

"KUNG-FU"

**Theatrical Motion Picture
Screenplay by**

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**Based on the "KUNG-FU"
Television Series
Created by Ed Spielman**

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FADE IN:

EXT. PEKING, CHINA - THE FORBIDDEN CITY - NIGHT

WE ESTABLISH the Forbidden City in all of its splendor and intrigue. It is a moonlit night over the palace grounds. Fiery urns impart a mysterious glow.

SUPER:

PEKING, CHINA
THE FORBIDDEN CITY - 1829

INT. PALACE OF THE EMPEROR - NIGHT

Inside the palace of Emperor Hsien Feng. A palace EUNUCH, a near giant six and a half feet tall, and dressed befitting a royal servant, walks in the darkened maze of corridors. The Eunuch carries something weighty over his right shoulder and covered with an ornate sheet-like cloth embroidered with dragons, a phoenix and imperial colors. The object beneath it is completely hidden. As he walks through passages illuminated by torches...

IMPERIAL GUARDS allow him to pass...

SUPER: OPENING CREDITS

THE EUNUCH makes his way to a central chamber protected by TWO IMPERIAL GUARDS. The Eunuch knocks and enters...

INT. IMPERIAL BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is the bedroom of the Emperor of China. The Manchu Ruler, HSIEN FENG, in his early 20's, has retired for the night. From under the covers, he looks wordlessly at the Eunuch. The giant servant carefully places the bundle on the floor at the foot of the bed, and kneels beside it. He whispers to whatever is under the ornate covering.

EUNUCH

*Once in ten thousand lifetimes
comes such an opportunity. Make
the most of it.*

The Eunuch pulls away the covering. There on the floor is a beautiful SIXTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL, stark naked. (We see only her outline in the striations of moonlight which filter into the chamber). The Eunuch announces...

EUNUCH (CONT'D)
Fourth Class Concubine, Onala,
Your Majesty.

HSIEN FENG motions with a wave of his hand for the Eunuch to leave. The big man bows his head and departs.

We do not see the girl's nakedness in the shadows, only her face, hauntingly beautiful. Her black hair is long and luxuriant, her features fine and classical. There is also a distinguishing trait that immediately sets her apart: her eyes are gray in color, the gaze penetrating, almost hypnotic. Her eyes also betray another aspect... cunning. The lovely face masks a creature of remarkable self-will. In this lowly state, so naked and vulnerable, her eyes nevertheless reveal a shrewdness and acuity beyond her years.

The Emperor raises the covers. Knowing what is expected of her, the girl, one of hundreds available to him, crawls across the floor and into his bed.

SLOW FADE OUT

SUPER-CRAWL:

AFTER ONLY ONE NIGHT, ONALA BECAME A FIRST CLASS CONCUBINE. IN TIME, SHE PRODUCED THE EMPEROR'S SOLE MALE HEIR. WHEN THE CELESTIAL RULER DIED, BY RIGHT OF SUCCESSION, HER SON ASCENDED THE THRONE AND BECAME... THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

FADE IN:

INT. MANCHU IMPERIAL COURT - DAY

SUPER: THIRTY YEARS LATER...

The throne room of the Manchu Imperial Court, a place of extraordinary decadence and opulence beyond measure.

The young Emperor, TONGZHI occupies the Celestial throne. He is dressed in the splendor of embroidered yellow robes (royal color). Though only in his twenties, despite the finery, he is gaunt, his eyes hollow and vacant.

A YOUNG painted FEMALE PROSTITUTE sits at his right foot like a mascot, her arms around his knee.

An effeminate YOUNG MALE PROSTITUTE in an identical posture is on his left side.

TONGZHI is dissipated, ravished by his licentious life.

In attendance are OFFICERS OF THE COURT, GUARDS and the ever present sinister EUNUCHS.

ANGLE ON a MANCHU GENERAL and his AIDES who appear at Court, still fresh from a battlefield. All is not well.

TONGZHI

What news of the Northern rebellion?

MANCHU GENERAL

The rebel army is resisting.
Perhaps if we had more troops...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(sotto)

LIAR!

TONGZHI

(repeating to General)

LIAR!

BEHIND THE THRONE is a magnificently carved screen. THE CAMERA MOVES AROUND IT to the back side, where we find...

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS - ONALA, the former Concubine, now called 'Tzu Hsi'. The hardness of her now 42 year old face imparts an older appearance. Her gray eyes, the cold and penetrating gaze make it evident; this is that once naked girl at the foot of the bed. She is seated in a throne-like chair. Her heavy face makeup is in the style of the period. Her pinky and ring fingers have nine inch fingernails. Her feet are bound. She is dressed in spectacular Imperial robes of embroidered yellow silk and adorned with fabulous jewels. She speaks through the screen with a whisper that only her son can hear.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

The battle is already lost.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCREEN, TONGZHI parrots her words.

TONGZHI

The battle is already lost.

The MANCHU GENERAL is shocked at the rebuff, that the truth already confronts him. He falls to one knee.

MANCHU GENERAL

Forgive me. I have failed you,
Your Majesty. I beg for my life.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

You beg for what is worthless.
Throw him down the well!

TONGZHI

Throw him down the well!

GUARDS immediately seize the General and drag him away.

TONGZHI

(through screen)
What should I do now?

DOWAGER EMPRESS

(through screen)
Nothing. The matter has already
been dealt with.

CU - THE DOWAGER EMPRESS

WE HOLD on the face of the indomitable woman behind the screen who is, in fact, the actual Ruler of China.

EXT. PLAINS OF CHINA - DAY

A SMALL CONTINGENT of MANCHUS walks with banners flying. There are FOUR IMPERIAL GUARDS...and ONE OTHER MAN.

SAI FONG (20's), looks curiously 'Western' in a black suit and bowler hat. His hair is worn long. At first glance, there is nothing overtly impressive about him... except for an air of quiet confidence.

WE PULL BACK to reveal we are in the midst of what was a recent BATTLEFIELD. The aftermath, the dead and detritus of war litter the plains. Many of the fallen wear the colors of the Imperial Army of the Manchus.

WE PAN TO THE VICTORIOUS REBEL CAMP. FLAGS flutter in the breeze and hostilities have ceased for the moment.

THE REBEL CAMP is an army of desperate men, a legion from the bottom of Chinese society. They are battle hardened, armed to the teeth and number in the thousands.

SAI FONG and the IMPERIAL GUARDS walk through the victorious enemy camp, ignoring the taunts of the Rebels who line the way.

EXT. REBEL CAMP - DAY

Outside a large tent is WU LIN (30's), the rebel leader who stands with several of his GENERALS. A RUNNER hurriedly approaches.

RUNNER

(to Wu Lin)

Sir, an emissary from the Manchus approaches under a flag of truce.

WU LIN and his Generals are in good spirits. Wu Lin is different from the others, curiously intellectual.

WU LIN

Send him to me.

The senior of WU LIN's GENERALS is HAN FEI.

GENERAL HAN FEI

So many battles. We have waited a long time for this...

WU LIN and his Generals enter the tent.

INT. TENT - DAY

WU LIN and the rebel Generals wait, secure in their position.

With the four Imperial Guards remaining outside, THE TENT FLAP OPENS And SAI FONG enters.

SAI FONG

I bring greetings from Tongzhi, Celestial Emperor of all China.

GENERAL HAN FEI

(bristling)

*I wipe my backside with Tongzhi!
...syphilitic imbecile...whelp of
a Fourth Class Concubine.*

The Generals laugh. WU LIN raises his hand for quiet.

WU LIN

(to Sai Fong)

You're here to discuss surrender...

SAI FONG nods his assent. Wu Lin and the Generals smile.

WU LIN (CONT'D)

Good. So, the Dowager accepts...

SAI FONG

Not ours...yours.

The Rebels are taken aback. Wu Lin almost laughs. He studies Sai Fong, now with more interest.

GENERAL HAN FEI

Impudence! We slaughter the Manchu dogs and they send this lackey to insult us.

SAI FONG remains patient and impassive at the insults.

WU LIN

Is the Empress so stupid? You are losing, while our army grows stronger by the day.

SAI FONG

That's why I'm here.

WU LIN

If the Concubine wishes to save face, well...I am a reasonable man. We can negotiate.

SAI FONG

I'm afraid that's not possible.

WU LIN

Not possible?

SAI FONG

(a dark smile)

One cannot negotiate...with the dead.

There is a moment of stunned silence before the words register. Sai Fong has attended not to negotiate...but to kill them.

Without warning, a stroke of his hand releases A SPRAY OF POISON DARTS. FOUR MEN fall at the same time. Suddenly all hell breaks loose.

The DOZEN REBEL LEADERS are all armed with knives and swords, but Sai Fong is a man of remarkable skills. They are no match for him.

One of the Generals throws a knife. Incredibly, with one move, SAI FONG deflects it in flight, and that same momentum carries the blade into another General.

Sai Fong, an executioner 'from the dark side', strikes lethal blows in fractions of a second.

EXT. TENT - DAY

While the Imperial Guards wait nervously, the sound of mayhem in the tent causes many of the WAITING REBELS to smirk, sure that the emissary is being torn to pieces.

INT. TENT - DAY

The bodies of all twelve GENERALS litter the tent.

WU LIN, the last rebel standing, has two swords and is a 'Master of the Two Blade Form'. The swords are a buzz saw in his hands.

Amazingly, Sai Fong evades Wu Lin's attack, and literally 'runs' several steps up a vertical tent post to back somersault over the advancing rebel leader. On the way down, he merely 'taps' Wu Lin with his fingers on the back of the neck.

SAI FONG lands behind him in a corner of the tent. Wu Lin spins and advances again, has Sai Fong cornered... But, Sai Fong just looks at him...calmly folding his arms.

WU LIN suddenly stops in mid-step and begins to tremble, confusion on his face. The blades fall from his hands.

WU LIN

What did you...?

SAI FONG

The Touch of Death. Dim Muk.

As if he had been hit by delayed high voltage to his central nervous system...WU LIN falls. Gasping for breath, he looks up at Sai Fong, disbelieving his fate.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

By the time I explain...you'll be with your ancestors.

SAI FONG looks around, surveys his handiwork. Then, he casually looks down at Wu Lin, almost with pity.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

Foolish...to put all your Generals in one place.

It is the last thing Wu Lin hears...his eyes close.

EXT. TENT - DAY

THE TENT FLAP OPENS and SAI FONG EXITS. The rebel soldiers outside peek in, see the carnage...and recoil.

SAI FONG eyes the mob...and they step back as if from death itself. His Imperial Guards begin his return through the enemy camp with banners flying.

MANCHU IMPERIAL GUARD
MAKE WAY! MAKE WAY FOR SAI FONG..!

WHISPERS spread among the rebels that it is SAI FONG... "THE RED GHOST". At the mention of his name, those of the now leaderless rebels shrink back. His power has been revealed. The rebel leaders are dead, insurrection over.

EXT. SHAOLIN TEMPLE - DAY

The geography is high and mountainous, with snow capped peaks in the BG. It looks like Tibet...

ESTABLISHING: THE SHAOLIN TEMPLE

Stark and imposing, built of stone blocks with high walls and few windows. Two massive doors are the only entrance guarded by a pair of large stone 'Fu Dogs'.

A SMALL GROUP OF BOYS (average age 11 to 13) waits in the open, milling about a distance away from the Temple gates. Their attention is suddenly drawn as...

WE HEAR the SOUND of THE TEMPLE GATE OPENING.

A MONK, MASTER KE stands framed in the doorway. He is of medium build and height with fierce, deep set eyes. His physical presence is lean, cat-like. His shaved head and black flowing robe cut an imposing figure. The boys are cowed by the suddenness of his appearance. The Monk takes two resolute steps forward. His feet are bare.

He firmly points out FOUR of THE BOYS...and motions them to step aside. They do. He emphatically waves his hand and dismisses the others.

MASTER KE

Go home.

The Boys hesitate. The Monk picks up a handful of pebbles, charges a few steps forward and throws them.

MASTER KE (CONT'D)

GO HOME!

The Boys scatter in full flight. KE returns inside the temple, shutting the gate with a resounding thud.

The FOUR BOYS stand bewildered and looking after him.

ANGLE ON the TALLEST BOY who is racially different from the others, evidently not purely of Chinese blood. He is KWAI CHANG CAINE (ten years old). Despite his youth, he is remarkably resolute, one who has somehow already been tested by life, yet still a child. His clothes are worn. He seems mature beyond his years.

One of the other boys is YI CHUAN (literally 'One Fist'), an introspective youth...with one good arm. The other is withered and useless as a result of an obvious birth defect. He bears his problems with a good natured stoicism and an absence of self-pity. Yet, the uncertainty of what happens next is written on his face.

CAINE sits beside him and smiles. Yi Chuan smiles back.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. SAME SCENE - NEXT DAY

The sun is shining. The Four Boys continue to wait.

EXT. SAME SCENE - NIGHT

We HEAR muffled night NOISES. Other boys are asleep, but CAINE is awake...looking at the gate, expressionless.

FLASHBACK

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Amidst flying sea birds and rolling surf, AN OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDSON are the only two souls on the beach. CAINE is nine, with an innocence about him.

His grandfather, 'OLD FOX' CHANG, a wealthy and scholarly man, finishes tying a cloth tail to a CHINESE BOX KITE. The LONG CLOTH IS EMBLAZONED WITH CHINESE WRITING.

CAINE

Now, Grandpa?

'OLD FOX'

Yes, now.

CAINE runs a few yards with the kite and the ocean breeze takes it. THE KITE SOARS, tail whipping in the breeze.

ANGLE on CAINE and his GRANDFATHER admiring their handiwork. The kite continues its ascent.

CAINE

It's a good kite.

'OLD FOX' CHANG

Better still with a prayer on its tail.

THE KITE SOARS HIGH UP. CAINE follows its course.

CAINE

Look how high...

'OLD FOX' CHANG

Ready?

THE BOY excitedly anticipates as...his Grandfather cuts the silk string. THE BOX KITE SOARS UPWARDS. They follow it until it is almost out of sight.

CAINE

Will it go all the way?

'OLD FOX' CHANG

All the way to your mother and father...in Heaven.

THE KITE disappears from view.

YOUNG CAINE is thoughtful, then sad.

CAINE

I can hardly remember them.

His Grandfather quietly produces a small gift.

'OLD FOX' CHANG

Now, you will. I made this for you...

CLOSEUP - A SMALL IVORY DISC, oval and perhaps two inches long. On it is an artfully etched portrait of a young woman and her husband. Chang's daughter (Caine's Mother) is full-blooded Chinese, young and elegant. Her husband is Caucasian, tall with a Sea Captain's hat. The image of Caine's parents is as meticulous as a photograph. On the back of the small ivory portrait are the characters for the family name: CHANG. The pendant is on a gold chain.

CAINE marvels at the little portrait. CHANG slips the chain over the boy's head. Caine hugs his grandfather. Chang's expression speaks volumes, the love and loss they both feel, the bond between them.

THE OLD MAN and THE BOY walk down the beach together.

CAINE

Was it here?

'OLD FOX' CHANG

Right here, we found him.

CAINE

Tell me about the boat.

'OLD FOX' CHANG

Your father's boat? No one ever saw one like it. It came out of the typhoon like a dark cloud. A 'privateer', very long, with three tall masts...mahogany and teak with brass fittings. And loaded with silk for the West. He was a fine sailor, but even the best Captain can't hold back the wind.

OLD CHANG indicates the rocks offshore.

'OLD FOX' CHANG (CONT'D)

The typhoon took the boat onto those rocks. It broke apart... over there. Only he survived. He was very strong. Your mother was eighteen then. She found him washed up on this beach. I carried him in the rain. That was in the years of famine. We had no food, but we saved him, your father...

THE OLD MAN and THE BOY continue down the beach...

OUT OF FLASHBACK

EXT. SHAOLIN TEMPLE - DAY

It is RAINING HEAVILY. CAINE waits with the water running down his face.

EXT. OUTER TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

From behind the heavy wall, a small panel is slid open and MASTER KE peeks surreptitiously at the waiting boys.

FROM HIS POV - TWO OF THE BOYS give up, leaving only CAINE and YI CHUAN.

PAN TO YOUNG CAINE.

A RESONANT MALE VOICE (MASTER KHAN) is heard O.S.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

The one to the left. Is that him?

MASTER KE

Yes.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

He has come a long way...

MASTER KE closes the panel.

WE MATCH CUT FROM BLACK TO...

FLASHBACK

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

BLACK NIGHT suddenly illuminated by SHOOTING STARS.

EXT. FORBIDDEN CITY - IMPERIAL COURT - NIGHT

A huge METEOR SHOWER lights up the night sky. A major astronomical event, flaming streaks cross the blackness.

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS watches transfixed from a balcony. MEMBERS OF THE COURT gaze skyward, some fearful.

LAO LAA ('OLD LAA'), personal Seer to the Empress, appears. She looks like a Tibetan Witch, lined leathery skin the color of bronze, a face as old as time, otherworldly black eyes, coarse white hair worn long and wild. She wears layers of rough silk in disarray. Lao Laa seems hardly of the present; her gaze is that of a metaphysician. The Old Tibetan has the trust of the Dowager Empress, who trusts virtually no one else.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

Days of rebellion...I am beset by enemies. And now, this.

She gestures up at the exploding Heavens.

DOWAGER EMPRESS (CONT'D)

It is an omen?

LAO LAA

Yes. Not such a thing has been seen in a hundred years...

DOWAGER EMPRESS

You have looked into the green
glass? You know what it means?

LAO LAA nods.

DOWAGER EMPRESS (CONT'D)

Speak, Old Laa.

LAO LAA

It is a sign. I have not slept for
three days, knowing.

She points upward with a gnarled finger.

LAO LAA (CONT'D)

And now, it is here, written in
the Heavens.

(a beat)

One of Impure Blood lives...who
will one day break the power of
the Manchus.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

You have seen it?

LAO LAA

A male child. Born in the Year of
the Tiger. Now ten years old...

DOWAGER EMPRESS

(fear turns to anger)

This destroyer, where is he to be
found?

Several spectacular streaks light up the sky in
succession, all moving in the same direction.

LAO LAA

North...Henan.

THE EMPRESS reaches up and rips a gold chain from her own
neck. On it is A BLACK PEARL THE SIZE OF A PIGEON'S EGG.
It is worth a fortune, but Tzu Hsi hands it to the old
woman. The Seer, taken aback, kisses Tzu Hsi's hand and
departs as quickly as she arrived.

TZU HSI turns to the CHIEF OF HER IMPERIAL GUARDS.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

Your army to Henan. Any male child
of mixed blood...anyone born of
union with a foreign devil. Find
them.

CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS

Yes, my Empress. And then?

DOWAGER EMPRESS

Kill them.

Under her unyielding stare, he nods his assent and EXITS.

THE EMPRESS turns to SAI FONG, her ever present shadow.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

You are my eyes and my right hand.

See to it.

SAI FONG nods his acceptance.

TZU HSI looks up a last time at the streaking lights in the night sky. She retreats back inside the palace as the meteor shower continues unabated.

EXT. 'OLD FOX' CHANG'S MANSION - NIGHT

'OLD FOX' CHANG's MANSION is a fortress surrounded by walls and guards. He is with YOUNG CAINE on a balcony.

With them is Chang's loyal servant, LEE TAM (about 60). From the balcony and their POV...

Below, MANCHU TROOPS can be seen ransacking houses in a small village. ARMED MEN CARRY TORCHES. Peasants run away in fear as Imperial troops move from house to house...

CAINE

(frightened)

Grandpa, what do they want?

'OLD FOX' CHANG puts a comforting arm around him.

'OLD FOX' CHANG

You must go with Tam. Obey him as you would me.

CAINE

No, no, grandpa. I'm frightened. Don't make me go.

'OLD FOX' CHANG

You must.

CAINE

What about you?

'OLD FOX' CHANG
 Don't worry about me. I am not
 'Old Fox' for nothing.

CAINE
 When will I see you again?

'OLD FOX' CHANG
 In time. But, whenever you need
 me...

(touches the boy's heart)
 I'll be right here.

(a beat)
 Now, go with Tam.

TAM begins to escort the boy away. There is eye contact
 between 'Old Fox' and Tam, an understanding between them.

EXT. PEASANT VILLAGE - NIGHT

The CHIEF of IMPERIAL GUARDS is with SAI FONG, the
 burning village in the BG. They survey CHANG's compound.

CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS
 We'll pay a heavy price to take
 this place.

SAI FONG
 Leave 'Old Fox' to me.

EXT. 'OLD FOX' CHANG'S MANSION - NIGHT

Guards patrol Chang's compound. Everyone is on high
 alert. The place looks impregnable, except for...

SAI FONG, who is in the shadows, literally climbing
 straight up a side wall. Strapped to his hands and wrists
 are metal CLAW LIKE APPLIANCES which give him a purchase
 on the sheer vertical face. A small sack on his back and
 in absolute silence, he climbs cat-like onto the roof.

ON THE ROOF, he soundlessly lifts several ceramic roofing
 tiles and sets them aside. With a blade, he cuts a hole
 in the sub-surface under the tiles. It is no more than
 heavy paper over strips of wood with spaces between.

FROM HIS POV - SAI FONG looks directly down on 'OLD FOX'
 CHANG, who is seated on his knees in front of the family
 altar. The 'OLD FOX' seems at peace, eyes half closed in
 meditation. It is as if he knows what is coming.

EXT. REAR OF COMPOUND - NIGHT

TAM (with a bundle slung on his shoulder) and young CAINE are already outside the walls via a rear exit.

TAM hurries the boy into an irrigation canal to circumvent the Manchus who ready their siege of the compound.

CAINE

What about Grandfather? He said we'd...

TAM

Quiet. We follow his wishes. Now, hurry...

They silently wade through the canal. TAM picks the boy up and carries him through the waist deep water.

EXT. 'OLD FOX' CHANG'S MANSION - NIGHT

On the roof, SAI FONG looks down on CHANG. SAI FONG takes the sack from his back, feels carefully and grabs hold of one end of what is moving inside. He produces A BLACK POISONOUS SNAKE, holds it behind the head.

SAI FONG silently guides the viper head-first through the hole in the roof, a cord already tied to the snake's tail. THE SNAKE WRIGGLES IN SPACE as Sai Fong lowers it...DIRECTLY OVER CHANG. THE SNAKE is inches above 'OLD FOX', who turns and finds the viper's eyes looking into his own. THE VIPER STRIKES, killing CHANG almost instantly and without sound.

SAI FONG leaves the snake, lights a torch and scurries across the roof on silent feet...setting the structure ablaze as he goes and disappearing into the shadows.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - NIGHT

TAM and CAINE at a mountain pass, look back at the house and compound, now afire. The boy is filled with fear.

TAM empties the bundle. It is dry peasant's clothes.

TAM

Quickly, give me your clothes and put these on.

CAINE

Grandpa said I must wear this coat.

TAM

Only until now. Give it to me.

YOUNG CAINE quickly changes, gives Tam his coat.

TAM points to the IVORY DISC.

TAM (CONT'D)

And that.

CAINE

No. It's mine.

With urgency, Tam snaps the chain from the boy's neck.

TAM

From here, you go alone.

The Boy reacts with shock.

TAM (CONT'D)

Travel north and only by night. In the highest mountains of Henan you will find a monastery...Shaolin. Until then, trust no one. These are your grandfather's wishes.

TAM turns and hurries down the pass, carrying Caine's clothes. CAINE calls after him. TAM is already gone.

ANGLE ON YOUNG CAINE. Confused and frightened, tears streak down his face. Lost, he moves up the mountain pass, into the night.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

TAM walks among the smoldering remains of the nearby village. A PEASANT WOMAN, dazed and inconsolable, sits beside her burned house and the burned body of her child.

TAM chokes back his compassion. He tosses Caine's clothes into the smoking ashes.

EXT. CHANG'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

SAI FONG and the CHIEF of the IMPERIAL GUARDS have taken Chang's compound, the place a fiery ruin. They turn as...

TWO IMPERIAL GUARDS approach...bracketing TAM, who is carrying the BODY OF A MALE CHILD...wearing young Caine's now scorched clothes.

IMPERIAL GUARD

We caught this one near the
cemetary.

THE CHIEF of IMPERIAL GUARDS looks at the body of the child whose identity is unrecognizable.

CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS

(to Tam)

Who is this?

TAM

It is Chang's grandson...

THE CHIEF of IMPERIAL GUARDS touches the scorched fabric of Caine's coat.

CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS

Fine clothes, but...

SAI FONG considers, then rips open the lining of the child's coat.

GOLD COINS and JEWELS spill out into the dirt.

THE CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS reacts, but SAI FONG is unmoved. He turns out the coat pockets and finds the little ivory portrait on a chain. On the reverse of the disc, SAI FONG reads the family name.

SAI FONG

"Chang".

CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS

The Empress will be pleased.

SAI FONG remains impassive. He peers at Tam, eyes burning into him. TAM holds his gaze, playing the hapless servant. He does not look away.

DISSOLVE TO

OUT OF FLASHBACK

EXT. SHAOLIN TEMPLE - DAY

CAINE and YI CHUAN wait at the Temple Gate. It is only months after young Caine's escape, yet he looks older, drawn, no longer innocent.

THE TEMPLE GATE OPENS and MASTER KE is there once again.

THE TWO REMAINING BOYS snap to attention.

MASTER KE

(softly)

Follow me.

CAINE and YI CHUAN follow KE through the gate and into the outer courtyard of the Shaolin Monastery.

EXT. OUTER COURTYARD - DAY

The boys follow obediently through A SECOND GATE into a large INNER COURTYARD. Here, the floors are smooth white block stone. The surface of the yard is immaculate. There is an aura of serenity about the place. They pause before a door leading to the inner temple.

INT. TEMPLE - DAY

THE BOYS follow KE through a corridor to a room. In the shadows behind a table, is the outline of a seated MONK.

KE motions the boys to sit opposite the shadowy figure. They do so. KE EXITS.

THE BOYS are seated on the gleaming floor facing the figure who is hidden in shadow.

THE MONK leans forward and the ambient light reveals a wizened face of indeterminate age. The Abbot, MASTER CHEN MING KHAN is imposing, yet with a gentleness about him.

MASTER KE returns with THREE CUPS OF TEA. He places one before Khan and one each before the boys.

KHAN motions with his hand for the boys to drink. YI CHUAN reaches for his cup, about to pick it up, but Caine, with utmost subtlety stays his hand.

MASTER KHAN

(to Yi Chuan)

You were wise to follow your friend. Welcome. Please go with Master Ke.

KE and YI CHUAN EXIT.

KHAN studies Caine for a long moment.

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

Why did you not drink?

CAINE

After you, sir.

Khan smiles. He picks up his cup of tea. Caine follows.

MASTER KHAN

Young man, where did you learn
your manners?

CAINE

My grandfather, sir.

MASTER KHAN

He taught you well. Tell me. What
is your name?

CAINE

Kwai Chang Caine.

MASTER KHAN

Caine. Not a Chinese name.

CAINE

My father was American.

MASTER KHAN

Where are your parents now?

CAINE

Both dead.

MASTER KHAN

And your grandfather?

CAINE

I don't know.

Khan studies the boy for a long moment.

MASTER KHAN

The Shaolin Temple has never
accepted anyone of other than full
Chinese birth.

Caine's eyes fall.

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

There is a first for everything.

Caine's face brightens. They finish their tea.

KHAN places his cup on the table, leans forward and opens his right hand. There is a pebble in it.

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

As quickly as you can...snatch the pebble from my hand.

Caine tries, but Khan's hand closes like a flash.

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

When you can take the pebble from my hand, it will be time for you to leave.

(he rises)

Please excuse me.

KHAN exits from the room with soundless steps.

HOLD ON YOUNG CAINE, his face filled with anticipation and the uncertainty of his future.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

There is a timelessness about the smooth ancient stones of the Shaolin Temple Courtyard.

KHAN walks quietly with hands behind his back. He is accompanied by young CAINE, now barefoot and dressed in the robes of a Novice, his head shaven.

MASTER KHAN

Our path is to master anger, fear and the inclination to do evil.

In the central courtyard are SIX GROUPS OF FIVE MEN EACH ... A MASTER AND FOUR DISCIPLES.

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

We strive for Oneness with the Higher Power. Serenity in the midst of conflict. For this, the ancients have taught us to emulate G-d's creatures...

MASTER SUN demonstrates a movement of 'THE WHITE CRANE'.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

The White Crane. From the Crane we learn grace and self control...

Sun executes the graceful and effective Crane movements.

ANOTHER MASTER - 'THE SNAKE' SYSTEM - hands weave in and out...parrying and blocking movements.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

The Snake teaches us resilience
and rhythmic endurance...

ANOTHER MASTER instructs 'THE WAY OF THE EAGLE'. His
fingers evocative of the eagle's talon.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

The Eagle, duality of hard and
soft...

ANGLE ON MASTER KE who reveals 'THE PRAYING MANTIS'.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

The Praying Mantis teaches us
speed...and patience.

KE demonstrates The Praying Mantis forms.

ANOTHER MASTER...'The Way of the Tiger'.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

The Way of the Tiger...tenacity
and power.

The Master's hands move like a tiger's claws.

ANOTHER MASTER performs 'THE DRAGON' SYSTEM.

MASTER KHAN (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

And from the Dragon, we learn to
ride the wind...

THE MASTER OF THE DRAGON SYSTEM appears to ride on the
air as he gracefully executes a flying sidekick.

THE SIX SHAOLIN MASTERS FORM A CIRCLE. At Khan's signal,
all of the disciples rush The Circle in mock attack.

In a whirlwind of martial expertise, we see the Kung-Fu
systems at work...flying bodies, blocked punches and
kicks, footsweeps and throws. None of the Disciples is
hurt, but all are defeated. A startling demonstration.

CAINE's expression is one of utter fascination.

CAINE

Which one will I learn?

MASTER KHAN

You will learn them all.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

The sun is coming up over a large fountain in the courtyard. The source of water, runoff from the snow capped mountain has been ingeniously engineered into a fountain at one corner of the temple.

Nearby, young CAINE is sweeping the yard in the light of dawn. The area is deserted except for an old monk, MASTER PO, who sits near the water...meditating.

Young Caine sweeps closer.

MASTER PO

(back to Caine)

You are the new student.

CAINE

I am not a student. All I do is sweep.

MASTER PO

Are you a good sweeper?

CAINE

Yes.

MASTER PO

Excellent. Come closer.

Caine walks around to the side of the seated monk. Po turns his face towards the boy. The old man's eyes are milky white; he is blind. Master Po is timeless, albeit with a twinkle in his blind eyes.

CAINE

(taken aback)

You cannot see...

MASTER PO

I cannot see? Hmmm. Maybe you're right.

(considers)

Take your broom and strike me with it.

Caine hesitates.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Do as I say!

Caine lifts the broomstick and hesitates again.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Strike!

CAINE reluctantly brings the stick down behind the Monk's back. PO blocks the strike with a flick of his hand.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Again.

Caine, puzzled, inquisitive, walks to Po's other side. This time, he tries harder. Again the blow is blocked. He backs off. Then he tries a quick flurry of blows, all blocked. Frustrated, Caine backs off several paces, then with full speed, he runs and tries to bring the stick down on the old man's shoulder.

With one move, Po grabs the stick and using the boy's momentum, heaves him somersaulting into the fountain.

Master Po, left with the broomstick in his hand, places it at his side.

Caine comes out of the fountain soaking wet. He stands before Po, astonished.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

It is true. I cannot see.

(amused)

But, then...you're the one who's wet.

CAINE smiles with some embarrassment. PO gestures to the ground beside him.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Here...sit down.

Caine sits beside him.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Close your eyes. What do you hear?

As they listen, THE SOUNDS are AMPLIFIED.

CAINE

I hear the water. I hear a bird...

MASTER PO

Do you hear your own heartbeat?

CAINE

No...

MASTER PO

Do you hear the grasshopper beside
you?

Young Caine opens his eyes, looks down. A GRASSHOPPER is
beside him.

CAINE

Old Man, how is you hear these
things?

MASTER PO

Young Man, how is it you do not?

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. SHAOLIN TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

YOUNG CAINE & YI CHUAN are walking in the temple
courtyard. They stop at...

A mysterious ORNATE BRONZE DOOR. On the door in bas
relief are symbols: Tiger, Dragon, Crane and Praying
Mantis. It is unlike any other door in the temple.

YI CHUAN

This door is always locked. What
do you suppose is behind it?

CAINE

When we're ready, they'll tell us.

INT. TEMPLE - KHAN'S STUDY - DAY

MASTER KHAN is in an annex of his study where he stands
beside TWO SMALL BUT ANCIENT SCROLLS, each about a foot
in height. His reverence for them is obvious.
The scrolls rest in a sarcophagus-like box near two
ceremonial objects, an ORNATE CUP and a BRONZE VASE.

YOUNG CAINE and YI CHUAN are with MASTER KHAN.

MASTER KHAN

What are the qualities we hold in
highest esteem?

CAINE

Kindness, moderation, humility...

YI CHUAN

...wisdom and pureness of heart.

MASTER KHAN

Why do we not seek possessions?

CAINE

Valuable goods tempt men to evil.

MASTER KHAN

And what of man?

YI CHUAN

Everything of man is vanity.

KHAN motions to the ancient scroll on the left.

MASTER KHAN

What is this?

YI CHUAN

The Scroll of Lineage.

MASTER KHAN

(nods)

All Shaolin Masters...for a thousand years. To be here, is to be among the righteous, a paving stone on the Road to Heaven.

Khan motions to the scroll on the right..

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

What is this?

CAINE

Our most secret knowledge. The soul of Shaolin.

MASTER KHAN

(nods)

From antiquity, our path to perfection.

KHAN closes the case in which the scrolls rest. His last question is more weighty than the others.

MASTER KHAN

Why is the knowledge of Shaolin not to be taught to the common people?

CAINE

It is dangerous in their hands.

INT. MANCHU IMPERIAL COURT-DAY

CLOSEUP- THE HANDS OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS, long fingernails, raptor-like. The hands of a tyrant.

ANGLE ON - The DOWAGER EMPRESS being groomed. THREE SERVANTS attend to her long black hair. One servant wields ivory handled combs and brushes.

THE YOUNGEST SERVANT takes the few strands of hair left on the combs and deposits them in a gold box, as if they had graced the head of a living deity.

SAI FONG and THE CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS are there.

CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS

The servant Tam is dead. He revealed nothing more. We believe...

DOWAGER EMPRESS

Believe? Who are you to believe anything? You are to obey! You were to find the half caste boy, but instead you return to me with opinions!

CHIEF OF IMPERIAL GUARDS

Your Majesty, in all of your lands, no such boy remains alive.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

And you would swear to that with your life?

The CHIEF of GUARDS falls silent with fear. THE EMPRESS turns to SAI FONG.

DOWAGER EMPRESS (CONT'D)

What do you think?

SAI FONG

It appears true. The boy is dead. But, only time will tell.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

Time and appearances are luxuries I do not have.

(a beat)

Continue the search.

INT. TEMPLE ROOM - DAY

The large room is filled with books and scrolls. THERE ARE CHARTS OF THE HUMAN BODY marked with dots and red lines, and inscribed with a multitude of characters.

MASTER KE stands before CAINE and illustrates the chart.

MASTER KE

In the human body are seven
hundred and eight nerve centers
...pressure points. Of these, a
hundred and forty-two are open to
attack.

KE indicates specific spots on the chart.

MASTER KE (CONT'D)

Touch this point, and a man will
die a slow and terrible death.
But, touch here, and it will heal
a man's heart.

He indicates A WALL OF SHELVES lined with JARS OF HERBS.

MASTER KE (CONT'D)

These pressure points and these
herbs can be medicine...or poison.
Use them with much caution. A
knife in the hand of a surgeon
heals, in the hand of an assassin
...kills.

INT. TEMPLE HALLWAY

MASTER PO and student CAINE are in a hallway.

MASTER SUN SPILLS A BUCKET OF WATER ACROSS THE FLOOR...
then UNROLLS A LONG RIBBON OF RICE PAPER ACROSS THE WET
FLOOR. The water seeps into the delicate paper.

MASTER PO

Rice paper...delicate as a
butterfly's wings. When you can
walk upon it without tearing it,
then your steps will not be
heard...

MASTER PO walks across the wet rice paper. His steps have
not even wrinkled the paper.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Now, you.

CAINE walks carefully over the rice paper.

INSERT - His steps have torn the fragile paper.

CAINE looks back with frustration.

EXT. TEMPLE FIELD - DAY

CAINE and MASTER KE are on the pathway in the fields near the Temple. There is a cart full of WATERMELONS nearby.

MASTER KE

As a student, you remind me of myself.

CAINE

Thank you, Master Ke.

MASTER KE

That was not a compliment. I was lazy and ignorant.

Caine smiles, knowing it is only Ke's sense of humor.

KE takes a watermelon and places it on a large stone. He holds his right palm a scant few inches above the watermelon. Then, he strikes. There is an almost inaudible 'pop'. The watermelon has hardly moved.

CAINE

(confused)

It is the same.

MASTER KE

Look inside.

Ke hands him a knife. Caine slices the melon in two. What pours out is nothing more than juice and pulp.

Caine looks at Master Ke with awe.

MASTER KE (CONT'D)

There are many levels of internal power...

MONTAGE

INT. SHAOLIN TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

CAINE and YI CHUAN begin 'IRON PALM' conditioning, thrusting their hands (fingertips first) into large stone barrels full of sand. They grasp handfuls of sand and strike with open hands...again and again.

DISSOLVE TO

Hands thrusting repeatedly into what was once sand and is now...stone pebbles.

DISSOLVE TO

Mature hands thrusting into what has graduated to... small rocks. The thrusts are rhythmic and powerful, yet, the conditioned hands are not damaged.

WE TILT UP to reveal that CAINE and YI CHUAN ARE NOW YOUNG MEN IN THEIR TWENTIES.

CAINE is tall with a physique of lithe muscles; he has grown more in the Caucasian mold, except for his eyes which are obviously Eurasian in appearance.

INT. MANCHU COURT - DAY

THE DOWAGER is DINING with solid gold chopsticks out of jade bowls. The dishes served number in the hundreds, one of which is mushrooms on a bear's paw. She is at the height of her sybaritic lifestyle...

INTERCUT WITH

CHINESE VILLAGES put to the torch...peasants arrested... as Manchu Troops consolidate the power of the Dowager Empress...and continue their search for Caine.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

The gates open and SEVERAL MONKS carry in an unconscious teenage STREET URCHIN (about 16).

MASTERS KHAN and KE are at the gate. The MONKS are hesitant to bring the boy in. KHAN issues orders.

MASTER KHAN

Bathe and feed him.

The Monks carry the boy into the temple.

MASTER KE

And then what?

MASTER KHAN

We shall see.

MASTER KE

Are we to take in every street
urchin? Every starving peasant?

MASTER KHAN

What is this place if not a
refuge? There is famine
everywhere. What choice is there?

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - WINTER - DAY

CAINE and YI CHUAN are in the courtyard in the white of
winter. Lightly dressed, they do their breathing sets
without concern for the cold.

MASTER KHAN (V.O.)

At the source of all life energy
is the 'Chi', the inner strength.
To delight in one's outer strength
is foolishness. It fades with age
and succumbs to sickness. But the
'Chi', once acquired, lasts
through every heat and every cold,
through old age...and beyond.

BUCKETS OF WATER are thrown on them. THE WATER
IMMEDIATELY TURNS TO ICE. CAINE and YI CHUAN do not
flinch and continue their Tiger, Crane and Praying Mantis
movements, skilled and effortless...

MATCH DISSOLVE

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - SPRING - DAY

CAINE and YI CHUAN execute their Tiger, Crane and Praying
Mantis movements...but it is now Spring.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA (the found boy). 'Cleaned up', he is
handsome, now fit and seemingly personable. He has a
curious physical anomaly, an erratic RIBBON OF WHITE HAIR
from the front of his head across the scalp. He is
working on hands and knees in a nearby flower bed.

ANGLE ON THE PARAPET ABOVE - KHAN AND KE look on.

MASTER KE

Your 'stray cat' is coping well.

MASTER KHAN

He is bright and makes himself useful.

MASTER KE

He steals food.

MASTER KHAN

Stray cats do that. It will pass.

Ke registers his concern.

MASTER KE

He knows he will never be one of us. We show him what he will never be. How long will he stay?

MASTER KHAN

A little while longer.

INT. TEMPLE - KHAN'S STUDY - DAY

KHAN is in the annex of his study, immersed in the TWO ANCIENT SCROLLS; His reverence for them is obvious.

CAINE appears. Khan looks up, then places the scrolls in the sarcophagus-like box near the ceremonial ORNATE CUP and BRONZE VASE.

CAINE

You wish to speak with me?

Khan returns to his main study and motions Caine to sit.

MASTER KHAN

Yes. A matter which should have been discussed long ago. But, now will do.

(a beat)

A year before you came here, the Manchus searched all of Henan... for a boy of mixed blood.

CAINE

You knew.

MASTER KHAN

Even as you stood before our gates.

CAINE

(disappointment)

I thought you accepted me on my merits.

MASTER KHAN

We did. But, still, we knew.

CAINE

I was angry at my grandfather for sending me away. But, then I understood. I heard it whispered in the villages where I hid... while The Manchus hunted me.

MASTER KHAN

They hunt you *still*.

CAINE

And for what? The lunatic ravings of an old woman. How could I...or anyone "break the power of the Manchus"?

Khan does not reply. He holds his silence.

CAINE (CONT'D)

This 'prophecy'...You believe it? You believe I'm the one?

MASTER KHAN

What I believe is not important. And who you are...is yet to be determined.

Khan stops. The door is ajar. Khan reacts, calls out.

MASTER KHAN

Ch'an Za...is that you?

The door opens and Ch'an Za enters carrying tea and cups.

CH'AN ZA

Midday. I thought you might like tea...

MASTER KHAN

That's very thoughtful.

CH'AN ZA

How did you know it was me?

MASTER KHAN

The rhythm of breathing is as
indelible as one's voice.

CH'AN ZA serves the tea.

CH'AN ZA

Is there anything else?

MASTER KHAN

No, thank you. Please close the
door behind you.

CH'AN ZA exits. CAINE follows him with his eyes. Had
Ch'an Za been listening?

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

CAINE is before a waist high STACK OF BLUE CERAMIC
ROOFING TILES. With a movement of his open hand, his
'Iron Palm' strike shatters all the tiles from the bottom
up, a display which seems like magic. CAINE TURNS...

A distance away, CH'AN ZA, looking on...approaches.

CH'AN ZA

That is... magic.

Caine smiles in answer.

CH'AN ZA (CONT'D)

Show me how you do it.

CAINE

It's not my place to show you.

CH'AN ZA

What's the harm? Who would know?

CAINE shakes his head with finality.

CH'AN ZA (CONT'D)

Why not? What's wrong with me?

CAINE

I am not a teacher. I am a
student. It is forbidden.

To cover his brazen request, Ch'an Za becomes apologetic.

CH'AN ZA

Of course. I...had no right to
ask.

(a beat)

You won't tell Khan, will you?

Caine shakes his head. He will not. He walks away.

WE HOLD on CH'AN ZA. His deferential expression hardens to a sneer of contempt. His courtesy is artifice.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

CAINE & YI CHUAN relax by a stream with the Temple in the BG. They have the temple's small brown HORSE and cart. YI CHUAN feeds the HORSE; it nuzzles his hand.

CAINE

He's partial to you.

YI CHUAN

Must be the farmer in me.

(pats the horse)

You can't always depend on people.

But, a good horse never disappoints.

CAINE

Do you ever miss home?

YI CHUAN

Never. My father was ashamed of me for the way I am. Sometimes he would beat me. What can a one armed farmer do?

(a beat)

No, I don't miss it. I will never leave here. This is my home.

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals A PEASANT MAN ON THE HILL above... watching. He turns to a nearby figure and nods.

The other figure is 'The Stray Cat', CH'AN ZA.

INT. MANCHU COURT - DAY

CLOSEUP - THE PEASANT prostrates himself on the floor.

WE PULL BACK to reveal THE DOWAGER EMPRESS on her throne and SAI FONG beside her.

SAI FONG

At the Shaolin Temple in Henan
...there is one of mixed blood.

THE DOWAGER explodes.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

You said he was dead! How is this possible?

SAI FONG

(brooding)

Only the hand of the Almighty could have saved him from me.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

I AM YOUR ALMIGHTY! YOU NEED FEAR. NO OTHER!

In a rage, THE EMPRESS takes a priceless porcelain vase and smashes it on the floor.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

WE PAN DOWN from a HIGH MOUNTAIN WATERFALL. Below, at the base of the falls, CAINE stands on a smooth rock... Bare chested, he holds his stance, claps his hands and SHOUTS PRAYERS (which cannot be heard) above the din as the water pounds down on him. It is a rite of purification.

INT. MANCHU COURT - DAY

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS on her throne, SAI FONG beside her.

REGENT PRINCE LIANG in his royal robes, is thin, very handsome, almost effeminate with the mien of a courtier.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

Prince Liang, Governor of Henan, you will visit the useless monks of the Shaolin Temple...

SAI FONG speaks privately, cautioning.

SAI FONG

Your Highness, the Shaolin may yet serve you. We only want the one.

She considers and returns her attention to Prince Liang.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

You will test their loyalty. And should you find one of mixed blood among them...bring him to me.

LIANG

I wish only to serve.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

As for the monks, should they
prove unworthy or obstinate...
I leave them to your discretion.

LIANG bows to the Empress and EXITS.

INT. TEMPLE - DAY

CAINE stands at the foot of the hallway we saw earlier.

MASTER SUN UNROLLS RICE PAPER onto THE WET FLOOR.

CAINE walks the delicate paper. His feet do not tear it.
His steps are SOUNDLESS.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

CLOSEUP - There is an abrupt POUNDING on the THE TEMPLE
DOORS. Several MONKS open them to reveal...

WARLORD TU TAO YIN mounted on a horse. Ferocious in a
horned helmet and body armor, THE WARLORD leads a mounted
detachment of FIFTY ARMED MEN. Without being asked, THE
WARLORD rides his horse into the courtyard and dismounts.

Most of the SHAOLIN MONKS gather. CAINE is among them,
but his face is shrouded by the hood of his robe.

MASTER KHAN faces THE WARLORD.

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

I serve Regent Prince Liang and
our Imperial Rulers.

MASTER KHAN

I am Chen Ming Khan. To what do we
owe this visit?

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

You are to be given a great honor.

MASTER KHAN

Thank you. And what is that?

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

The Empress and the Imperial Court
have many enemies. In times like
these, men of skill like the
Shaolin cause suspicion. Not to be
a friend...is to be an enemy.

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

(CONT'D)

You understand this? You are with
or against, loyal or disloyal.

While he speaks, The Warlord scans the faces of the
Shaolin Monks and Disciples. He takes particular notice
of the tall Disciple whose face is not visible.

MASTER KHAN

And the great honor?

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

You will teach my army.

Khan thoughtfully composes an answer.

MASTER KHAN

We practice exercise and simple
prayer.

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

The skills of the Shaolin are well
known. You will train my men...
with all your warrior secrets.

MASTER KHAN

Legends, fairy tales for children.
We are simple Monks. We have
nothing of value for men such as
you.

Khan has told the truth, albeit a double entendre.

The Warlord absorbs Khan's declining 'the honor'.
Suddenly, the WARLORD slaps Khan across the face. THE
OTHER SHAOLIN MONKS react, but Khan raises a hand for
them to be still.
THE WARLORD studies his lack of response, then slaps him
again with more force.

KHAN represses any outward reaction. The Warlord
considers this surprising pacifism, seems to soften.

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

So, you are indeed men of peace.
Accept my apology. I had to do
that or my men would think me
weak.

TU TAO YIN remounts his horse. He and his men leave.
SEVERAL MONKS hurriedly close the gates.

CAINE had been standing near the other Monks, incensed at the indignity visited upon Khan.

MASTER KHAN

(calmly, to Caine)

I told him the truth. We have nothing to teach them...

CAINE

You let him strike you.

MASTER KHAN

We choose our battles. And we value peace and quiet above victory.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. TEMPLE - DAY

ALL OF THE SHAOLIN MONKS ARE IN MEDITATION. Formed in neat lines, they are seated on the courtyard floor.

THE TEMPLE GONG SOUNDS

A MESSENGER from Regent Prince Liang arrives. Brought before Khan, he reads the Prince's communication.

MESSENGER

His Highness, Regent Prince Liang, Governor of the Provinces, wishes to offer his regrets for the rudeness of his emissary.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

If Master Khan would be so kind, please send your best Disciple to accept a gift and formal apology.

The MESSENGER departs.

MASTER KHAN turns to KE.

MASTER KHAN

It is a deception. They want Caine. We give him to them, it proves our loyalty.

MASTER KE

And if we send Yi Chuan?

MASTER KHAN

Yes. They have no reason to harm him.

EXT. CAMP OF REGENT PRINCE LIANG - DAY

THE CAMP is vast, SOLDIERS beyond number.

YI CHUAN arrives with the small brown horse and cart bearing first fruits from the fields. He is immediately brought before...

REGENT PRINCE LIANG and WARLORD TU TAO YIN.

YI CHUAN is uncomfortable with the less than pleasant gaze of the Prince and the Warlord, who offer no welcome.

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals...SAI FONG looking on.

YI CHUAN

(to Prince & Warlord)

I...bring first fruits from our fields. A gesture of good will from Master Khan.

LIANG nods his stoic acceptance. It is an awkward moment. They just look silently at Yi Chuan.

YI CHUAN (CONT'D)

Do you...have something I am to take back...?

TU TAO YIN, fearsome in his armor and horned helmet, just smiles...a cold smile, intended to disarm. Not knowing what else to do, Yi Chuan smiles back. Suddenly, the Warlord strikes Yi Chuan across the face.

Evocative of Khan, Yi Chuan has the presence of mind to allow it. The Warlord raises his hand again, but stops, looks at Yi Chuan who is unflinching, with quiet dignity and defiance. Further blows are pointless. Instead, the Warlord turns to THE SMALL BROWN CART HORSE, grabs the reins and strikes the whinnying and frightened animal.

The Warlord raises his hand to strike the terrified animal again...but finds his arm suddenly locked.

QUICK CUT- YI CHUAN has him in a pressure point grip. Yi Chuan hurls him backward and he falls.

WIDER ANGLE - The scene is still and quiet. The Warlord slowly gets to his feet, enraged. He dwarfs the one-armed young man who is alone with the horse and cart.

YI CHUAN stands calmly. THE WARLORD CHARGES and all of Yi Chuan's life and training is crystalized into this one pure moment. The Warlord closes as with a shift of his stance and his one good arm, Yi Chuan executes a classic jujutsu-like move. The Warlord is hurled into the air with all the force of his own violence. He falls heavily on his face and bounces in the dirt, his armor askew, the horned helmet flying from his head.

The dust settles and Yi Chuan stands looking down at him, a triumphant moment, soundless but for the Manchu banners whipping in the breeze. Time seems to stand still.

Yi Chuan's triumph is short lived. He looks around. PRINCE LIANG and SAI FONG have witnessed the mere Disciple's skill. Yi Chuan is a lone figure... surrounded by a Manchu army.

SLOW FADE OUT

INT. TEMPLE - DAY

CAINE and MASTER KHAN

KHAN EXTENDS HIS OPEN HAND. There is a pebble in it. A moment of eye contact.

As Khan closes his hand...CAINE'S HAND FLASHES OUT. KHAN OPENS HIS HAND. The pebble is gone. CAINE OPENS HIS HAND. The pebble is there.

MASTER KHAN

Time for you to leave.

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals we are in an EXPANSIVE TEMPLE ROOM. With MASTER PO nearby...

KE is seated at a large mahogany table. Before him is the OLD PARCHMENT SCROLL covered with artfully inscribed Chinese calligraphy. With a fine brush and black ink, KE begins to write elegant Chinese characters.

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

(to Caine)

Your name is inscribed with all those who have gone before.

MASTER KHAN (CONT'D)

(with pride)

You are now Shaolin, Master Caine.

Eye contact between CAINE and KHAN speaks volumes. Though Caine remains stoic, his eyes reveal his admiration and gratitude. He bows his head.

KHAN, KE and PO are filled with pride and paternal satisfaction.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

KHAN, KE and PO accompany CAINE to...THE MYSTERIOUS BRONZE DOOR. For the first time, we see it unlocked.

In a kind of 'graduation' ceremony, THE OTHER SHAOLIN MASTERS HAVE FORMED TWO LINES...which end at the bronze doorway. KHAN, KE, PO and all the MASTERS have their sleeves up and arms bared. Each reveals the TIGER on the inside of one forearm and the DRAGON on the other. CAINE walks between the TWO LINES OF SHAOLIN MASTERS. He reaches the door. He is about to enter, when...

THERE is COMMOTION at the TEMPLE GATE.

KHAN turns. A DISCIPLE hurries toward him carrying a WOODEN BOX, festive with ribbons. The Disciple is ashen.

DISCIPLE

Sir, from Prince Liang...

MASTER KHAN

Why do you interrupt?

DISCIPLE

Teacher, look...

The DISCIPLE slides open the cover of the box.

YI CHUAN'S HEAD IS INSIDE.

CAINE is stunned, instantly grief stricken. He falls to his knees, hands holding his head in anguish, a barely audible whimper from his mouth.

For the first time, KHAN reacts outwardly, slumps under the weight of his grief and guilt, devastated by the loss. He looks at the terrible 'gift' in the box.

MASTER KHAN

Forgive me, forgive my stupidity,
Yi Chuan. Poor boy. You've paid
such a price for peace and quiet.

Khan closes the box, understands the grave situation.

CAINE

(to Khan)

This is because of me.

Khan speaks with moral authority and finality.

MASTER KHAN

You did not make them what they
are.

(to the others)

We must leave.

MASTER SUN

Abandon the Temple?

CAINE

No, they want me. I'll go.

MASTER KHAN

We are the Shaolin Temple. The
rest is only stones. We'll go
together.

KE looks over the wall.

MASTER KE

Too late.

MASTER KHAN

(knowing)

How many are there?

MASTER KE

A few.

It is a remarkable understatement.

CRANE SHOT - WE PULL UP AND OVER THE WALL to reveal...
A VAST ARMY surrounds the Temple. Heavily armed with
swords, lances and shields, they stretch to the horizon.

EXT. BEYOND THE TEMPLE - DAY

In the far BG, PRINCE LIANG is seated on a two story high
'palanquin' chair (to be carried on the shoulders of 20
men). Liang towers above that which he surveys.

Near the temple gates, the WARLORD calls his ultimatum.

WARLORD TU TAO YIN

Shaolin trash! Give us the one
known as Caine...or go the way of
your Disciple!

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

MASTER KHAN turns to MASTER SUN.

MASTER KHAN

Quickly. To my study. The sacred
scrolls...burn them.

SUN is taken aback by the enormity of the order. He nods
his assent and hurries off.

EXT. OUTSIDE TEMPLE - DAY

WITH A ROAR, THE MANCHU ARMY SURGES FORWARD smashing a
battering ram against the gates, which quickly succumb
and are forced open. SOLDIERS pour in.

The battle is a FEW DOZEN SHAOLIN MONKS against the
Manchu horde. The MONKS do not retreat. We now witness
the amazing nature of Shaolin skills. (These are not
portrayed as heavily 'choreographed' and stylized.
Rather, it is convincing 'real time' action, a Martial
Arts "Braveheart").

THE INVADERS HAVE MANY SCALING LADDERS, not all of which
can be repelled. They come over the walls like locusts.

EXT. INNER COURTYARD - DAY

FIVE SHAOLIN MONKS stand on the wall of the inner court.
Each holds a strong long bow and a full quiver of arrows.
Simultaneously, all five let loose an arrow; firing with
grace and rapidity, each archer is a classic image.

FIVE ATTACKERS are stopped in their tracks. EACH HAS AN
ARROW THROUGH THE RIGHT EYE.

For a moment, THE INVADERS STOP, taken aback by this
incredible display of Zen archery.

WARLORD TU TAO YIN, FURIOUS, URGES HIS MEN ON. They renew
their charge.

The ARCHER MONKS let fly, arrow after arrow... SEVERAL ARROWS PIERCE MANCHU CHEST ARMOR, FLY THROUGH...AND KILL THE MAN BEHIND. The arrows are fired with such rapidity that whole lines of Manchus are felled in fives and tens.

ANGLE ON - SEVERAL SHAOLIN MONKS make their stand where the attackers must enter the inner courtyard no more than four abreast. In these 'funnels', the Masters take out many of the incoming human tide. But, these few monks are against a veritable army...

KHAN, KE and the OTHERS REVEAL THEIR DEVASTATING SKILLS.

ANGLE on MASTER PO, heroic and impenetrable, takes on dozens...with no more than a stick.

ANGLE on CAINE. Now truly a Master, his array of techniques devastates anyone within five feet of him.

ANGLE on MASTER KHAN. He mows down four Manchus at once, with two kicks and two punches...thrown in less than two seconds, a defense so quick and lethal that...

AN ENTIRE LINE of MANCHUS stops in their tracks...and runs away.

THE MASTERS OF THE TEMPLE decimate the attackers...but there are just too many. At the height of the battle, the incoming Manchus are winning by sheer numbers.

The MASTERS OF THE TEMPLE fall...one by one.

INT. KHAN'S STUDY - DAY

MASTER SUN and several MONKS rush in and begin burning charts and books. SUN moves to the sarcophagus which houses the ancient scrolls. It is empty. Both ancient scrolls are gone as are the ceremonial cup and vase.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

MASTER SUN rushes out, his eyes searching the combatants.

ANGLE ON - CH'AN ZA, now disguised in Manchu clothes. 'The Stray Cat' is carrying a bundle over his shoulder, making his way through the bedlam of the attacking army, hiding in plain sight while leaving the Temple.

SUN knows what Ch'an Za has done. Armed with a bow and arrows, Sun draws a bead on him and lets fly.

But, in the chaos of the battle, A MANCHU SOLDIER suddenly steps in the way and takes the arrow.

CH'AN ZA disappears among the Manchu horde...and is gone.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

With the Shaolin Temple battle raging, MASTER SUN rushes back to tell Khan and Po. We do not hear what he says, but they now know what 'The Stray Cat' has done.

ANGLE ON THE TEMPLE GATE - With the tide of battle turned, PRINCE LIANG on his TOWER CHAIR is carried into the temple. DRUMMERS in front announce his presence.

ANGLE ON KE...high up near the parapet wall. He takes out the enemy in two's and three's, even turning their own weapons against them. Ke appears invincible. After a flying split kick levels two Manchus simultaneously, he lands, spins, and comes face to face with...

SAI FONG.

KE is taken aback, but immediately attacks with punches, so fast the eye can hardly follow. Yet, amazingly SAI FONG blocks them with no more than deft hand movements. Ke has never faced such an adversary. Ke gathers himself and unleashes more punches and kicks. All blocked.

SAI FONG traps Ke's arm as he throws the last technique and with an 'iron palm' strike to Ke's solar plexus... KE IS HURLED OFF HIS FEET AND OVER THE PARAPET WALL. HE FALLS.

ANGLE ON CAINE...looking up from the lower courtyard as KE plummets. CAINE is shocked. The impossible has happened.

CLOSEUPS - SAI FONG and CAINE. Their eyes meet.

BOOM! A GUNSHOT SOUNDS. CAINE TURNS TO SEE...

MASTER PO has fallen, shot...

ANGLE ON - LIANG'S HIGH PALANQUIN TOWER

PRINCE LIANG has a smoking BLACK POWDER COLT REVOLVER in his hand. From the safety of his high perch, it is like shooting ducks in a pond.

CAINE rushes to the fallen MASTER PO. They are momentarily shielded by temple statuary. PO is mortally wounded. Caine holds him.

MASTER PO

There is still hope. You must live, so that the Shaolin Temple does not die.

CAINE is overcome with emotion.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Ch'an Za has taken the scrolls. Without them, there is no Shaolin. Find them...and resurrect the Temple.

(a beat)

Go, my boy. You must live. Do this. Nothing must stop you. Promise.

CAINE, overcome with emotion, nods his agreement.

CAINE

I swear.

MASTER PO

What do you hear?

CAINE

(tearful)

I hear the Grasshopper.

MASTER PO

Of all my students, I loved you best.

PO dies as...

ANGLE ON KHAN as he is hit by another gunshot. Yet, he does not fall.

THE WARLORD steps forward to finish Khan personally.

KHAN defiantly holds his stance and with his last breath, he dispatches the smirking Warlord with a 'hand sword', a fingertip thrust right through the Warlord's armor.

KHAN holds THE WARLORD'S SHOCKED GAZE. It is a last victory. KHAN FALLS.

ANGLE ON CAINE. Filled with uncharacteristic rage, he leaves Po's body and fights his way to the throne chair.

With a Herculean strike, he literally splinters one leg of the four corners.

THE THRONE CHAIR topples over like a felled tree. PRINCE LIANG, shaken, COMES UP WITH COLT IN HAND, takes aim...

CAINE is a clear frontal target. Liang smiles at him... and pulls the trigger.

CAINE spins sideways, EVADES THE GUNSHOT. As LIANG pulls the hammer back to fire again, Caine is on him. With one startling move (one hand to the back of Liang's head and the other to his chin as a lever), there is an audible 'crack'...Liang's head is spun on its axis. In a second, the back of Liang's head now faces the front of his body. He is dead before he hits the courtyard floor.

EXT. TEMPLE - SAME SCENE - DAY

THE MANCHU HORDE is now pouring through the open gates. Without stopping, CAINE fights like a madman, battles his way to THE ORNATE BRONZE DOOR.

INT. TUNNEL

CAINE charges in through the door and slams it shut. But, it will only momentarily slow the Manchu pursuit. They are already battering the door to gain entry.

REVERSE ANGLE - Reveals we are in a dark, winding stone tunnel with a concave roof, dimly lit by wall torches.

CAINE starts down the tunnel cautious and alert. Forewarned, he has an inkling of what awaits. It is A TUNNEL OF ENDLESS TRAPS and SNARES.

MASTER KHAN (V.O.)

The secrets of the tunnel cannot be learned. There are a thousand traps and dangers of all kinds ...infinite combinations trigger other combinations. To step in safety once is no guarantee. No two circumstances are ever the same...

With every step, CAINE DEFLECTS SPEARS, ARROWS AND TRAPS which await in the deadly tunnel.

BEHIND CAINE, THE DOOR CRASHES OPEN and he is now pursued by what seems half the Manchu Army. He must evade the traps ahead, and the spears and arrows of his pursuers.

Unsuspecting, THE MANCHUS CHARGE INTO THE TUNNEL, immediately SPRINGING INGENIOUS TRAPS AND DEADLY DEVICES. Suddenly, there are MOVING STONES IN THE FLOOR, MOVING WALLS that portend death.

CAINE remains alive only by skill...not luck. His pursuers are not so lucky.

Those of the WARLORD'S ARMY who have rushed into the tunnel PLUMMET INTO BLACK HOLES...are impaled...or otherwise suffer a sudden end.

A PAIR OF STONE DRAGON HEADS SPITS FIRE...SUDDEN GLARE blinds the Manchus, spoiling their vision in the dark.

A CAULDRON OF BOILING HOT OIL spills down from a panel in the ceiling...

A GIANT SWINGING BLADE suddenly arcs out from the wall, cutting down several men at once.

The onrushing Manchus suddenly panic, turn and try to escape. THERE ARE TRAPS AND SPRING LOADED DEVICES EVERYWHERE. They cannot get out; it is as dangerous on the way out as on the way in. Not one of them leaves the tunnel alive. Their screams echo off the stone walls.

ANGLE ON CAINE - No longer pursued, he waits quietly now.

MASTER KHAN (V.O.)

Have courage. Every Master of
Shaolin has passed this way...

CAINE examines the walls and arched ceiling, then he takes a handful of iron balls (like ball bearings) from a leather pouch and rockets them into the tunnel. As they hit the floor and walls...THE TUNNEL COMES ALIVE WITH DARTS, ARROWS AND SPEARS flying from all directions. CAINE barely avoids the maelstrom. Then, all is quiet.

CAINE continues into the tunnel, intentionally triggering traps and jumping back, searching out the pitfalls.

CAINE ducks...as a large ARROW shoots straight down the length of the tunnel.

FINALLY...SILENCE.

CAINE lightly tosses a few more of the steel balls. Nothing. He moves to the end of the tunnel, where he finds...

A LARGE GLOWING HOT URN FILLED WITH STEAMING COALS.

The intense heat reflects on Caine's face. Behind the urn is a door.

ANGLE ON - THE URN - ON ITS RIGHT SIDE IS A RELIEF OF A TIGER, ON THE LEFT SIDE A DRAGON.

CAINE positions his feet, summons all his resolve. With one horrific motion, he places his forearms against the urn...His muscles tense as he bears the pain, lifts the urn and moves it aside. He opens the unblocked doorway...

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

CAINE EXITS into a snow covered wooded area. He falls outstretched with his arms in the snow.

Slowly, he gets up and looks to the BG. High above him on the mountain, THE SHAOLIN TEMPLE IS BURNING.

CAINE looks down at his arms. A TIGER is seared ON ONE FOREARM...A DRAGON ON THE OTHER.

His 'graduation' was also his means of escape. He is, apparently, the Shaolin Temple's sole survivor. He looks back once more...and moves on.

INT. MANCHU COURT - DAY

THE TIBETAN SEER, LAO LAA is before The DOWAGER EMPRESS.

LAO LAA

The lone Shaolin who escaped.
He is the one. Now a grown
man...and so much more dangerous.

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS, her expression grim, turns to...

SAI FONG, who stands in the throne room.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

I give you a bounty. The Shaolin
known as Caine...

SAI FONG
(uncharacteristic
caution)

Difficult business, Madame. There are those who would honor, even revere such a man. And many would hide him.

Tzu Hsi vents her anger, like the voice of doom.

DOWAGER EMPRESS
I do not beg favors, Assassin. I will reward you.

(a beat)
If it were a small matter, I would send a lesser man.

Tzu Hsi looks at him with fiery eyes.

DOWAGER EMPRESS (CONT'D)
You have killed everything that walks and breathes, but surely this is the greatest quarry. The Last of the Shaolin. To kill a legend is to become a legend.

SAI FONG
(facing reality)
A Divine Hand is upon him. Only he survived.

DOWAGER EMPRESS
As your father and grandfather before you served the Celestial Rulers, so High Executioner, you serve me.

I give you his weight in gold.

SAI FONG
(solemn vow)
It will be as you wish.

DOWAGER EMPRESS
Follow him to the ends of the Earth if need be...but do not return here without having taken his life...or you will forfeit your own.

CLOSEUP - SAI FONG nods his agreement.

MONTAGE - CAINE ON THE RUN

EXT. DESERT - DAY

CAINE, both hunter and hunted, trudges across a barren desert.

INT. SMALL VILLAGE INN - DAY

CH'AN ZA is eating at an inn in a small village. Over his meager meal, he hears TWO MEN talking, both half drunk.

CHINESE MAN #1

Only one year he is gone...and
already he sends money home.

CHINESE MAN #2

We are fools. We stay here and
starve, while there are streets of
gold...in America.

CH'AN ZA listens; the words register.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - NIGHT

CAINE, cold and disheveled, keeps to the shadows. He wears a large straw hat which hides his face.

On the wall, Caine sees A 'WANTED POSTER' WITH HIS OWN IMAGE ON IT. He hurries away.

INT. SMALL VILLAGE INN - NIGHT

CLOSEUP - THE SHAOLIN CEREMONIAL CUP

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals it is on a shelf in the small inn.

The INNKEEPER is a rough character. CAINE motions to it.

CAINE

Where did you get that?

INNKEEPER

Traded for food and drink.

CAINE

White streak in his hair?

INNKEEPER

(nods and laughs)

Good looking kid, but dumb.

CAINE

Where did he go?

INNKEEPER

Like everyone these days. To the coast.

Yards away, several UNSAVORY CHARACTERS (one with a scar on his cheek) notice Caine, whisper among themselves.

Fearing they have identified him, CAINE leaves.

EXT. SILK STREET - NIGHT

COLORFUL BOLTS OF FRESHLY DYED AND DRYING SILK hang on ropes strung diagonally overhead between buildings.

INT. SILK WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The place contains bales and LONG BOLTS OF SILK which hang over crossbeams from ceiling to floor. CAINE is asleep in the second story loft. Suddenly, he awakens...

Below, IMPERIAL TROOPS, accompanied by THE MAN WITH THE SCAR enter the barn. They begin searching.

ABOVE, CAINE quickly opens a loft door, ready to leap down to the street.

FROM HIS POV - In the alley below waits...SAI FONG.

INTERCUT CLOSEUPS - CAINE & SAI FONG

CAINE reacts, ready to do battle with the man who killed Master Ke, but...

MANCHU ARCHERS now appear.

CAINE slams the loft door shut.

The SOUND ALERTS the MANCHUS in the warehouse below. They charge up the ladders to the loft.

ANOTHER ANGLE as MANCHUS reach the LOFT. CAINE is nowhere to be found.

Puzzled, THE LEADER OF THE GUARDS opens the loft door and looks down at Sai Fong.

LEADER OF GUARDS
(to Sai Fong)

He's gone.

EXT. SILK STREET - NIGHT

SAI FONG absorbs the words.

SAI FONG

Burn it.

INT. SILK WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

THE LEADER OF THE GUARDS motions for his men to get out. Alone, he lights the end of a hanging silk with his torch. It is instantly ablaze, burning quickly up like a wick. He follows it with his eyes and...

Finds CAINE SUSPENDED DIRECTLY OVERHEAD, arms and legs horizontally outstretched under a long hanging silk, like a human crossbar between two ceiling beams.

CAINE drops, trailing the fluttering silk, and is on him.

On his feet, CAINE has his arms criss-crossed, the silk in his hands. In one move, there is a silk loop over the Guard's head. Caine spins and snaps the silk taut. The garrote takes the Guard off his feet and out in a blink.

THE SILK BARN is now walls of flame. CAINE looks around. There is no way out. He is trapped.

EXT. THE SILK LOFT DOOR - NIGHT

The loft door bursts open. CAINE, swathed in silk like a giant butterfly, leaps out onto one of the diagonal ropes between the buildings, slicing through it with the Guard's sword. He swings down from the burning warehouse like a billowing apparition.

THE MANCHU TROOPS in the alley are startled. CAINE hits the ground running. THE TROOPS unleash a barrage of arrows. Many hit the retreating figure. Remarkably, as if impervious to the arrows...CAINE KEEPS RUNNING.

THE GUARDS are aghast at the moving man who will not die. Silks billowing, CAINE turns the corner and disappears. The MANCHUS hurry after him in the narrow street.

SAI FONG and the Manchus rush to where...A silk shrouded BODY lies in the street, ARROWS PROTRUDING FROM IT.

SAI FONG PULLS THE SILK AWAY. IT IS NOT CAINE, but the LEADER OF THE GUARDS that has taken the arrows. (Caine has used him to shield his back under the silk).

SAI FONG looks after Caine. He is gone.

EXT. SEAPORT - NIGHT

CAINE arrives at a bustling seaport. MANCHU TROOPS patrol the area, stopping passers-by. All avenues are blocked.

It is chaos, people pushing and shoving to get on the LARGE MASTED SHIP that is about to leave.

THE TICKET SELLER is at a table, inundated by people wanting to leave.

CAINE pushes through to the table. THE TICKET SELLER collects a fistful of money from an ANXIOUS PEASANT. From under the table, the TICKET SELLER produces THE BRONZE SHAOLIN VASE.

CAINE reacts at the sight of it.

TICKET SELLER

(to Peasant)

White stone...this ship. Black stone...next week.

THE PEASANT puts his hand in the vase and takes out A BLACK STONE. He dejectedly gathers up his few belongings and moves aside.

CAINE raises his voice to be heard above the din.

CAINE

You traded for this vase?

TICKET SELLER

So?

CAINE

Is he on this ship?

TICKET SELLER

No. Sailed a week ago.

CAINE

Where to?

TICKET SELLER

Same as everybody. The gold
fields. America. Everyone crazy.

CAINE puts his money down, gets his ticket. The Ticket
Seller holds out the bronze vase.

TICKET SELLER (CONT'D)

White stone...this ship. Black
stone...next week.

CAINE sticks his hand in the vase. IT IS A WHITE STONE.

CAINE JOINS A LINE OF PEOPLE BOARDING THE SHIP and WALKS
UP THE GANGWAY as it weighs anchor.

EXT. SHIP AT SEA - DAY

At the rail on deck, CAINE watches China recede. He turns
his face to the ocean...and the new world beyond.

EXT. SEAPORT - DAY

The boat becomes a dot on the horizon as...

SAI FONG, astride a black horse, looks out at the sea.
His hunter's eyes remain fixed on the direction in which
his quarry has sailed.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO SEAPORT - DAY

SUPER:

SAN FRANCISCO - THE BARBARY COAST

CAINE disembarks amidst a teeming mass of immigrants of
every description, booming commerce, an emerging
metropolis. He is awestruck by the New World.

CAINE steps off the gangway; his clothes appear neither
Eastern nor Western, a collarless shirt, rugged pants and
lace up shoes. His dark hair is worn long.

AMIDST A CROWD - A GIRL tries to pick his pocket. She has
lifted his chamois purse of coins as...

CAINE grabs her hand, restrains her and in so doing,
inadvertently SHOWS THE TIGER MARK on his arm.

Nearby, a rough looking CHINESE LONGSHOREMAN, 'WOLF EYES' is laboring on cargo with a baling hook. He also sees the SHAOLIN MARK, REACTS as he notices the BRANDED TIGER on CAINE'S FOREARM.

CAINE takes notice of 'WOLF EYES' glance and pulls his sleeve over his arm.

THE GIRL - LIEN is 15-17, small, wiry, a street waif who might be pretty under the grime. She struggles to get free.

LIEN

Please, please...I...I'm hungry.
Let me go. I won't do it again.

LIEN pleads pitifully, a mixture of innocence and fright. And yet, this is artifice, part of her 'con'.

CAINE

(considers)

If you're hungry, I'll feed you.

INT. THE BARBARY COAST - A RICE SHOP - DAY

CAINE has taken her to a nearby rice shop for a meal.

LIEN eats hurriedly as if the food would disappear, CAINE looking on.

Caine intuitively lifts the chopstick stuck in the bun of her hair as a rude decoration. The chopstick is only a handle; the end is a thin steel blade.

Lien grabs it defensively and replaces it in her hair.

LIEN

I...A girl has to look out for herself.

CAINE

Where's your family?

LIEN

(bristles)

In hell I hope.

He watches her wolf down the food.

CAINE

How long has it been since you've eaten?

LIEN

Two days.

Lien produces a scrap of cloth, overturns the remaining rice from her bowl and wraps it in the cloth to take it.

LIEN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

She starts to leave.

CAINE

Wait...

Lien turns with 'attitude'.

LIEN

I said 'thanks'.

CAINE

Perhaps you can help me. I'm a stranger here.

LIEN

(curiosity)

You don't know anyone?

CAINE

No.

LIEN

Where to stay?

CAINE

No.

LIEN

Then you'll be robbed while you sleep...or worse.

CAINE

You know this place well?

LIEN

The Barbary Coast?

(wryly)

I know every dirty corner. You want to gamble? I take you. You want a woman? I take you.

CAINE

No, no...I just need a safe place
to sleep.

LIEN

You'll pay me?

CAINE nods. LIEN agrees.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - DAY

CAINE & LIEN - She takes him on a WALKING TOUR OF THE BARBARY COAST. A COLORFUL, WILD, 'WIDE OPEN' PLACE where DESPERATE CHARACTERS OF EVERY ETHNICITY AND DESCRIPTION filter in and out at close proximity. LIEN leads him past dive bars, street urchins and others sleeping in the alleys, outdoor food stalls and cheap restaurants, commerce of every kind, horse drawn wagons and carriages. And everywhere, rough looking characters...

CAINE takes it all in, things strange and new. A curious fascination; he is in the Land of his Father.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - DAY

As LIEN LEADS CAINE through the bustling streets...

LIEN

What's brought you across the
ocean?

CAINE

I'm looking for someone.

LIEN

A friend?

CAINE

No, not a friend.

LIEN

Then, why must you find him?

CAINE

He has something that doesn't
belong to him.

LIEN

This 'something' must be
important.

CAINE

Very.

They make their way through the crowded streets.

LIEN

It will be difficult to find him.
It's easy to get lost on the
Barbary Coast.

CAINE

He should not be too hard to find.
A Chinese with a streak of white
in his hair...

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - DAY

CAINE & LIEN make their way to...

THE CHINESE SECTION, a warren of narrow streets and
alleys...In an alleyway in the Chinese section, we tilt
up to a furnished room on the second floor...

INT. THE BARBARY COAST - FURNISHED ROOM - DAY

CH'AN ZA is in the room, a lit cigarette in his lips,
absorbed in reading the stolen SHAOLIN SCROLLS; he is
immersed in the chart of PRESSURE POINTS, obsessed with
its information and mysteries, tracing the minute points
on his own body. He appears to have already acquired some
expertise. CH'AN ZA has changed, now wears spectacles and
seems almost scholarly. Lost in their contents, the
scrolls seem to have impacted upon him.

CH'AN ZA gets up and goes to the window, drinks tea from
a small pot and cup, inadvertently looks out and sees...

CAINE and LIEN walking below.

CH'AN ZA reacts with shock, the cup nearly falls from his
hand...

INT. THE BARBARY COAST - THE STREET - DAY

CH'AN ZA rushes downstairs to peek out, see where Caine
and the Girl are going. But, they are already gone from
sight in the teeming street.

CLOSEUP -CH'AN ZA, alarm and trepidation. With Caine in
America, he knows he's been followed across the world.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - THE DOCKS - DAY

A distance away, outside of a beer joint on the docks, CAINE & LIEN see a tall SWEDISH SEAMAN waylaid by three men, hit with a sap and dragged off.

CAINE is about to help him, but LIEN restrains him.

LIEN

No...no...

CAINE

Maybe they'll kill him.

LIEN

Don't you know anything?

(a beat)

'Shanghied'.

CAINE

'Shanghied'?

LIEN

(matter of factly)

He'll wake up on a ship. Forced to work. He'll be gone for years... maybe forever.

(a beat)

Keep to your own business and stay unnoticed. If you help,...you could be next. Come...

LIEN tugs on his arm.

CLOSEUP - CAINE. Against everything in his character, and realizing where he is and that he cannot save the world, he accepts that he must keep his 'eyes on the prize'. He nods his understanding and reluctantly follows.

EXT. A CHINESE FLOPHOUSE - DAY

Above the doorway of a plank board building is a SIGN:

"BEDS - 10 CENTS"

ANGLE ON LIEN

LIEN

Here.

LIEN leads him inside.

INT. CHINESE FLOPHOUSE - DAY

A LARGE ROOM with rude bunks for about a dozen laborers.

AN OLD CHINESE MAN greets them and shows them an empty bed. He EXITS.

LIEN

You'll be safe here.

CAINE

And you?

LIEN

I have a place.

EXT. THE CHINESE QUARTER - THE STREET - DAY

LIEN makes her way through serpentine streets.

ANOTHER ANGLE - CH'AN ZA sees her and follows at a safe distance.

EXT. THE CHINESE QUARTER - UNDERGROUND DEN OF THIEVES - DAY

CH'AN ZA follows LIEN through UNDERGROUND PASSAGEWAYS to a DEN OF THIEVES. CH'AN ZA secrets himself in the shadows and observes...

LIEN is among TEN IMPOVERISHED CHINESE YOUTHS holed up in a kind of communal hideaway. Their leader is a heavily muscled gangster-type, 'JYAN', a hardened criminal while still in his teens. He is the self-anointed 'KING OF THIEVES'.

He braces Lien with his hand out.

'KING OF THIEVES'

Give.

LIEN hands over her 'take'. He counts it, SLAPS HER to the ground, then tosses her a few coins back.

'KING OF THIEVES' (CONT'D)

More than you're worth.

(a beat)

Do better or I sell you to the cribs.

LIEN SOBS, no act this time. She recoils from him.

The 'KING OF THIEVES' pauses, senses movement, a presence in shadows.

'KING OF THIEVES' (CONT'D)

Who's there? Come out!

After a long moment, CH'AN ZA steps into the light.

'KING OF THIEVES' (CONT'D)

Who are you?

CH'AN ZA wordlessly approaches.

'KING OF THIEVES' (CONT'D)

What do you want here?

CH'AN ZA suddenly touches him at a pressure point (between the rib cage and the stomach wall). The 'KING OF THIEVES' collapses to one knee. CH'AN ZA touches him again, a point in the middle of the vertebral column. He falls over, though still conscious.

CH'AN ZA leans down and whispers to him, while emptying his pockets.

CH'AN ZA

You're finished here. You'll be able to get up in a minute. Then get out.

(a beat)

If I see your face again...it'll be the end of you. Now go!

JYAN, 'THE KING OF THIEVES' gets shakily to his feet; he slinks away.

LIEN and THE THIEVES look on, astonished.

ANGLE on CH'AN ZA as he addresses THE THIEVES, who are startled...and interested.

CH'AN ZA

You work for me now.

(a beat)

Not because you're afraid, but because you'll want to.

(considers)

How much did he let you keep before?

LIEN

Two coins in ten.

CH'AN ZA
The truth or be punished.

LIEN
(reconsiders)
One of ten.

CH'AN ZA tosses money he's taken from the 'King of Thieves' onto the dirt floor. THE THIEVES scramble for it.

CH'AN ZA
Now, it's five.

As THE THIEVES divide the money and excitedly react to their turn of fortune...

CLOSEUP - CH'AN ZA. He seems different than the man we knew, more forceful and more charismatic, full of a newly found power he has leeches from the Shaolin Scrolls.

CH'AN ZA talks privately with LIEN.

CLOSEUPS - CH'AN ZA & LIEN

LIEN reacts to his streak of white hair.

CH'AN ZA
Your old boss. You take his bed,
his space here. I'm sure the most
comfortable.

LIEN
(suspicious)
Thank you.

CH'AN ZA
The man you were with today, the
tall one. Where did you take him?

LIEN
Why?

CH'AN ZA
Where did you take him?

CLOSEUP - LIEN knows she is caught between adversaries. She looks at CH'AN ZA with interest, uncertainty and trepidation.

INT. THE CHINESE FLOPHOUSE - NIGHT

CAINE awakens in his bunk, aware as...

A tough looking CHINESE MAN, HOP MIN enters. He is of middle age, but obviously a 'tough customer'. He nudges a sleeping 'guest' with his foot. At the very sight of HOP MIN, the man hurriedly departs in fright. HOP MIN takes the bunk.

Pretending to sleep, CAINE watches as...

Covertly, in twos and threes, new ROUGH LOOKING YOUNGER MEN enter. Some silently move the occupants from their bunks, other guests hurriedly exit.

All the previous inhabitants have now been replaced by CHINESE THUGS.

HOP MIN, the oldest and most menacing stands and speaks to Caine from across the room. All the young thugs stand up and ready themselves.

HOP MIN

I am Hop Min.

(thumps his own chest
with a boast)

I have killed ten men.

CAINE sits up, sizes up the situation in silence and with an absence of fear.

ONE OF THE YOUNG THUGS locks the door. There is no other way out. The DOZEN MEN now produce WEAPONS, mostly large knives and hatchets.

HOP MIN

(studies Caine, smirks)
You don't look like much...not
like a man with enemies. But, a
cool one though, I'll say that...

THE CIRCLE closes; violence is about to be unleashed.

CLOSEUP - CAINE raises his arms and pulls away his sleeves, revealing... THE TIGER and the DRAGON seared on his forearms.

CLOSEUP - HOP MIN stops in his tracks, stunned.

HOP MIN

Shaolin.

(bows his head and falls
to his knees, instructs
the others)

Bow down...

(they are confused, slow
to react)

BOW DOWN.

They comply. Hop Min excuses them to Caine.

HOP MIN (CONT'D)

They are young and stupid. Born
here. They know nothing of the old
ways...

(a beat)

Shaolin, your pardon. Go in peace.

Before Hop Min and his men can leave...

CAINE

Who sent you?

HOP MIN

He gave no name. His money was
good. A man with a stripe of white
hair.

CAINE reacts.

CAINE

Where can I find him?

HOP MIN

Who knows?

CAINE considers the man before him for a moment, then
goes on intuition.

CAINE

Hop Min, I...need your help.

HOP MIN nods his agreement.

CAINE (CONT'D)

Soon, this man will try to leave
the Barbary Coast.

HOP MIN

(solemn vow)

Our eyes and ears are yours...

INT. BARBARY COAST - CH'AN ZA'S FURNISHED ROOM - SAME DAY - LATER

CH'AN ZA is furious, venting to the walls of his room.

CH'AN ZA

He lives...He still lives!...Even
criminals honor him...!

He paces back and forth, enraged.

INT. MANCHU IMPERIAL COURT - DAY

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS sits holding a hand mirror as she is being groomed by THREE FEMALE ATTENDANTS. THE DOWAGER is the very soul of self indulgence.

CLOSEUP - THE DOWAGER EMPRESS. The tyrannical Ruler of China studies her image in the hand mirror.

FLASHBACK

EXT. CHINA - A SEACOAST VILLAGE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

SUPER:

44 YEARS EARLIER

INT. - A MODEST HOUSE - DAY

A SIXTEEN YEAR OLD PEASANT GIRL. Her dress is tattered, hair unkempt and she is nearly barefoot. She is married, destitute and with an infant daughter.

CLOSEUP - IT IS THE DOWAGER EMPRESS, unmistakable, the same grey eyes, now at sixteen and in very different circumstances. She goes by the name of ONALA.

In the rude house, she fixes what little food there is while her husband studies.

His name is CHANG LEE, a studious and intellectual young man. By their clothes and circumstances, they are desperately poor.

She looks at him with undisguised contempt.

ONALA

You read. You study. For what?

Her husband is long suffering, slow to anger. He has heard it a thousand times before.

CHANG LEE

Famine is everywhere, and I do the best I can. You knew what I was when you married me.

ONALA

I married a fool, and useless. While you read...we will die in squalor.

CHANG LEE shakes his head, doesn't bother to argue and leaves the small house.

The BABY begins to cry.

ONALA looks down at her infant daughter. She lets the baby cry, her face emotionless. That most primal female aspect, a mother's love...is missing. Onala is a loveless woman, unhappy and desperate like a caged animal.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THROUGH THE WINDOW reveals a rare event...

OUTSIDE, ON THE ROAD is a PROCESSION FROM THE MANCHU COURT passing through the small village. The Manchu elite are bedecked in finery, their lives, their world is everything Onala's is not.

ONALA watches as the PROCESSION STOPS IN THE SMALL VILLAGE FOR SUPPLIES.

CLOSEUP - ONALA's mind is racing. She looks around at her circumstances, then at the now SLEEPING BABY.

ONALA makes her decision. She quickly writes a note with brush and black ink and leaves it on the table. She then grabs a few personal items, wraps them in a cloth.

Pausing only a moment to look at the SLEEPING BABY, ONALA turns her back and rushes out the door.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - A SMALL SHOP - DAY

AN OLD WOMAN is tending her shop, clothes and sundries. She tends to a CUSTOMER and takes him inside the store.

CLOSEUP - Outside is a BOLT OF CHEAP SILK displayed amongst other wares.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ONALA has been waiting anxiously nearby. With the woman out of sight, ONALA rushes forward, steals the bolt of silk and runs off.

EXT. THE RIVER - DAY

ONALA strips off all her old clothes as if they were contaminated. She throws them away into the bushes and quickly bathes, then...

ONALA hurriedly unwraps the meager personal possessions she has taken...a comb and a mirror. With desperation, but sure hands, she washes and prepares her face and fixes her hair.

EXT. THE PROCESSION - THE REGENT'S COACH - DAY

THE REGENT, a lordly man in his 40's and attired as befits his position, stands by his elegant, horse drawn enclosed coach. It is a welcome respite from his travels. He stretches, breathes fresh air and oversees his underlings loading supplies.

He walks off to issue orders and insure that all is in order.

ANGLE on ONALA hiding nearby. She sees her chance.

WE OBSERVE ONALA, but only from her bare knees down as... she steals into the Regent's Coach.

INT. THE REGENT'S COACH - DAY

THE REGENT reenters his coach as his driver snaps the horses to action and the van lurches forward.

EXT. SAME SCENE - DAY

THE PROCESSION is leaving the Village.

INT. THE REGENT'S COACH - SAME SCENE - DAY

THE REGENT stands wordlessly looking down at his bed.

Lying there, naked except for the silk alluringly draped across her body...is ONALA, sensuous and inviting.

The REGENT is stunned.

ONALA slowly, seductively draws back the silk revealing her nakedness.

DISSOLVE

INT. CHANG LEE'S HOUSE - DAY

CHANG LEE reads the note that Onala has left for him.

ONALA (VO)

You are my husband no longer. I am
gone from your life. You will
never see me again...

SPLIT SCREEN - WE HOLD THE SCENE ON ONE SIDE OF THE
FRAME, AS ON THE OTHER...

INT. THE REGENT'S COACH - DAY

THE REGENT is in the throws of satisfying his lust,
breathing heavily, he and ONALA intertwined.

ONALA's chin is on his shoulder as he exerts himself. Her
expression, unseen by him, is detached and passionless,
all 'business'.

ONALA (V.O.-CONT'D)

...Do with our daughter what you
will. Give me up for dead.

WE HOLD ON ONALA'S FACE. Even here, even now...an icy
self-will and unrestrained ambition.

EXT. A SEACOAST ROAD - THE MANCHU RETINVE - DAY

The elegant procession leaves the small village in the
distance.

OUT OF FLASHBACK

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - A PRIZE FIGHT - DAY

A WILD, *BARE KNUCKLE PRIZE FIGHT is taking place in an
outdoor makeshift arena. A LARGE, RAUCOUS CROWD is in
attendance.

*(In the latter part of the 19th Century, The Barbary Coast
was a primary location for the beginning of American
prizefighting and the development of pugilism in the United
States.)

The contest is underway in an elevated ring, bare knuckled and dirty. The dominant of the TWO FIGHTERS is 'HAPPY JACK' DOYLE, six feet four and 240 pounds of bone and gristle. He is so skilled a brawler that his parted hair remains slicked back and the OTHER FIGHTER's blows are to little avail.

THE CROWD is WILD, CHEERING, BETTING. They are IRISH, CHINESE, SWEDES, RICH & POOR of every ethnicity and description.

RING SIDE - ANGLE ON

'DOLLAR BILL' BROMLEY and his partner, ROLAND LUNDY.

'DOLLAR BILL' BROMLEY is the Boss of the Barbary Coast; he is late 30's, nattily attired in a vested suit, the jacket unbuttoned. He is an urban gangster of the 1870's, handsome, albeit with the mien of a hardened criminal.

Seated beside him and similarly attired is ROLAND LUNDY, a 'Slugger' par excellence. ROLAND has the face of a miscreant and under his suit, shoulders like sides of beef. He wears a bowler hat even when indoors.

Amidst the tumult of the fight, 'DOLLAR BILL' and ROLAND calmly cover bets with a mere nod or motion of the hand to their underlings and other sporting types.

IN THE CROWD, ANGLE ON...

CLOSEUP - CH'AN ZA looking on. He does not wager, but from the look on his face, the spectacle has given him an idea. He smiles to himself...

CUT TO

INSERT - CLOSEUP - CAINE'S IMAGE on a CHINESE WANTED POSTER

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - THE CHINESE LEGATION - DAY

THE WANTED POSTER is displayed near the entrance of the Legation along with other postings of interest to the Chinese Community.

'WOLF EYES', the dockworker stands outside the Chinese Legation studying Caine's likeness.

EXT - THE BARBARY COAST - SEAFRONT - DAY

SAI FONG ARRIVES, steps off the gangway onto the teeming wharf of San Francisco.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - A MARKET - DAY

LIEN is in the crowded open air market, sizing up a Sailor\victim, and about to pick his pocket.

A HAND enters the frame and grabs her's. It is CAINE. LIEN is taken aback.

CAINE

Still hungry?

LIEN

Let me go...

CAINE

I did not "sleep safely".

LIEN shrugs, completely unapologetic.

CAINE (CONT'D)

Have you nothing to say?

LIEN

In this world...it's eat or be eaten. There is nothing else but that.

CAINE reacts to her cynicism.

CAINE

There is more than that. There is kindness. There is honesty.

LIEN

The strong kill the weak. That is the way of the world. No one is honest and kindness is just another weapon.

CAINE is struck by her vitriol.

INT. CHINESE LEGATION - DAY

SAI FONG arrives at the CHINESE LEGATION. OFFICERS scurry to welcome him with deferential treatment.

LEGATION OFFICER

Sai Fong, it is an honor. And a fortuitous arrival in the New Year.

SAI FONG

(curtly)

I am not here for celebrations.

The Legation Officer loses his obsequious smile.

LEGATION OFFICER

We will render every assistance.

SAI FONG shows them one of the Wanted Posters.

SAI FONG

Idiot! Don't put up any more of these.

LEGATION OFFICER

Don't you want him found?

SAI FONG

I don't want him alerted. He'll be more difficult to find. And I don't require any competition.

LEGATION OFFICER

One man already claims to have seen him.

SAI FONG reacts to the information.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - A MARKET - DAY

LIEN and CAINE, walking.

CAINE

One so young. If I closed my eyes, I'd hear a bitter old woman. Why?

LIEN

Old woman? Maybe so.

I never knew my parents. When I was a baby, they went away. Maybe dead, I think. I prayed that they would come back. But they never did.

(a beat)

I don't pray anymore.

CAINE

And this is why...?

LIEN

(dismissive)

He made me.

CAINE

Who made you?

LIEN

Never mind.

CAINE

Is this the truth?

In answer, LIEN pulls her blouse down off her shoulder, BARES HER SHOULDER AND BACK, old scars and new bruises from beatings.

LIEN

Is this the truth?

(unapologetic)

This is my life.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO'S BARBARY COAST - BARROOM - DAY

A rough and smoky joint filled with desperate characters, Chinese among them. 'WOLF EYES' is seated alone at a table.

SAI FONG ENTERS and looks around the room.

'WOLF EYES' nods to him. SAI FONG approaches.

He stops at the table and sets down a copy of CAINE'S Chinese WANTED POSTER.

SAI FONG

You have seen him?

'WOLF EYES' nods in the affirmative.

SAI FONG sits down at the small table and folds his arms.

'WOLF EYES'

He came here off the boat a week ago.

SAI FONG

He is alone?

'WOLF EYES'

No. There is a local girl, a little thief named Lien. She guides him...

SAI FONG taps the image on the poster.

SAI FONG

You're sure it's this man?

'WOLF EYES'

How many Shaolin are there? I saw the Tiger seared on his arm.

(a beat)

I'll take my reward now.

SAI FONG

When I have my man.

'WOLF EYES'

It should be worth something now.

SAI FONG looks down. 'WOLF EYES' KNIFE has been under the table all along, its point now at Sai Fong's belly.

'WOLF EYES' (CONT'D)

Pay before your next breath.

(predatory smile)

I'm a dangerous man.

Sai Fong, arms casually folded, is seemingly unprepared.

Then, in a blink, SAI FONG'S LEFT HAND EXPLODES DOWNWARD, a BACKFIST so quick that it is hard to follow. It sails through the table top, splintering it. He now has 'WOLF EYES' by the wrist, the hand immobile, the knife useless.

EVERYONE IN THE PLACE FREEZES.

SAI FONG stares at 'WOLF EYES', whose expression changes from predator to prey. He remains motionless like a deer in the headlights.

SAI FONG SUDDENLY STRIKES WITH HIS FREE HAND. A straight punch to the mid-body, bloodless, but with such speed and power that THE BACK OF 'WOLF EYES' CHAIR SHATTERS.

'WOLF EYES' looks uncomprehending, then falls over.

SAI FONG

Not dangerous enough.

SAI FONG EXITS in no particular hurry.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - SEAFRONT - DAY

CAINE & LIEN look out at the sailing ships in the harbor.
LIEN is pensive.

CAINE

Do you ever think of leaving here?

LIEN

Why would I leave? This is all I
know. I belong here...I'm bad.

CAINE

You're good.

She laughs. No one has ever suggested this before.

CAINE (CONT'D)

You're good. I read it in your
face.

LIEN

You read it?

CAINE

Character is written on one's
face. I read yours from the first.
Strong, brave, good hearted.

(a warm smile)

You just don't know it yet.

LIEN studies him, intrigued, only half believes him.

LIEN

You're a fool. I'll disappoint
you.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - THE PRIZE RING - DAY

'HAPPY JACK' DOYLE delivers a last crunching blow and his
opponent falls.

'HAPPY JACK' raises his hands in victory as the CROWD
ERUPTS.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA...as 'HAPPY JACK'S' OPPONENT is carried
right past him. The fallen fighter appears half-dead.

CH'AN ZA takes it all in.

INT. THE FORBIDDEN CITY - MANCHU IMPERIAL COURT - DAY

MANCHU GENERAL - REDUX

It is an excerpt of a scene we have seen before, but now in a new context. Once again, THE DOWAGER EMPRESS is behind her son's ornate throne.

MANCHU GENERAL

Forgive me. I have failed you,
Your Majesty. I beg for my life.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

You beg for what is worthless.
Throw him down the well!

TONGZHI

Throw him down the well!

GUARDS immediately seize the General.

CLOSEUP of THE GENERAL reveals...

MATCH DISSOLVE - FLASHBACK

INT. THE MANCHU RETINUE - THE REGENT'S COACH - DAY

THE REGENT is the General, the same man years before.

ONALA (OS)

What is this?

ANOTHER ANGLE - ONALA, the Regent's new lover, lounges half undressed. She has settled into her new environment. She picks up a valuable BRACELET from a silk box. It is gold with inset gems.

REGENT

(annoyed)

It's for my wife.

ONALA, admiring the bracelet, slips it on.

THE REGENT flares into anger.

REGENT (CONT'D)

Put it back.

(brazenly, she does not
comply)

Shameless wench...put it back.

She still doesn't obey. He storms over. She wears the bracelet, undeterred, looks at him with her cat-grey eyes and whispers seductively.

ONALA

My Lord,...I will give you a night of pleasure that men only dream of. You'll see. And when I am done, you'll want more...and more ...and you will give me this as if it were nothing.

She fixes him with wanton eyes, irresistible. His anger changes...to lust. He takes her in his arms. She whispers lasciviously in his ear.

SLOW DISSOLVE

INT - THE MANCHU COURT - INSPECTOR OF CONCUBINES - DAY

The sixteen year old ONALA is in the Manchu Court. She has transformed herself, used her new connections. She is now attired in silk, her face and hair remarkably elegant; she is a vision of natural and startling beauty. On her wrist she wears the gold and gem encrusted bracelet.

She stands before a wily OLD MAN, bedecked in fine robes. He is THE INSPECTOR OF CONCUBINES for Celestial Ruler Hsien Feng, Emperor of China.

The INSPECTOR is irate.

INSPECTOR

You are all nerve and no breeding.
No refinement. A bumpkin...a
nothing.

ONALA does not react to the harshness of the insult. She keeps her composure.

INSPECTOR (CONT'D)

The Emperor has six hundred concubines, each a pure virgin. The most perfect from every province. I have examined, picked each one myself. Every part perfection. Perfect fingers and toes, perfect skin without blemish to please him...each one untouched and unsullied, like fine porcelain.

ONALA

Am I not beautiful?

INSPECTOR

You are beautiful like a flower
that grows from a weed. It is
still a weed. Your kind of beauty
has no value to me. It is cheap.
*What makes you think I would send
you to the Emperor with my 'seal'
on you?*

ONALA

He will thank you.

INSPECTOR

I have examined you. A perfect
virgin?

(mocking laugh)

You have even borne a child.

ONALA

No...

INSPECTOR

Liar! Would I send one such as you
to the Emperor's bed? Go away. Go
away while you have your life.

ONALA considers. Her entire life has come down to this
one moment. She will not be denied.

ONALA

I know how to please a man. A
perfect virgin. He will never
know. And he will reward you.

INSPECTOR

(adamant)

Harlots like you are more common
than flies. NO.

ONALA

It is nothing to you. Just one
more girl for his amusement...

(holds up the gold
bracelet)

But, it is worth this.

(slips it from her wrist
and offers it to him)

For just one night...

The INSPECTOR CONSIDERS, taken with the impressive object. He wavers...then takes the gold bracelet.

INSPECTOR

If you ever admit this to him or anyone else, you will envy the dead.

ONALA nods her agreement.

CLOSEUP - ONALA...iron nerve and consummate ambition written on her face.

OUT OF FLASHBACK

EXT. THE FORBIDDEN CITY - MANCHU IMPERIAL COURT - DAY

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS strolls across the courtyard followed by her obedient RETINUE. She approaches...

A GIBBET on which a MALE FIGURE has been hung by the neck.

CLOSEUP - THE INSPECTOR OF CONCUBINES is the unfortunate figure suspended in the breeze.

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS takes no notice of him as she and her Retinue pass by.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - THE CHINESE SECTION - DAY

CAINE and LIEN share a meal.

LIEN

There are two kinds of people on The Barbary Coast. Those running to something, and those running away. What are you running from?

CAINE hesitates, unsure of what he may reveal, Then...

CAINE

The Ghosts of the Dead.

LIEN

You killed someone?

CAINE

Yes...No, not the way you think.
(a beat)

All those I cared for, those who gave me everything... all died.

CAINE (CONT'D)

Only I live on. I ran away.

She searches his expression. For the first time she has a glimpse of his inner demons.

LIEN

Could you have saved them?

CAINE

No.

LIEN

Is there anything you could have done?

CAINE

I could have stayed.

LIEN

Would they have wanted you to?

CAINE

No.

LIEN

Then why are you troubled?

CAINE

All those I loved...I lost.

CLOSEUPS - CAINE & LIEN. Now she understands.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO - CHINATOWN - OFFICE - DAY

'BLACK TIGER' HWAN (40's) is in his office overlooking Chinatown. He wears rimless eye glasses and American style clothes of quality. He smokes a cigarette held between thumb and forefinger. The pinky of his right hand wears an overlay, a two inch gold fingernail. He blows cigarette smoke, thoughtful, and waiting.

'BLACK TIGER' HWAN is a 19th Century Chinese Gangster, a 'Lord of the Triads' (powerful 'Societies' that became corrupt during Manchu Rule and gave rise to 'The Tongs').

Hwan's place is a kind of office where he conducts business. There is a desk behind him on which rests a CHINESE HATCHET, favored weapon of 'The Tongs'.

Lounging in the corner is a SEVEN FOOT CHINESE MAN, QUONG, 'Black Tiger's' ever present personal bodyguard.

There is a SMALL DISTURBANCE outside.

THE DOOR OPENS AND 'LOVER BOY' and CHARLIE SAM TOM, two Chinese 'BOO HOW DOY' (Tong Hit Men) bring in a cowering CHINESE MAN.

'BLACK TIGER' motions for QUONG to take him. The giant bodyguard holds him by the scruff of the neck as if he were a chicken.

'BLACK TIGER' nods and the TWO TONG GANGSTERS adjourn to the next room.

WE HOLD ON 'BLACK TIGER' as he speaks to the terrified Chinese held fast in the giant's grip.

'BLACK TIGER'

You stole from me. Two fingers
worth...

THE GIANT QUONG forces the cowering man's hand flat onto the desk. 'BLACK TIGER' picks up the hatchet.

INT. OUTSIDE THE OFFICE - DAY

SAI FONG approaches the door as...

OFFSCREEN there is an abrupt THWACK! WE HEAR the cowering man scream.

The door opens and the CHINESE MAN, holding a cloth over his bloody hand, flees for his life. He disappears as...

SAI FONG ENTERS through the open door.

'BLACK TIGER'

Welcome.

SAI FONG

Thank you for seeing me.

'BLACK TIGER'

Refreshment?

SAI FONG

No, thank you.

'BLACK TIGER'

What is it you seek? Opium? Women?

SAI FONG waves his hand in the negative. He sets CAINE'S WANTED POSTER on the desk. 'Black Tiger' looks at it.

'BLACK TIGER' (CONT'D)

The Dowager has no power here.

SAI FONG

But you do. I am in a strange land...and The Triads reach everywhere.

HWAN scratches his cheek with his gold pinky nail.

'BLACK TIGER'

True. The roots of the Triads are deeper than those of the Manchu. We will outlive The Dowager and a hundred like her.

(considers)

I will help you, Sai Fong, but a courtesy must be repaid. When that time comes, I will ask...and it cannot be refused.

SAI FONG

Agreed.

'BLACK TIGER'

I will send two men to you. They will assist.

SAI FONG

Thank you. Please offer my respect to the Brothers of the Triad.

SAI FONG LEAVES.

After a long moment, a side door opens and the TWO GANGSTERS REENTER.

'LOVER BOY' is in his 30's, attired in a natty American suit. Thoroughly Western in dress and attitude, culturally, he seems more American than Chinese. His ENGLISH is unaccented.

CHARLIE SAM TOM is equally dangerous, although perhaps less cunning. He is also a 'BOO HOW DOY', a Tong contract killer.

'BLACK TIGER'

There is a heavy price on the Shaolin's head. Whoever delivers him will have favor with the Manchus.

'LOVER BOY'

We find him for this Sai Fong and he will take all the credit...and all the reward. We get nothing.

'BLACK TIGER' weighs his choices.

'LOVER BOY' (CONT'D)

So, you want us to help him?

'BLACK TIGER'

No.

(a beat)

I want you to kill him.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - DAY

CAINE is walking...

At the end of the street, CH'AN ZA suddenly appears. The two men lock eyes. CH'AN ZA turns and runs, Caine after him.

CH'AN ZA leads him up one street...and down another... until...

CAINE turns a corner and stops. It is a dead end.

CH'AN ZA stands looking at him from a distance.

They are at 'THE CRIBS'; rows of young prostitutes in cage-like cubicles line both sides of the dead end. Some of the unfortunates would seem little more than children, but any vestige of youth is already gone. It is a place of utter despair, Man at his lowest ebb.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA - He is curiously nonplussed. He has led Caine to this place.

CAINE is taken aback by the wretchedness before him. CH'AN ZA brings him back to the moment.

CH'AN ZA

Caine, their fate is already
written. Yours is about to be.

CAINE pauses for a long moment, makes no physical move
against him.

CAINE

The Scrolls.

CH'AN ZA

They're safe.

CAINE studies him, notices the change in Ch'an Za's
appearance, his composure and self-assurance.

CAINE

(introspective)

The Temple Fathers were the
greatest of men. What did they or
I ever do to you?

(CH'AN ZA replies with a
smirk)

They saved you.

CH'AN ZA

They gave me charity. Only that.
And I came to hate them for it.

CAINE

They were good to you.

CH'AN ZA

Were they? Day by day, year by
year, do you know what it's like
to see someone become what you
will never be?

(a beat)

I wasted my youth watching you
learn and grow into who you are
now. And even common criminals who
know no law...bow down to you.

CAINE listens as CH'AN ZA pours out his venom, a hatred
that had heretofore been hidden.

CH'AN ZA (CONT'D)

The Shaolin gave you all they saw
fit to deny me. And I came to
despise them for it...and you, and
all your pieties.

CAINE

They denied you nothing. All the choices...were yours.

CH'AN ZA unleashes the fury of his resentment.

CH'AN ZA

I'm as good as you! Better in my way. Oh, you pretend goodness, but I see you for what you are. And I do not mourn because you are the last of them. In the end, for all their skills, I am better than they.

CAINE has shown patience and reserve, until now. He replies with rare disgust.

CAINE

Better? They were lions. You are a bed bug.

CH'AN ZA

I am still alive. That makes me better.

CAINE

A bedbug is alive, but it is still a bedbug.

CH'AN ZA

(dark smile)

Hmm, I've never seen you angry before. Wasn't that the first thing you learned? Anger first 'unbalances', then destroys.

(a beat)

You are the last of them. And you will go the way they went. But, before you do...you will disgrace yourself. To you, public shame is worse than death. And that's exactly what I've arranged.

CAINE

Do you know what 'shame' is?

CH'AN ZA

"A Shaolin's skills are never for show, never for money, and not for the common people". You see, I heard and observed much more than you knew.

(a beat)

You will do all of that and worse.
If I am a betrayer, so are you.

CAINE

You bay at the moon, Ch'an Za.
You're quite mad.

CH'AN ZA

Mad? Then so be it.

But, you will. You will take
Shaolin into the prize ring for
all to see. What could be worse?

CAINE

Why would I?

CH'AN ZA

Because of the girl. She is
nothing to me. But, if you don't
...I will sell her as a whore for
the 'cribs'. She will become one
of them...and death is more
merciful.

CH'AN ZA motions to...

THE YOUNG CHINESE GIRLS in their 'cribs', little more
than rudely furnished cages, pitiful prostitutes.

CH'AN ZA (CONT'D)

Do you see them? Most often, they
are sold at birth and quickly used
up. Most don't even live to be
eighteen...

CAINE

Where is Lien?

CH'AN ZA

She walks free...for now.

(a beat)

But, the deal is done. Even if we are both gone, or even dead...this will take place. Unless...

(eye contact)

You fight in the ring. That is the only way. Oh, and you will win.

CAINE

I swear this to you, Ch'an Za. I swear it. Your treachery will not go unrewarded.

CH'AN ZA

(smiles)

That was my always my idea.

(dark whisper)

Just look how angry you are.

(icily)

Your honor or her life. The choice is yours.

CAINE looks sidelong at the pitiful girls in the cribs, and considers. Ch'an Za is right. Death is more merciful.

CAINE turns back to CH'AN ZA, but he has disappeared through one of the doorways on the street.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - BUDDHIST TEMPLE - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING - A SMALL BUDDHIST TEMPLE on a side street of the Chinese District.

INT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - NIGHT

Amidst candles and lit incense...

CLOSEUP - CAINE is seated alone in the quiet and darkened temple, lost in his thoughts.

FLASHBACK

INT. THE SHAOLIN TEMPLE - NIGHT

The Temple interior has a similar ambiance...

MASTER PO

My boy, in the sanctity of the Temple we see the perfect order of things, the Yin & Yang, the Light and Dark...the simple harmony of life.

YOUNG CAINE

Someday I will leave here. And there will be times,...when I won't know what to do.

MASTER PO

Oh, it's really not so complicated.

(a beat)

Do good, love justice and mercy. Defend the weak. And remember that every good deed returns a thousand fold.

CLOSEUP - CAINE listens, absorbs what Po has said.

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

Know that...and you know everything.

YOUNG CAINE

But, what if it's not clear... even what is right?

MASTER PO

Hmmm.

(lightly)

Well, when your brain is too busy or confused...just be quiet. Very still. Stop thinking. Then, in that stillness...just listen to your heart. Not your brain...your heart. And you'll know.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - THE PRIZE RING - DAY

The DIN before a big fight, the restless crowd, activity at ring side and anticipation of the action.

'DOLLAR BILL' and ROLAND LUNDY are covering bets.

INT - A NEARBY TENT - DAY

FRANKIE MALONE, THE CHALLENGER, a muscle-bound street brawler is waiting to go into the ring. He warms up, throwing punches, loosening up.

A MAN enters carrying a bucket of water. We do not see his face.

MAN

Water?

FRANKIE continues shadow boxing.

FRANKIE MALONE

No thanks. Just put it in the corner.

THE MAN puts the bucket down, and produces a small flat whiskey bottle from his back pocket. He offers Frankie a swig. FRANKIE cannot resist

FRANKIE MALONE

That's more like it.

Frankie, enthusiastically takes two big swigs from the bottle and returns it.

FRANKIE MALONE

Thanks...

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals the MAN who has proffered the whiskey is...CH'AN ZA...EXITING from the tent.

EXT. RING SIDE - DAY

CAINE, wearing his usual shirt, pants and shoes, is standing among the throng, stoic.

IN THE RING, a burly, red-faced REFEREE and 'HAPPY JACK' DOYLE are waiting for his opponent.

CH'AN ZA, his eyes on the ring, sidles up beside CAINE.

CAINE looks wordlessly at him. BOTH TURN as...

FRANKIE MALONE exits from his tent, wavers...and passes out.

Some MEN rush to Malone's aid as an IMMEDIATE REACTION roils through THE CROWD.

EXT. THE RING - SAME SCENE - DAY

REFEREE

(reacting)

What the hell's going on?

SEVERAL MEN excitedly approach the ring.

MAN #1

(to Referee)

Malone can't fight. He's sick or
somethin'...

REFEREE

Whaddya mean? He's gotta fight.
There'll be a riot here...

ANGLE on CH'AN ZA as he seizes the moment, climbs into
the ring and up to the REFEREE. He motions toward CAINE
standing at the ring apron.

CH'AN ZA

He will fight instead.

REFEREE

Who the hell is he?

THE CROWD IS now MORE IMPATIENT, grumbling. The REFEREE
fully understands the danger and difficulty he is in.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Yeah, okay.

CLOSEUPS - CAINE & CH'AN ZA.

CAINE REMOVES HIS SHIRT. Barechested, his forearms are
wrapped with burlap strips, leather cuffs at his wrists.
His covered forearms are in the old 'Chinese Boxing'
style, the Tiger and Dragon hidden from view.

CH'AN ZA sees this, looks at Caine, knows he will not
reveal his TIGER & DRAGON, but makes no issue of it.
Caine's personal disgrace is enough.

CAINE climbs INTO THE RING.

ANOTHER ANGLE- RINGSIDE

'DOLLAR BILL' and ROLAND LUNDY react to the replacement.

'DOLLAR BILL'

What's going on? Where's Malone?
Who's that?

There is excitement and confusion in THE CROWD.

CAINE's appearance has caused the Chinese and others to view him with interest and enthusiasm...betting ensues.

ROLAND LUNDY

Wait a minute. The Chinese are laying bets...Who is this guy?

'DOLLAR BILL'

Who cares? Jack's got fifty wins.
He killed four men in the ring.
What's this bum gonna do?

Let'im fight. Cover the bets.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE REFEREE calls 'HAPPY JACK' DOYLE and CAINE to the center of the ring.

REFEREE

(announcing)

With FIFTY WINS AND NO LOSSES, THE
CHAMPION OF THE BARBARY COAST...
'HAPPY JACK' DOYLE, AGAINST...

THE CROWD CHEERS, GROWING EXCITEMENT.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

(aside to Caine)

What's your name?

CAINE

No name.

THE REFEREE considers and announces.

REFEREE

...AGAINST 'NO NAME SLUGGER'!

(a beat)

NO STOMPING! NO GOUGING! NO
BITING! NO OTHER RULES!

FIVE MINUTE ROUNDS TO A FINISH!

'HAPPY JACK' sizes CAINE up.

'HAPPY JACK'

No name, huh? That's okay.

Dead men don't need no names.

REFEREE

GO TO YOUR CORNERS.

'HAPPY JACK' pushes the Referee aside, and tries to sucker punch Caine in the back of the head.

Remarkably, CAINE senses the punch coming, side steps and bats it away.

CLOSEUP - 'HAPPY JACK', surprise written on his face. He is now aware that Caine is no 'patsy'.

THE BELL SOUNDS.

'HAPPY JACK' sets his stance, all business...and closes with CAINE. For all his size, 'HAPPY JACK' is a skilled pugilist.

CAINE, in a more 'KEMPO' Chinese Boxing style, now employs 'hard' inside and outside blocks as he bats away 'Jack's punches with arm blocks and an impenetrable defense. CAINE uses no Tiger\Dragon subtle 'open hand' techniques. Here he employs closed 'WAY OF THE FIST' ...Shaolin Temple Boxing.

Caine's skills immediately put 'Happy Jack' off his game, the bigger man's immense strength is now of less utility.

'HAPPY JACK' catches his breath and comes on, more determined, throwing a FURIOUS FLURRY OF PUNCHES. None hits home.

CAINE fends off each blow with a hard blocking strike at the forearms, wrists or biceps. 'Happy Jack' has never experienced anything like this before. The hard blocks wear him down, his arms hurt and grow weary.

ANGLES ON 'DOLLAR BILL' & ROLAND...they can hardly believe what they are seeing. 'Happy Jack' is struggling and seems...inept.

THE BELL SOUNDS ending the round.

ANGLE ON 'DOLLAR BILL'. He leaves his seat and sidles up to 'Happy Jack's corner as the fighter is being worked on by a CORNER MAN between rounds.

'Dollar Bill' calls up from the ring apron.

'DOLLAR BILL'

Whaddya doin? Put this guy away.

'HAPPY JACK'

I'm tryin'. He's...he's a 'dirty fighter'. He's breakin' my arms!

'DOLLAR BILL' glares at him.

'HAPPY JACK' (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'll get 'im.

'HAPPY JACK' rises to his feet in anticipation of the bell.

'DOLLAR BILL' walks a few steps and makes eye contact with the REFEREE. A look from 'DOLLAR BILL' and mere tilt of his head indicates that the situation is unacceptable. The REFEREE nods his silent understanding and agreement. The 'Fix' is in.

The REFEREE walks to a corner of the ring, where he leans down and speaks quietly to an ASSISTANT, A MAN WITH A CIGAR AND A DERBY HAT. We do not hear the dialogue.

ANGLE on THE MAN IN THE DERBY HAT as he takes a hand towel, uncovers a bucket and produces a BOTTLE of AMMONIA. He quickly and covertly douses the towel with it... hands it back up to the REFEREE.

THE REFEREE moves over to CAINE standing alone in his corner.

REFEREE

You okay?

CAINE nods.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Lemme see...

He places one hand with the ammonia drenched towel atop Caine's head, tilting Caine back, feigning concern for the Shaolin's welfare. The Referee squeezes the towel, the solution dripping onto Caine's forehead and down towards his eyes.

THE REFEREE steps back...as THE BELL RINGS.

CAINE'S SKILLED DEFENSE HAS DRIVEN THE CROWD INTO A FRENZY OF BETTING.

'DOLLAR BILL' covers all the bets.

CAINE moves to the center ring but immediately reacts to the ammonia. He can hardly see now, and wipes at his eyes.

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA - CAINE'S POV

CAINE'S VISION is BLURRED. He rubs his eyes, but the blurring only gets worse.

ANGLE ON 'HAPPY JACK' as he rushes in, seizes Caine in a bear hug... and head butts him.

CAINE lands heavily, a nasty cut across his forehead.

THE CROWD ERUPTS WITH A ROAR, sensing the end.

ANGLE ON 'DOLLAR BILL', well pleased.

CH'AN ZA observes with a hint of satisfied smile and anticipating the rest.

ANGLE ON CAINE - On the canvas, stunned. He rubs his eyes, trying to clear them.

'HAPPY JACK' hauls CAINE to his feet. Caine still cannot see, shakes his head from the head butt and the acrid solution in his eyes.

WE SLOW THE ACTION.

In SLOW MOTION, 'HAPPY JACK' rears back and puts everything into a straight right hand. As he delivers...

FLASHBACK

EXT. SHAOLIN TEMPLE COURTYARD - DAY

THE SUN IS A BRIGHT FIREBALL. THE CAMERA TILTS DOWN to reveal...

We are in a courtyard of the Shaolin Temple.

YOUNG STUDENT CAINE stands attentively as...

MASTER PO holds a PIECE OF BLACK CLOTH in his hand. He speaks to the SUBJECTIVE CAMERA.

MASTER PO

As you do not fear the light,
neither will you fear the
darkness.

(fingering the cloth)

MASTER PO (CONT'D)

You will wear it half a day, each day for a time...going out and coming in...intimidated neither by the glare of the sun nor the blackness of shadow.

(a beat)

This, my gift to you.

PO holds up the cloth blindfold...And COVERS THE SUBJECTIVE CAMERA. SUDDEN BLACK.

EXT. SHAOLIN TEMPLE COURTYARD - YEARS LATER - DAY

We are in the same location, but years later.

CAINE is fully grown, now in a classic 'horse stance' (legs apart to the width of his shoulders, knees slightly bent). HE WEARS THE BLACK CLOTH BLINDFOLD as...

MASTER PO STRIKES WITH HIS STICK.

CAINE blocks the stick with a 'rising block'. WHACK! PO STRIKES AGAIN...AGAIN...AGAIN...each time in RANDOM FASHION. Inside block, outside block, each blow of the stick is warded off or batted away, by Caine's hands and forearms, a powerful defense that is seemingly immune to attack.

CLOSEUP - CAINE has become almost extra-sensory. Po's gift over years is to train him to sense incoming blows without actually having to see them.

CAINE, like MASTER PO, now appears to 'see without eyes'.

OUT OF FLASHBACK

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - THE RING - DAY

AS 'HAPPY JACK's fist is about to land...

END SLO MO - RESUME NORMAL SPEED

CAINE 'slips' the punch, lets it sail over his left shoulder and instead of stepping back, steps in with a whipping hammer fist to Jack's biceps.

'HAPPY JACK' recoils in pain, all of the 'energy' of his attack having been used against himself.

'HAPPY JACK' moves back angrily, then charges in again... strikes again and again as CAINE DEFENDS and BLOCKS each punch, all the while desperately trying to clear the ammonia from his eyes.

Even now, 'Happy Jack' cannot hit him...

THE BELL SOUNDS

Half blind, CAINE finds his way back to his corner, without any 'Second' or Ring Man to assist him.

ANGLE ON 'HAPPY JACK' in his corner, confused, exhausted.

AT THE RING APRON, 'DOLLAR BILL' calls up to him.

'DOLLAR BILL'
Whaddya we have to do for ya
...cripple this guy?

'HAPPY JACK'
(calls down to him)
He ain't human!

'DOLLAR BILL'
FINISH 'IM!

ACROSS THE RING

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA - CAINE'S POV
Through the haze, CAINE sees a BUCKET OF WATER in his corner.

He takes THE BUCKET OF WATER and POURS IT ON HIS OWN HEAD. He wipes his eyes. His vision clears. HE CAN SEE.

THE BELL RINGS

ANGLE ON CAINE as he meets 'HAPPY JACK' at the center of the ring.

'HAPPY JACK' is more tentative now, doesn't quite know what to do.

THE CROWD is WILD, PEOPLE CROWDING RINGSIDE, YELLING, BETTING FURIOUSLY.

'HAPPY JACK' raises his fists to attack again.

With startling speed, CAINE steps forward with a right hand 'double-punch'...a straight right hand blast to the abdomen which lands with such velocity that 'Happy Jack's' wind is gone. In a split second, CAINE's same right hand recoils twice as fast, propelled up in a circular motion into a rocketing 'back fist'. CAINE's fist clocks 'HAPPY JACK' squarely on the side of his chin. 'Happy Jack's' head snaps backwards...

'HAPPY JACK' falls 'pole-axed', out cold.

A RIOT ERUPTS... WINNERS and BAD LOSERS in THE CROWD, chairs flying. THE BARBARY COAST CROWD is as savage as anyone in the ring.

ANGLE ON 'DOLLAR BILL', livid.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA. He turns and PUSHES THROUGH THE CROWD and melts away.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - DAY

'LOVER BOY' and CHARLIE SAM TOM proceed through the narrow streets.

'LOVER BOY'

This should be easy. He's probably just a politician from the Manchu Court. Leave it to me. I know how these 'old country' types think...

INT. A NOB HILL HOTEL - SAI FONG'S QUARTERS - DAY

SAI FONG is ensconced in the elegant hotel as befits his station. In a rare moment, he is seated at a table near the window, expertly wrapping thin wire around the tiny branches of a bonsai tree, forming its future shape.

It is a skill that requires delicacy and expertise. Sai Fong is a man of surprising and contradictory sensibilities.

There is A KNOCK at the door. Engrossed, he hardly looks up.

SAI FONG

Enter.

'LOVER BOY' and CHARLIE SAM TOM enter. The two Tong gangsters introduce themselves.

'LOVER BOY'

Sai Fong.

SAI FONG

Welcome.

SAI FONG offers a stoic greeting. It is a warm day. He cools himself with AN ORNATE FAN, THEN RETURNS TO HIS WORK ON THE BONSAI.

'LOVER BOY' smiles.

'LOVER BOY'

Our mutual friend sends his respect. We are here to assist.

SAI FONG

I've been waiting for you.

'Lover Boy' looks on with interest at Sai Fong's artistry with the Bonsai...

'LOVER BOY'

You spend a lot of time on that?

SAI FONG

It's very satisfying.

'LOVER BOY'

That right?

'LOVER BOY' looks sidelong at CHARLIE SAM TOM as if to say, "See? What did I tell you? A rube."

SAI FONG

The tree wants to grow as it wishes. But, I impose my will. It will grow as I direct.

CHARLIE SAM TOM

Too bad that don't work with people.

SAI FONG

Oh, but it does.

The two GANGSTERS move casually. Sai Fong reads their body language.

SAI FONG pauses and cools himself with THE ORNATE FAN.

'LOVER BOY'

(amused)

A fan. You sure are 'old country'...

Curiously, Sai Fong does not seem offended. Both men are now within his arm's length.

SAI FONG

Yes. As such, I appreciate the courtesy of your visit.

(a beat)

Men of the Triad are men of honor.

SAI FONG casually passes his hand over his mouth as if thoughtfully considering his next decision with the Bonsai.

'LOVER BOY' and CHARLIE SAM TOM position themselves, now bracket him on either side.

'LOVER BOY'

Yeah.

(a beat)

But this is the New World and there are new ways.

'LOVER BOY' signals his partner with a glance and almost in unison, *SWITCHBLADES APPEAR, FLASHING OPEN IN THEIR HANDS...

QUICK CUT - WITHOUT WARNING, SAI FONG wheels and SPITS A POISON DART, which hits 'LOVER BOY' on the right side of his face. Then another poison dart on the left.

(Now, we understand why Sai Fong passed his hand over his mouth. That's where the darts came from.)

'LOVER BOY' COLLAPSES as...

SAI FONG whirls and WHAP! He snaps THE FAN closed with a deft flick of his wrist and with a sudden sidearm motion ...THWACK! He catches CHARLIE SAM TOM in the throat with THE CLOSED FAN. We hear Sam Tom's vertebrae snap.

The knives tumble to the carpet. Both men have been dispatched in two blinks of an eye.

(* Historically accurate - The 'switchblade' is a late 19th Century invention.)

SAI FONG drops the closed fan onto the table. It lands with a small 'thud'. He has been cooling himself with A JAPANESE IRON FAN ('Tessen'\ 'Shanzi' in the Chinese). A Samurai accoutrement, its seemingly delicate blades, strung together with thin silk cord hide its iron ribs, three pound bludgeon weight and numerous lethal uses. In mere seconds, both Tong Assassins have been dispatched. The Iron Fan is Sai Fong's favorite personal weapon.

With the two men dead at his feet...

SAI FONG casually reseats himself and returns to the delicate business of shaping the bonsai tree.

SAI FONG

(muses)

That's how 'old country' gets to be old...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - THE CHINESE QUARTER - DAY

CH'AN ZA leaves the Chinese quarter...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

...and enters the non-Asian side of the Barbary Coast. It is mostly an assortment of bars and whorehouses, wagons and commerce from the wharf.

CH'AN ZA finds a two story frame building.

INT. DOLLAR BILL BROMLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

'DOLLAR BILL' BROMLEY is behind his desk attired in his usual vested suit, the jacket unbuttoned and casually flipping his trademark silver dollar.

ROLAND LUNDY is seated beside him and similarly attired. He wears his bowler hat even when indoors.

CH'AN ZA enters. The TWO MEN REACT, irate.

'DOLLAR BILL'

Who're you?

CH'AN ZA

You are 'Dollar Bill'.

'DOLLAR BILL'

What's it to ya?

CH'AN ZA
You're the Boss of the Barbary
Coast.

'DOLLAR BILL'
(smiles)
Damn right. Now, whaddya want?

CH'AN ZA
To do you a favor.

'DOLLAR BILL'
You're going to do me a favor?

CH'AN ZA
Yes.

CH'AN ZA lays THE CHINESE WANTED POSTER with the likeness
of Caine down on the desk. 'Dollar Bill' and Roland look
at it with curiosity.

ROLAND LUNDY
Ain't this the guy knocked out
'Happy Jack'?

CH'AN ZA
The very same.

'DOLLAR BILL'
(bristling)
Son of a bitch cost me a bundle...

CH'AN ZA
How would you like your money back
many times over and repay him, as
well?

'DOLLAR BILL'
I'd like that just fine.

CH'AN ZA
(motions to the poster)
He is worth a fortune.

ROLAND LUNDY
To who?

CH'AN ZA
The Empress of China.

ROLAND LUNDY
Never met her.

'DOLLAR BILL'

A fortune, huh?

CH'AN ZA

Dead or alive. But better dead.

('Dollar Bill' now
listens attentively)

Such opportunities are rare.

'DOLLAR BILL'

(somewhat skeptical)

This on the level?

CH'AN ZA

Yes, as you say. On the level.

ROLAND LUNDY

How do we get paid?

CH'AN ZA

From the Chinese legation. I'll
see to it.

'DOLLAR BILL'

What's in it for you?

CH'AN ZA

Nothing that should interest you.

(finger on the poster)

I must caution you, however. You
saw for yourself. He will not be
'easy' to deal with. Not easy at
all.

'DOLLAR BILL' is casually flipping his silver dollar
again. He does not even look at the coin; his eyes are on
CH'AN ZA. Suddenly, the coin in the air, 'Dollar Bill'
draws a short barreled 'bird's head' Colt revolver from a
shoulder holster, FIRES, and reholsters the gun...

Across the room THE SWINGING PENDULUM of a small
REGULATOR CLOCK ON the MANTLE has been hit dead center by
Bromley's deft shot. THE CLOCK EXPLODES in a blast of
shattered springs, wheels and tinkling glass as...

'DOLLAR BILL' CATCHES THE COIN WITH THE SAME HAND.

He has drawn, fired and reholstered with the coin still in the air, his hand speed as practiced and remarkable as a magician's trick. 'Dollar Bill' Bromley is hell's lightning with a Colt sidearm.

'DOLLAR BILL'

I can handle it.

INT. THE DEN OF THIEVES - LATER - DAY

CH'AN ZA & LIEN

CH'AN ZA

Foolish talk! No friends, no family. Your own parents abandoned you. What makes you think he won't?

LIEN wavers, hard pressed under Ch'an Za's seduction.

LIEN

Meeting him was the only good that's ever happened to me.

CH'AN ZA

Why do you think he's on the Barbary Coast? He's no different from anyone else here. He uses you, reeks silken words and false piety. And when he is gone, what will you have? Do as I say and you will want for nothing the rest of your days.

CLOSEUP- LIEN studies him.

LIEN

Why do you hate him?

CH'AN ZA is taken aback at her insight and his transparency. He doesn't answer.

CH'AN ZA

You'll do as I say.

LIEN

(ambivalent)

Will I?

CH'AN ZA

Yes. Because, you're not like him...you're like me.

CLOSEUP - LIEN. She considers.

INT. THE BARBARY COAST - OPIUM DEN - DAY

WE ARE IN AN OPIUM DEN. It is a dark place, stacked wooden bunks line a heavy canvas tent lit by occasional candles.

'BLACK TIGER' HWAN, the sole customer, lies on a pallet, smoking a long pipe with a small metal bowl. He wears black silk pajama-like Chinese clothes with wide sleeves at the cuff. He is in dreamy half-sleep, but still aware.

A BLACK CAT lies on Hwan's chest. The cat seems narcotized by the wafting opium smoke.

SAI FONG is suddenly beside Hwan. Even in his half stupor, the gangster REACTS. He is completely vulnerable.

SAI FONG

(mildly)

Yes, I still live.

(leans forward)

You took two fingers from a man
for a small theft.

What shall I take from you?

With a sudden move, SAI FONG snatches the TONG HATCHET that is concealed in Hwan's wide right sleeve...and with a snapping sidearm motion, lets it fly.

THUUNK! The hand axe hits the canvas wall seven feet above the floor...and, as the sound indicates...a heavy object behind it. The weight of it pushes down on the hatchet's razor sharp end and slices through the canvas. QUONG, THE SEVEN FOOT CHINESE GIANT bodyguard, now with the hatchet in his forehead, falls like a felled tree into the opium den.

HWAN is now fully out of his stupor and in mortal fear.

SAI FONG reaches out and pats THE CAT on Hwan's chest.

SAI FONG

Your pet?

'BLACK TIGER'

He...lives here...He must have the
opium smoke.

SAI FONG strokes the cat with uncharacteristic gentility.

SAI FONG

Poor thing...so slow now. All he
can catch are opium sotted mice.

'BLACK TIGER'

He will never leave.

SAI FONG

He may not be the only one.

SAI FONG pats THE CAT on Hwan's chest with deceptive
gentility. HWAN knows his life is hanging by a thread.

'BLACK TIGER'

Don't kill me!

SAI FONG

You owe me your life...and I may
collect at any time. Consider it a
courtesy because I require the
good will of The Triad...

SAI FONG grins for the first time. He pats the opium
narcotized cat.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

And because...I'm fond of cats.

EXT - THE BARBARY COAST - THE WHARF - DAY

LIEN and CAINE are at the Wharf.

LIEN

Ch'an Za wishes to see you. He is
afraid. He will give you what you
want if you promise to let him go.

CAINE

Take me to him.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - A BUILDING - DAY

LIEN leads CAINE through the narrow streets to a two
story wood frame building. What had been a Saloon, now in
disuse, is up a wooden staircase on the second floor.

CAINE looks up at the place, then faces LIEN.

Self-recrimination is written on her face, her expression grim.

LIEN

Wait...maybe this is not the place. *Maybe I made a mistake...*

CAINE

This is the place.

CLOSEUP - LIEN can't go through with it.

LIEN

No, don't go in there...

CAINE

It'll be alright.

LIEN

No, it won't. Don't go in. You don't understand.

CAINE

I do.

(quiet smile)

Just as I said...strong, brave, good hearted.

LIEN looks on helpless as...

ANGLE ON - CAINE. He walks up the high wooden staircase to the door, pauses...and enters.

INT. - THE BARBARY COAST - A DESERTED SALOON - DAY

ESTABLISHING - THE SALOON is deserted. There is a long bar, some chairs piled up and others at assorted tables.

CAINE ENTERS and closes the door behind him. The place is only half lit through a single window.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SALOON - DAY

LIEN, distraught and in tears, is at the top of the stairs listening at the door.

INT. DESERTED SALOON - DAY

The room is HALF IN SHADOWS. Only peripheral light from one window over the street spills in.

CH'AN ZAA appears in a corner of the spacious deserted room. He and CAINE stand looking at each other from a distance.

CH'AN ZA

I knew you'd come.

CAINE

I did as you asked. Time to return what does not belong to you.

CH'AN ZA

Oh, but they do. And most instructive.

CAINE

They belong to the Fathers of the Temple.

CH'AN ZA

What value are these scrolls to old men who live behind walls? Their real value is only to someone like me. Someone who appreciates them as a means to one's own hidden power.

CAINE

Those 'old men' gave you life ...and you betrayed them. I want them back.

CH'AN ZA

I think not. Do you remember when I asked you to teach me and you refused?

(a beat)

Now, it's my turn to refuse.

(with contempt)

You've come across the world...for nothing. A very long journey. It's time you rested...

ANOTHER ANGLE - 'DOLLAR BILL', ROLAND LUNDY and another gunman, 'DEACON' ROY step out of the shadows. 'DEACON' cradles a SINGLE BARRELED SHOTGUN. The three men are in advantageous positions.

CAINE has fallen into a trap from which there appears no escape.

'DOLLAR BILL'
 Been waitin' on ya.

At the far right corner, CH'AN ZA looks on expectantly as...

'DOLLAR BILL' and ROLAND LUNDY close on either side of Caine. 'DEACON ROY' stands a distance away at the far left corner with his shotgun ready.

'DOLLAR BILL' has planned it perfectly. CAINE does not dare move. 'Dollar Bill's' coat is open. He stands only a few feet away from Caine.

'DOLLAR BILL'
 Oh, I know what you're thinkin'.
 Are you fast enough to get me, and
 maybe Lundy?

(motions to 'DEACON' and
 his shotgun at the far
 left corner)
 Don't matter. You won't get him...
 unless you can fly.

There is no way for Caine to make it across the room before 'Deacon' pulls the trigger.

Sadistic, playing with him, 'Dollar Bill' is supremely confident. His eyes are on Caine as he begins to flip his silver dollar without looking at the moving coin. Death is only seconds away.

DOLLAR BILL (CONT'D)
 Well, nice knowin' ya...

'DOLLAR BILL' makes a lightning move for his gun.

But, CAINE is faster. With a sudden sidekick, The Shaolin whacks him squarely in the ribs, a kick so ferocious that 'Dollar Bill' sails backwards through the window, and amidst shattering glass is hurled completely out of the room. His 'bird's head' Colt pistol is thrown across the floor and comes to rest near the door.

CAINE has timed it to the split-second, so that 'Dollar Bill's' silver dollar is still in the air. CAINE catches it...and lets fly.

THE HEAVY SILVER COIN* rockets through the air...towards the SUBJECTIVE CAMERA.

The projectile HITS 'DEACON' ROY squarely between the eyes at a hundred miles an hour. He is knocked completely off his feet and crashes against the wall as he involuntarily pulls the trigger...

Roy's SHOTGUN BLAST MISSES CAINE, but goes through the door behind him to his left. Simultaneously...

ROLAND LUNDY quickly brings up a 'coach gun' which he carries on a lanyard under his suit jacket; a shot gun with only a pistol grip, its twin barrels have been shortened to a foot long. As LUNDY levels the fearsome weapon and pulls back the twin sidehammers 'click', 'click'...

In one motion, CAINE slams the barrel against Lundy's chest with the tip pointing up and pushes down with Lundy's fingers still trapped on the twin triggers.

We CUTAWAY as...BOOM. The 'coach gun' goes off under ROLAND LUNDY'S own chin...

ANGLE ON - CAINE turning to CH'AN ZA...who is stunned by the speed and brevity of the action.

ANOTHER ANGLE - A bloodied FEMALE HAND reaches down through the now partially open door and picks up 'Dollar Bill's Colt.

CAINE is about to cross the room to get to Ch'an Za, but stops, sensing a presence behind him.

LIEN, stands FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY, wounded. The gunshot has hit her where she stood behind the now open door, blood on her arm, chest and face. She can barely stand.

CH'AN ZA suddenly uses this distraction to rush out the side door. CAINE does not follow. As LIEN collapses, he scoops her up and carries her out.

(*Historically accurate - 1,000 years before their use by feudal Japanese assassins known as 'Ninja', the use of 'shuriken' throwing objects, heavy coins (sharpened and unsharpened), throwing stars and steel balls was a staple of Chinese martial arts.)

INT. A ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

CAINE sits beside LIEN in the darkened room. Her wounds have been tended, cleaned and bandaged, but she remains grievously injured. The mood is almost funereal, lit only by candles and a lantern.

LIEN

(weakly)

Am I dying?

(the possibility is
written on Caine's
expression)

Don't leave me.

CAINE

I have to. But, only for a while.
I'll be back soon.

INT. CHINESE HERB SHOPPE - NIGHT

CAINE enters the small shoppe which is filled with MULTI-DRAWERED CABINETS and bundles of odd herbs which hang from the walls and ceiling.

CAINE and the PROPRIETOR, an old HERBALIST, exchange conversation in Mandarin. The old man sets about preparing powders.

INT. A ROOM - NIGHT

CAINE pours hot water from a kettle into a cup, adds powdered herbs and stirs the brew. He kneels beside LIEN who is dazed and now feverish.

CAINE

I'm going to give you something.
Try to drink all of it.

LIEN

Is it tea?

CAINE

Sort of. It tastes terrible.
That's why you have to drink
it...not me.

CAINE holds his nose and makes a funny face.

CAINE (CONT'D)

Arggh!

LIEN manages a wan smile. CAINE gently lifts her head and puts the cup to her lips. LIEN grimaces. The stuff is indeed terrible, but she slowly drinks it.

CAINE (CONT'D)

Good...slowly...all of it.

DISSOLVE

INT. SAME SCENE - LATER - NIGHT

CLOSEUP - ANGLE ON - LIEN, feverish, lying motionless with a cloth over her eyes.

ANOTHER ANGLE - BURNING ACUPUNCTURE NEEDLES ARE IN HER WRISTS, HEAD AND ABDOMEN. LIEN seems almost lifeless, the glowing 'fire needles' make her appear like a 'voodoo doll'.

LIEN'S eyes are covered by a cloth. She seems in no discomfort from the acupuncture.

LIEN

They don't hurt...just tingle a bit.

CAINE

They'll stop the infection.

LIEN

I lied to you...

CAINE

I know.

LIEN

You came across the world to find him, to take back what he stole. And you let him get away to help me...After what I did...Why?

CAINE

Shhh. Rest now.

LIEN

Why did you help me?

CAINE

(considers)

I had teachers, wise and good.
What did I learn? That it doesn't
matter what we say, or what we
believe. It only matters what we
do.

You told me not to go in.

LIEN accepts this, but is still guilt ridden.

LIEN

Why did you even bother with me?

CAINE

(more intimately)

A life spent struggling in the
gutter... is hardly a life. You
never had the chance to feel the
spring breeze on your face. You
never looked up to see the stars.
I wanted that for you. I still do.

She absorbs the words and slowly begins to weep, quietly
at first then wracking sobs.

LIEN

Forgive me...forgive me.

CAINE smiles, gently, Buddha-like. He places a gentle
hand on her shoulder and allows her to weep.

He sits with her...the acupuncture needles burn.

INT. SAI FONG'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

SAI FONG readies himself. Before him, in a neat line on
the table is AN ARRAY OF SMALL BUT NASTY HAND WEAPONS,
all of which can be hidden on his person.

He meticulously prepares a LIQUID SOLUTION, heating a
TINY BOTTLE over a small flame. The clear blue liquid is
a very SPECIAL POISON.

INT. THE FORBIDDEN CITY - LAO LAA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

LAO LAA, the old Tibetan Seer peers into her GREEN GLASS
GLOBE, seemingly in trance.

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS looks on, only steps away.

LAO LAA

Highness, the one you seek will soon face his doom.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

Sai Fong has found him...

LAO LAA

They will meet in the sky, high above the earth and water. On a cloud of timber and steel. There will be no turning away for The Shaolin. He will face Sai Fong. And neither will avoid their destiny...

CU - THE DOWAGER EMPRESS. She is pleased.

EXT. DAWN

INT. A ROOM - DAWN

CAINE & LIEN. Caine sits with her, keeping watch.

HOP MIN knocks at the door and hurriedly enters.

CAINE looks at him expectantly.

HOP MIN

Ch'an Za is about to leave.

INT. CH'AN ZA'S ROOM - DAY

CH'AN ZA is before an improvised wall panel; he moves the wood away to reveal THE SHAOLIN SCROLLS secreted there. He places them in a shoulder bag and hurriedly EXITS.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - STREET - DAY

HOP MIN leads CAINE to Ch'an Za's location. They arrive as...

CH'AN ZA is leaving. HE and CAINE lock eyes.

CH'AN ZA runs...

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - STREET - DAY

CAINE chases CH'AN ZA down a side street to a MAIN THOROUGHFARE where...FESTIVITIES for The CHINESE NEW YEAR are in full celebration.

A SERPENTINE MACHE DRAGON undulates down the street amidst the jubilant CROWD, the cacophony of FIRECRACKERS and ROCKETS overhead and CHINESE DRUMS.

ANGLE on CH'AN ZA pushing through the crowd.

CAINE is a distance away, trying not to lose him.

EXT. THE BARBARY COAST - STREET - DAY

CH'AN ZA breaks out of the crowd amidst the din of EXPLODING FIREWORKS.

SEVERAL CELEBRANTS light LARGE ROCKETS which ZOOM skyward and explode as...

CH'AN ZA sprints down another side street. He looks over his shoulder while running, and crashes into...

A CHINESE MAN who has been loading BOXES OF FIREWORKS onto a cart for the festivities. AS THE CHINESE MAN rises to his feet, CH'AN ZA knocks him out.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA...his recognition of a fortuitous circumstance.

EXT. SAME SCENE - DAY

CAINE comes around the corner, where he finds...
CH'AN ZA waiting.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA. He has hastily turned a CASE OF the LARGEST ROCKETS on its side, the lid and bottom of the box have been removed.

At the sight of Caine, CH'AN ZA uses a lit cigarette to HURRIEDLY IGNITE THE ROCKETS.

THE ROCKETS LAUNCH down the side street in meteoric fashion directly at CAINE. He dives for the dirt.

The path of the missiles is erratic; one slices left, one hooks right. TWO ROCKETS SAIL inches over CAINE's head. THEY EXPLODE in a shower of multi colored sparks.

CAINE looks up as TWO ROCKETS are headed right for him. With a millisecond to react, he rolls left, then right as the incendiaries miss by inches.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA. He has saved the last rocket. He turns and runs.

It is the outskirts of town, beyond is a HILLSIDE.

CAINE springs to his feet and pursues.

AT THE BASE OF THE HILLSIDE, CH'AN ZA stops and turns. He lights the last rocket. He aims it at the STORE OF FIREWORKS.

AS CAINE reaches the end of the street...

CH'AN ZA aims the rocket and it flies through the store's open door into the stacked BOXES OF FIREWORKS.

BOOM! THE BUILDING EXPLODES INTO KINDLING amidst a maelstrom of ancillary and arrhythmic detonations, filling the sky.

CAINE is knocked off his feet, but only momentarily.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA. He watches incredulous as...

CAINE gets to his feet.

There is nowhere else for Ch'an Za to go but up the STEEP EMBANKMENT. CH'AN ZA is exhausted, runs struggling, sometimes on all fours and barely makes it to the top.

CAINE quickly closes the distance.

At the crest of the embankment are tracks of a TRAIN TRESTLE which spans a CHASM. There is A PANORAMIC VIEW OF SAN FRANCISCO.

EXT. TOP OF THE EMBANKMENT - SAME SCENE - DAY

CH'AN ZA reaches the top with CAINE right behind him. Exhausted, and in an act of utter desperation, CH'AN ZA takes the shoulder bag containing THE SHAOLIN SCROLLS and...

SLOW MOTION - PITCHES THEM HIGH INTO THE AIR.

ANGLE ON CAINE as he catches the SHAOLIN SCROLLS.

At the end of his strength, CH'AN ZA trips and falls part way down the embankment.

ANGLE ON CH'AN ZA. He is winded, cannot rise. He is done.

CLOSEUP - CAINE stands over him, cradling the Scrolls in one arm.

CH'AN ZA looks up at CAINE...and is as servile in defeat as he was arrogant in his intrigues. His schemes having come to nothing, there is no grandiosity left. He bows his head, terrified, waiting for whatever Caine will mete out to him.

CAINE looks down at him, contemplative, deciding...
CH'AN ZA anticipating, cowering with his head bowed.

After a LONG MOMENT,...CAINE simply nudges CH'AN ZA with the point of his shoe.

CH'AN ZA looks up, terrified.

CAINE simply turns his back and walks up the embankment. CH'AN ZA cannot believe it, confusion written on his face, having anticipated a not so swift death.

As if in answer, CAINE stops with an after thought.

CAINE

You have been punished.

Left to live...just as you are.

CAINE turns away from him with finality and continues up the embankment. Defeated, CH'AN ZA watches him go, Caine's last words imprinted on his expression.

EXT. THE BRIDGE TRESTLE - DAWN

AS THE FIRST RAYS OF THE MORNING SUN APPEAR...

CAINE reaches the top of the trestle at ONE SIDE OF THE BRIDGE...

OS - SAI FONG

SAI FONG

Shaolin.

EXT. THE BRIDGE TRESTLE - OTHER SIDE - DAWN

SAI FONG stands at the other side of the trestle.

INTERCUT - CAINE and SAI FONG. At opposite ends of the bridge, they look at each other across the expanse.

SAI FONG

You know who I am?

CAINE

Sai Fong.

SAI FONG

You knew I would find you.

CAINE

And so you have.

SAI FONG takes a moment to verbalize Caine's demons.

SAI FONG

The others died...like men. Do their faces haunt you? Only you survived, coward that you are.

(a beat)

So what's it to be, Shaolin? Will you run again?

ANGLE ON CAINE. He begins to walk towards SAI FONG. THE TWO MEN close the distance between them.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

You should have run. The other Shaolin I killed, he was your teacher. A better man than you, and I snuffed him out.

CAINE

You have already lost. You have never lived. No heart, no love, no mercy. You are more dead than those you kill.

CLOSEUP - SAI FONG. Caine's words register. For the first time, Sai Fong has been momentarily 'unbalanced'.

THEY MEET IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE. The moment they both knew was destined is at hand.

SAI FONG AND CAINE circle warily, each man studying the other, each dares not even look down to where he may place his feet. Their precarious footing is on the railroad ties which are not on a solid bed, but anchored on either side. Between the ties is air and a long drop to the black water below.

ANGLE on SAI FONG. He reaches into his shirt and produces AN AMULET AT THE END OF A THIN CHAIN he wears around his neck...the little IVORY PORTRAIT of CAINE'S PARENTS.

SAI FONG

Remember this?

CAINE reacts.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

I've kept it for you. But, you'll have to take it.

ANGLE on CAINE. He looks at Sai Fong with calm and purpose.

Without warning, SAI FONG ATTACKS. CAINE BLOCKS... SAI FONG counters with a flurry of deadly blows. Blocked.

Now, with each of Caine's defensive moves...Sai Fong identifies its origin. He talks as he probes Caine's defenses, taking the measure of his skill.

SAI FONG

'Tiger'... 'Dragon'... 'Crane'...
'Mantis'... You have been well
trained, Shaolin...

(a beat)

But, none of them will help you.

SAI FONG is merely testing, even complimentary. Incredible as it seems, Caine is out of his class with 'The Red Ghost', who has another whole range of abilities.

SAI FONG suddenly unleashes TWO WHIPPING HAND STRIKES ("furi-uchi") which materialize from behind his back with such speed and surprise that Caine barely blocks them. SAI FONG identifies the origin of this technique.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

Japanese...

A HIGH WHIPPING KICK to the side of the head...which Caine evades.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

Korean...All the ways are known to me.

An odd combination of foot and elbow strikes...SAI FONG is an international 'death machine'. He and Caine now circle warily.

SAI FONG

You have no chance, Shaolin. Your purpose is to revere life...mine to destroy it.

SAI FONG now produces two objects, one from each sleeve. They are long and narrow pointed blades, like stout ice picks, shiny steel; each is tipped with the BLUE POISON.

SAI FONG (CONT'D)

I've prepared this for you. One touch. Death.

SAI FONG ATTACKS...CAINE DEFENDS, retreats, desperately evading the poison tipped blades. Finally, with a lightning quick two handed technique, CAINE BATTERS THEM FROM SAI FONG'S HANDS.

SAI FONG SMILES...at his worthy opponent.

LOW ANGLE - CAINE and SAI FONG must be wary of where they place their feet, even as the struggle ensues. One misstep on the ties would be disaster.

SAI FONG now moves so that Caine is on the defensive. 'The Red Ghost' forces Caine to literally jump out of harm's way with both feet, a brilliant anticipatory move. As Caine is in the air...

SAI FONG STRIKES DOWN WITH THE HEEL OF HIS FOOT, a stomp kick so powerful that...CRAAACK! THE RAILROAD TIE under Caine BREAKS IN TWO. We can now more plainly see the long drop to the black water below.

CAINE LANDS AND FALLS THROUGH the broken footing, but catches himself. Most of his body is beneath the trestle and only his head, shoulders and arms protrude. With Caine momentarily trapped, Sai Fong moves to finish him. SAI FONG CHARGES as...

CAINE LETS GO AND FALLS THROUGH.

ANGLE - UNDER THE BRIDGE. CAINE dangles beneath the trestle, holding on by a precarious hand hold. As SAI FONG closes for the kill...

CAINE escapes by 'hand walking', a fragile grip from tie to tie, as if on rungs of a horizontal ladder.

ABOVE - Scant inches behind him, SAI FONG ADVANCES and CRACK!...CRACK!...CRACK!...he stomp kicks through each tie, breaking them as Caine lets go...

SAI FONG is suddenly over him, takes aim at Caine's hand hold, can even see his face below...CRACK! SAI FONG's foot crashes through the tie...

CAINE, suspended by one hand, suddenly HAS SAI FONG BY THE ANKLE with the other. With a deft twist, CAINE TAKES SAI FONG OFF HIS FEET.

Quickly, with an ultimate effort (as with 'high bar' gymnastics), CAINE uses his arms and shoulders to propel his body and swings up and through the space in the broken ties. CAINE lands on the trestle on solid footing.

INTERCUT - CLOSEUPS - CAINE and SAI FONG...again on their feet and facing each other. SAI FONG SUDDENLY moves his hand in a single throwing motion, FOUR POISON DARTS fly out of nowhere.

CAINE raises his arm in front of his face...and catches the darts, now impaled in the cloth of his sleeve.

Caine lowers his arm and...Sai Fong is gone.

The darts were a masterful misdirection. Caine turns... and incredibly, Sai Fong is behind him. The Assassin unleashes a savage, incapacitating blow.

CAINE GOES DOWN.

SAI FONG is about to finish Caine off... 'THE RED GHOST' reaches out with both hands for the coup de grace, "The Death Touch"... DIM MUK.

QUICK CUT TO

BOOM! A GUNSHOT echoes over the ravine.

SAI FONG clutches his shoulder.

QUICK CUT TO

LIEN...stands at the edge of the trestle, having fired 'DOLLAR BILL's pearl handled COLT REVOLVER.

SAI FONG's wound allows just enough time...for CAINE TO STRIKE.

CAINE comes off the floor with a single spectacular move, an IRON PALM strike that catches SAI FONG in the middle of the chest at the solar plexus.

It is a shattering, killing technique (and a sound like a crate of eggs being run over by a truck.) It is the very thing that Sai Fong had used against Master Ke.

As if struck by a cannon ball, SAI FONG is hurled backwards off his feet and through the air...clear off the trestle. He seems to hang in space for a moment, just enough time for him to see...

CAINE holding out the LITTLE IVORY PORTRAIT OF HIS PARENTS.

SAI FONG, a look of shock and amazement on his face...plummets like a stone and lands in the river.

ANGLE ON SAI FONG BELOW. Hands to his chest, struggling in his death throws, THE CURRENT WASHES HIM AWAY.

CAINE and LIEN watch SAI FONG disappear in the swift black water.

CAINE takes the Colt pistol from her, tosses it over the side into the water below.

CLOSEUP LIEN looks up at him, tears in her eyes. She has changed, speaks softly, in a way she never has before.

LIEN

I prayed my parents would come
back. And they have. Only in
another form.

My prayer was answered.

She embraces him, her face against his chest.

CAINE

You stood up for me. Now you can
stand up for yourself.

(looks out at the vast
American vista)
Leave the Barbary Coast. Honest
work. A new life...

CAINE takes his small chamois bag of gold coins, presses it into her hand and closes her fingers around it.

LIEN accepts silently, with gratitude.

LIEN

And you?

CAINE

I've got what I came for.

(He stops as if to savor
the moment)

Feel that?

She lightly touches her cheek, brushes a wisp of hair away from her face, and smiles.

LIEN

...a spring breeze?

CAINE

(smiles down at her)
Goodbye, Lien.

CLOSEUP - LIEN - A smile, tears.

EXT. SAME SCENE - DAY

CAINE walks into the distance with the bundled Shaolin Scrolls under his arm.

LIEN watches him go.

ANGLE ON CAINE walking into the distance.

HALF DISSOLVE TO

THE SPECTRAL IMAGE of THE DOWAGER EMPRESS.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

*He shall find no sanctuary, even
to the ends of the Earth. A reward
beyond measure for the life of The
Shaolin known as Caine! He shall
not remain alive!...*

SLOW FADE OUT

1

The 'KUNG-FU' Theatrical Trilogy continues and the Second Feature begins as...

THE CAMERA continues down river where...

We find SAI FONG WASHED UP ON THE RIVER BANK.

WE MOVE CLOSER. He seems dead...Then, one eye opens...and the other. Slowly, painfully, he sits up. If 'The Red Ghost' was scary before, this is more so.

SAI FONG performs some curious breathing, summoning a kind of mind control. He sets himself and with nothing more than his fingers, he sticks them into the bullet hole...and pulls out the slug. He looks at it for a moment, then tosses it away.

SAI FONG has been shot, many bones broken...Yet, now with teeth gritted, but otherwise expressionless...he slowly *gets up*...and stands erect. Seemingly more than half dead, SAI FONG, 'The Red Ghost' ...walks away.

As he moves into the distance...

HALF DISSOLVE TO

THE SPECTRAL IMAGE of the DOWAGER EMPRESS.

DOWAGER EMPRESS

*Follow him to the ends of the Earth if need
be...but do not return here without having taken
his life...or you will forfeit your own...*

SAI FONG is truly deathless, and...

His Quest for The Shaolin is not over.

In the first feature, Ch'an Za surrendered the Shaolin Scrolls to Caine, but it is now revealed that with consummate treachery...the Scrolls are *not intact*. Ch'an Za had cut out several key portions and taken them with him. Without their return, the Scrolls are desecrated and incomplete.

These important elements of the Shaolin Scrolls are Ch'an Za's asset and life insurance policy. He knows they will give him leverage and potential power even in the New World. He hides the stolen documents as easily as one would hide bonds.

'The Tongs' (Secret Societies now in the New World) will want them, as does Sai Fong and the Dowager Empress. Ch'an Za could sell them...but he does not.

Ch'an Za seeks out the ruling gangster, 'Black Tiger' Hwan (who has his own problems within 'The Triad', others vying with him for power.)

Ch'an Za offers a deal.

"The assassin Sai Fong hunts the Shaolin...and he hunts me. I alone hold their secrets and their power," Ch'an Za tells Hwan. "Give me your protection and I will share the secrets with you. Their power will make you the 'Lord of The Triads', leader of all 'The Tongs'," 'Black Tiger' readily accepts.

Under 'Black Tiger's' protection, Ch'an Za joins 'The Tongs'. He becomes even more sinister, learns to tap into the power of The Scrolls, absorbs more of their secrets and tactics. This helps him in his rise to power as he grows exponentially in ability and cunning.

At a dramatic moment, Ch'an Za betrays 'Black Tiger' Hwan, kills him by treachery and ascends to become the 'Lord of the Triads', the unquestioned ruler of 'The Tongs'.

The character of the betrayer, Ch'an Za, figures importantly. We see him grow in stature into a kind of Chinese 'Michael Corleone'. He creates new treachery and broadens the story. He gives Caine a powerful motivation; the stolen elements of the Shaolin Scrolls propel Caine forward in his American quest, his odyssey in the New World.

• THE SHAOLIN SCROLLS

The two ancient scrolls are each no more than a foot in length, meant to be portable in times of peril.

The Scroll of Lineage contains the historical line of all Shaolin Masters and their Disciples, a document of certification which guards against impostors. Anyone claiming to be a Shaolin whose name is not on the scroll...is false. The lineage is secret, but vital for a clear and unbroken line of descent, to prevent those who would use the name for their own purposes or pervert their teachings.

The second scroll contains the most secret Shaolin martial knowledge; it is a masterwork of physical and psychological tactics, comparable to a combination of Sun Tzu's 'Art of War', Miyamoto Mushashi's "Book of Five Rings" and specialized knowledge even to the most arcane and potentially deadly techniques and pressure point knowledge, all reserved for only the most senior Masters of Shaolin. A 'civilian' would not know how to apply this information, but it is like someone walking around with a secret formula which must be returned or destroyed. In the right hands it has enormous value, in other hands supremely dangerous. Though it is the rare individual who would understand what is written or how to apply it, those who do would be living conduits of the power within.

With the scrolls, the Shaolin Temple could be resurrected. Without them, the deepest knowledge of the Shaolin is lost forever. Among those who will learn of the scrolls existence and will move heaven and earth to acquire them is...Sai Fong.

Ch'an Za's theft of key portions of The Scrolls propels Caine to find him and put an end to his intrigues once and for all.

Unbeknownst to Caine, ... *Sai Fong is also right behind him.*

In the second "KUNG FU" feature film...

Master Ke is revealed to have survived the Shaolin Temple battle.

During the siege of the Temple and under Sai Fong's savage attack, Ke plummeted off the wall parapet. Now it is revealed that Ke hit branches of a tree that he and Caine had planted near the wall when Caine first arrived at the Temple. One of young Caine's routine duties was to water and tend to that tree. With curious irony, those very branches, now grown and strong, broke Ke's fall and saved his life. Grievously wounded, but playing dead, Ke was thrown onto a cart with the other Shaolin dead. He crawled out and tumbled off the moving cart under the nose of the Manchu driver. Ke hid, healed... and survived.

Finding that Caine has also survived the Shaolin Temple battle and knowing his mission, Master Ke follows him to America.

Ke arrives in America, seemingly back from the dead, just as Caine is overwhelmed by the forces that confront him. Together, Caine and Master Ke must all at once take on Sai Fong, as well as Ch'an Za and The Secret Societies. Their goal is to return the complete Scrolls back to China and reestablish a new Shaolin Temple. To prevent this, Ch'an Za unleashes the power of 'The Tongs' against them.

In the end, Ch'an Za dies and the stolen portions of the Shaolin Scrolls are restored.

One task remains...Caine's ultimate enemy and the final battle with The Dowager Empress and her assassin, Sai Fong.

In a last climactic combat and with guidance from Master Ke...
Caine barely survives, but finally kills Sai Fong.

INTEGRATION OF THE BACK STORY

CAINE'S GRANDFATHER

Both Elias Caine and his wife, Mai would lose their lives in that turbulent time. Their son was raised by his grandfather.

It was the scholarly Lee Chang who taught the boy from a very early age, molded his emerging character and set him on his life's path. The Shaolin known as Caine would always honor his grandfather's kindness, wisdom... and sacrifice.

*It is a final irony that Lee Chang lost his life at the hands of The Dowager Empress and her proxy, Sai Fong. The Dowager Empress would only learn a lifetime later, that among the victims of her edict was an old man...who had been her husband when she was a girl of fifteen.

In time, she would learn that 'The Destroyer' she sought to kill...was her own grandson.

THE FATE OF CAINE'S PARENTS

We will integrate and explain the fate of Caine's parents. His father, American ship's captain Elias Caine and his Chinese mother, Mai are swept up in tumultuous times. Elias, against his personal interests becomes involved in the *Tai Ping Rebellion.

*(The Tai Ping Rebellion lasted for 20 years. As a direct result of the conflict, almost twenty to thirty million people died. In this period from 1850 to 1873, as a result of rebellion, drought and famine, the population of China dropped by over sixty million people. This was the tragedy of the mid-nineteenth century in China.)

The Tai Ping revolt against the despotism of Manchu rule, carried a vast army to Nanking in March of 1853. From there, they attacked Beijing. In this battle, and wanting above all to reunite with his family, Elias Caine heroically lost his life. He was known among the Chinese as a valiant man, a leader who sacrificed himself in the cause of justice. After his death, note was taken among the Manchu leaders of this foreigner's participation. His status as an enemy of the Manchus would be a legacy that would cast a shadow on his son.

RESOLUTION OF THE BACK STORY

At the Shaolin Temple, Master Khan tells Caine (age 18) of his history, and that of his father and mother, the circumstances of their death in the Tai Ping Rebellion.

Khan underlines The Prophecy, that Caine is the one fated to break the power of the Manchus.

"You knew I was the one?" Caine asks.

"Of course," Khan responds, "We always knew. Since that first day when you came to the gate."

As a grown man, The Prophecy and his fate as a hunted man becomes Caine's 'demon'. He wishes to be free of it, does not want to live his life in its shadow. He wants merely to live.

Caine will not know his hidden connection to The Dowager Empress until the very end of the last feature. Here the final element of the back story is revealed.

THE 'KUNG-FU' TRILOGY CLIMAXES...

In America, after the death of Sai Fong and the retrieval of the Shaolin Scrolls, Caine is near the end of his odyssey. Either The Prophecy is true or it isn't. This judgment and Sai Fong's death now fuels an act of extraordinary courage and completion. He has had enough of running, enough of his status as a fugitive.

The revelation of his lineage is life changing. For him even to approach The Dowager Empress seems a suicidal act, but he will not be dissuaded.

CAINE RETURNS TO CHINA.

He appears unannounced at the Imperial Court...for an eye to eye confrontation with his nemesis. Caine now gambles everything.

In this electric face to face meeting (with the Tibetan Seer, Lao Laa present to validate the truth)...their dialogue makes evident the startling revelation that *he is, in fact, Tzu Hsi's own grandson...her only blood relative.*

The prophecy that he "would break the power of the Manchus" now comes about in a way that could never have been foreseen.

At this stage of her life, The Dowager Empress has lived by ambition and treachery, killed her enemies, struggled for power and dominance. She has won all of her battles and is prepared to kill the Shaolin, her most feared adversary.

But, now she seems tempered, even world weary. That for which she struggled has left her empty. She has tasted everything of life, every sense sated, every desire granted, riches and power beyond measure, victory over all her foes. She is feared, not admired, reviled, not loved. Having attained every desire, she is

utterly alone. She, whose entire life has been a will to power ... what could melt such a heart?

When their dialogue reveals to her that she is his grandmother and he her grandson, both realities are suddenly upended. She is gripped by the certain knowledge that the one she hated, feared and moved heaven and earth to kill... is her only grand child.

She motions for him to come forward. He does so and kneels in front of her. He searches her expression with his eyes.

"I will not raise my hand against you," he says. His heart is open to her. As his only living relative, in a curious way, the old woman is now all he has. He is willing to sacrifice himself, if need be.

"I am flesh of your flesh, blood of your blood," Caine says, kneels before her and grasps the hem of her royal robes. He bows his head.

"Do with me what you will."

As he kneels before her, a jewel encrusted dagger appears in her hand. She raises it to strike...

The blade is poised in the air.

She looks down at him. There is a change in her face that heretofore would not have seemed possible. Tzu Hsi cannot undo all that she has done, but finally at long last, she cannot murder her own grandson. In one remarkable moment, the hardness of her face gives way. She looks at Caine...and the fight goes out of her. She lowers her hand. The knife slips out of it and falls to the floor.

With that same hand, the old woman now runs her fingers over his head with an act of affection. We have never seen her do such a thing. Her face now seems softened, as if in recognition of the emptiness of her years of selfishness and intrigue.

She suddenly almost seems benign, an old woman whose battles are finally over, who no longer cares for the self-will which was the force of her life.

He looks up at her. She smiles at him and for the first time, she seems human, even vulnerable.

Looking on, the old Tibetan Seer, Lao Laa whispers aloud what the prophesy had said all along;

"It is so. He has broken the power of the Manchus."

The prophesy proves to have been true, but has come about in a way that could never have been foreseen. *It was neither hatred nor violence that broke the power of the Manchus...but love.*

(*From that day on, Tzu Hsi kept to herself in the Forbidden City. Never again would she rule as before with an iron hand. Those she placed on the throne were always weak and ineffectual. But, now her perspective changed. In her last years, she instituted the social reforms she had previously forbidden. To survive along the way, she had studied law, government and foreign policies, and had even learned some English and Japanese to help in dealing with foreigners. Now, her policies changed; she favored railroads and modern schools, was more open to Western innovations and ideas. She outlawed opium.

With these changes, the Manchus lost most of their special privileges in China. War, modernization and tumultuous events soon did away with the Imperial Throne. It was not long until it and the rule of the Dowager Empress was gone.)

EPILOGUE

Shanghai, 1925, emerging and bustling. Here, we close the circle. In a modest place in this teeming city, we find an old man. At first, we do not recognize him. But then, we do.

It is Caine.

A boy sits before him. The old man extends his hand. There is a small stone in his open palm. The boy looks up at him.

"Snatch the pebble from my hand," the old man says. The odyssey is now complete. The story has been told.