inside of the door and the metal bar holding it shut have been shredded to pieces. BANG! Virginia kicks it open. One side nearly falls off the broken hinges.

Virginia steps in and glances around the empty room.

She discards the empty submachine gun and pulls out the .38. Caesar appears at the doorway across from her.

CAESAR
Is this what you wanted, Virgie?

She stops. Gritting her teeth, she raises the weapon.

VIRGINIA
I want my baby back...

Behind her, comes a GRUNT! Griselda swings a length of pipe and hits Virginia in the shoulder. The revolver goes flying. Virginia staggers sideways into the wall.

GRISELDA
You can't have him back!

Griselda swings again connecting at Virginia's midsection. She goes down to her knees. Caesar steps into the room.

VIRGINIA
Zelda?

Another swing smashes across the small of her back.

GRISELDA
He's mine now. Fair trade, Virgie.
You take mine, I take yours.

CAESAR
She's quite a talented woman.

She turns to Caesar and kisses him hard.

VIRGINIA

I bet...

GRISELDA

And smart enough to know who held the power in this family. Keno was too busy playing with his whores and Diego... he was sweet, but a woman has practical needs, too.

Caesar puts an arm around her. They look down at Virginia.

CAESAR

I guess women like power.

VIRGINIA

Makes us stupid, huh Zelda?

Griselda kicks Virginia in the ribs, rolling her over.

GRISELDA

You let her talk to you like that?

Noting the newfound silence, Caesar steps to the window and takes out his phone. He presses a key.

CAESAR

Where the fuck are you?

GRISELDA

We don't have much time, baby...
(Another kick)
Between the police and the Arabs...

CAESAR

Fucking towel head just wants the drugs. He can hold that over me. Signed his own fucking warrant...
(Into the phone)
Just get here. That camel jockey fucked us! I want his head.

Griselda watches over Virginia, who struggles to her feet, away from them. Zelda grips the pipe, holding it up to swing as she moves to corner Virginia.

GRISELDA

And what about your ex?

He glances away from the phone and shrugs.

GRISELDA

A victim of a vicious
assassination attempt?

CAESAR

Works for me... Just watch her.

(Back to the phone)

Pick us up! We're gonna' roll over
to that little dive of his.

Griselda steps closer to Virginia with a Cheshire cat grin.

GRISELDA

No more fun with me or my Diego...

She swings the rod, but Virginia ducks back. Then, she jumps into Zelda, grabbing the rod at both ends. Spinning around, Virginia brings the metal rod across Zelda's throat and with a vicious twist and hideous CRUNCH - the younger girl's windpipe is crushed. She flops to the floor.

CAESAR

Zel!

Caesar drops his phone on the floor and fumbles in his pocket. Virginia staggers into the hallway as he pulls out his nickel-plated pistol. But, she's out of sight.

INT OFFICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stumbling to the open window, she looks down.

VIRGINIA

Fayed! Up here!

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

In the lot below, the Syrians are loading the SUVs with cartons of drugs. Fayed smiles at her and waves goodbye.

VIRGINIA (OS)

Son of a bitch...

INT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Virginia turns around to face Caesar. His cool demeanor is now a murderous glare. He ROARS at her, enraged beyond words. The automatic booms and Virginia stumbles back as she's hit in the stomach by the bullet. Caesar looks down.

CAESAR

You. Little. Cunt. Of all the things you've done. You'd come here with that low-life...

(Yells out the window)

Take it, you son of a bitch!

Payback is coming!

He fires out the window as Fayed retreats.

EXT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Fayed's Mercedes leads the convoy of SUV's out of the lot; leaving a number of bodies scattered on the ground.

INT WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Virginia slumps against the grey block wall, Caesar's bullet seems to have taken her last energies from her. She rolls her head to see him standing over her.

CAESAR

Why? Why couldn't you just die?

As she gropes for her pistol, he looks down in disgust and kicks her injured ribs. She yelps and flops backwards.

CAESAR (CONT.)

You're a user... look at you.

Whatever you can take, you take.

You took from your mother... that old nigger who raised you... Me...

Sadir... Never cared for anyone. So, now no one cares or wants to save you. Poor little damsel.

Virginia grits her teeth and forces herself to sit up.

CAESAR (CONT.)

You were a good fuck once, Virgie.

Damn good fuck when I met you.

But, you started popping pills and the booze. You weren't such a good fuck anymore. And then, you go and get pregnant. My uncle...

He rolls his eyes with a sigh.

CAESAR (CONT.)

My uncle says a man is supposed to be responsible... and I didn't dare tell Mama... I ended up telling Zelda. Griselda understood. She was supposed to be Diego's, but she wanted to be mine. She liked the power and he never wanted it. We thought maybe sometime you'd take too much dope and I wouldn't have to hide our little... mistake. But, then you become fuckin' Mary of Nazareth. No dope... no drinking...

VIRGINIA

Bite me...

He looks down at her and grins. Her face is reddening.

CAESAR

You even started to look good again... even glow a little. But, us married would break Mama's heart. So, I asked Richie to cook up something and spike you with it.

Tears silently stream down Virginia's cheek.

CAESAR

I didn't know it was gonna' tear up your insides so bad... Guess it's my fault you started hitting the O.C., uh? Kill the pain? We only hurt the ones we love.

He squats down in front of her and wipes away a tear.

VIRGINIA

You... don't know pain.

She tries to laugh through the sniffles. His look of pity fades into disgust. He glances over to Griselda's body.

CAESAR

I think I do. You fucked my cousin... killed my uncle... now Zelda. I think I loved her. She was a good woman... nothing you'd ever know anything about...

He puts his hand to her throat and the automatic against her temple. She closes her eyes. CLICK.

Surprised, he works the pistol action and checks the magazine. It's empty. He grabs up her .38 and points it at her. CLICK.

CAESAR

Dammit!

Standing, he checks his pockets. Virginia manages a laugh.

CAESAR

I come back; the last place I'm shooting you is the fucking head. And you'll welcome it. Then, I'll put your dead ass in a box and ship it to that towel head fucker!

He stomps across the concrete floor and into the office; slamming the door out of anger. She glances down at her .38 pistol, lying on the concrete floor.

VIRGINIA (VO)

I'm sorry, Momma...

She reaches out and picks it up.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Sorry I was never your perfect little angel...

The cylinder opens and the empty shell casings spill out. She finds the single unused bullet. She puts the round back and closes the cylinder.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Your little girl still ended up in the gutter.

Turning the cylinder, she lines up the bullet behind the pin and thumbs back the hammer.

VIRGINIA (VO)

One bullet... one's enough.

She looks into the darkened barrel where the bullet waits.

BLACK

VIRGINIA (VO)

Lily... sorry I never got to meet you. I tried to make it right...

INT WAREHOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

Caesar rifles the drawers of an old desk. He comes out with a pistol magazine. There's a metallic BANG. He turns. The steel door swings open and slams against the wall as Virginia staggers through the doorway.

CAESAR

Shit!

Caesar's eyes widen and he swivels to shoot.

VIRGINIA

Come on, Caesar! Welcome it!

She raises the .38. Both guns erupt. Caesar lurches as he's hit in the chest. He tries to shoot again, but his arm won't come up. The automatic falls to the concrete as he clutches his chest. He puts his other arm down for support.

VIRGINIA

Why couldn't I just die?

She shuffles toward him, holding her stomach.

VIRGINIA (CONT)

Maybe... some part of me really wanted that baby.

He looks up at her. She smiles weakly. He exhales with a cough and collapses.

VIRGINIA (VO)

Maybe... *she* could have saved me...

She sways. Looking down at her stomach, blood drips between her fingers and down to the floor. Virginia collapses.

CROSS-FADE

VIRGINIA'S P.O.V. / INT AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Red and blue lights swirl as she rouses. Two paramedics load the gurney she is on into an ambulance. She glances up to them as one fixes an IV bottle to a roof hook. Sights and sounds blend in a blur. Parke appears at the door.

PARKE (OS)

Parke, eighth precinct.

EMS 1 (OS)

No time, detective. Losing her...

EXT CEMETARY - DAY

Kneeling on the grass, Virginia sets a small stuffed bear in front of Lily's grave marker. A cigarette hangs between the fingers of her scarred, but healed hand.

VIRGINIA

Happy birthday, little lady...

She grunts in pain and turns over to sit on the ground.

VIRGINIA (CONT.)

Yeah, I know... I'm way early.
But, I probably won't be here.
(Take a drag on her smoke)
Or next Christmas either.

She closes her eyes, with a sigh.

VIRGINIA (CONT.)

I gotta' go away for a while. A
lot of people are lookin' for your
Momma right now and I don't feel
like bein' shot again.

Opens her eyes and takes another drag.

VIRGINIA (CONT.)

Hey, maybe I'll go out West; go
back to school. Find a real man.
Get a real job.
(Laughs at the thought)
Maybe...

She struggles to stand, careful not to pull her shoulder.

VIRGINIA (CONT)

Well, you're Mom can dream right?
(Tosses away the cigarette)
Coldern' a witch's tit out here...
I'm gonna' go. I'll come back and
see you sometimes. Promise.

Virginia takes a last look, then turns. A few markers away stands Detective Parke. She nods.

DET. PARKE

Didn't want to be rude.

VIRGINIA

Guess you need to put the cuffs
back on me.

DET. PARKE

I'd be derelict not to, but -

He holds up the cuffs. She nods and raises her hands. He slips them back into his coat pocket.

DET. PARKE

Word came back. They're dropping the case against you. Not enough. Just have your claim of self-defense on the original assault. No reliable witness from Richie's. And, you got an alibi. A.D.A. talked to a Mrs. Debra Fraggetti, formerly Debra Wills. She swears you stayed at her house last week and had gone to that warehouse to break it off with your boyfriend. You just caught got in the middle.

VIRGINIA

Thanks, Mom.

DET. PARKE

And we both know its bullshit. You still need help.

VIRGINIA

Think you can give me a ride uptown? Still can't drive either.

She laughs, and then grimaces in pain. Parke reaches in his pocket and pulls out a pill bottle.

DET. PARKE

Here. I get migraines sometimes.

She looks at the bottle a moment, and then shakes her head.

VIRGINIA

I think I can live with this. Been numb for more than two years...

He nods and walks away. Alone, a sudden breeze reminds her to tighten her coat. But then, she looks up, spreads her arms and lets the next gust blow it open. Feeling the brisk wind whip through her hair, she closes her eyes and smiles.

BLACK

VIRGINIA (VO)

Pain lets us know we're alive.