

THE WOLVERINE

Written by

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BLACK

And a woman's voice. Soft, yet strong.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Before Kofun, before Asuka, there
was the age of Jomon... The darkest
days in a remote island kingdom.
Before it was called Japan...

A PRIMAL SCREAM takes us to:

EXT. RAIN-SWEPT RICE PADDY - DAY

Not the Japan you imagined. We are in her dark ages,
in the midst of a savage tribal war.

WARRIORS are draped in primitive animal hides with a
thick outer layer of finely woven grass to shed the
pounding rain. Faces are marked with war-paint.
Weapons are iron and combat is clumsy with the
battlefield under two feet of water.

Casualties are high.

VOICE (V.O.)

There was no Emperor then. No
shogun, no Samurai. Only rival
warrior clans, fighting over food,
land and religion... But two
particular clans, their names lost
to history, fought only for blood.

EXT. BAMBOO FOREST - CLEARING - DAY

DIFFERENT CLANS. A different kind of battle. The
dress is lighter - weapons sophisticated, fighting
techniques refined. War-paint has given way to
colored sashes. One side wears RED, the other BLACK.

ON ONE SIDE OF THE CLEARING WE FIND: THE RED WARLORD,
a polished volcanic stone around his neck, watching
the merciless fight with cold, unblinking eyes.

VOICE (V.O.)

It was a feud so old its reasons
could not be remembered - so bitter
its wounds could never be healed.
The only objective... revenge.

ACROSS THE CLEARING: THE BLACK WARLORD, a strand of
green pears around his neck, calmly looks on.

EXT. RICE PADDY - DAY

The sky clear, the war over. Peasants plant rice.

VOICE (V.O.)

Most clans would find an uneasy peace. They flourished and grew, planting the seeds of what would one day be Japan. But for some...

EXT. OPEN FIELD - NIGHT

The Red and Black clans clash again. Flaming arrows fill the air, providing the only light. The fighting is graceful, precise, perfect...

VOICE (V.O.)

Killing was all they knew. And they refined it to a high art.... Until it was clear to all that neither side would ever defeat the other.

EXT. BAMBOO FOREST - CLEARING - NIGHT

An ominous orange light. Red and Black Warrior surrounding the clearing holding torches.

VOICE (V.O.)

Finally, the Warlords of the rival clans met to end the war.

The Red and Black Warlords meet in the center of the clearing, speaking in clipped, firm tones deep into the night, making no progress...

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Both men were wise, but neither could put aside his insatiable hunger for vengeance. They could see only one path to peace...

CLOSE ON: A GLOWING IRON ARROW is pulled from a flame and extended between the Warlords.

We cannot understand the Red Warlord, but we can see his tone is firmer now. Final. He extends a hand. The Black Warlord considers, then offers his own hand.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And on this, the Warlords swore an unbreakable oath.

The Two Warlords clasp hands around the arrowhead, searing their flesh, unflinching.

EXT. BAMBOO FOREST - CLEARING - NIGHT

As their warriors watch, the Warlords strip to the waist, each man taking a sword. They circle one another, looking for a weakness. Then they charge.

Their men watch the fight with cold, unblinking eyes.

VOICE (V.O.)

The winner claimed victory in a war
as old as time.

The Black Warlord stands into frame, a bloody blade in his hand. The Warriors of the Black Clan silently kneel and bow their heads in salute.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The loser sealed his clan's fate.

The Warriors of the Red Clan simply drop their torches, turn, and vanish into the night.

EXT. RED CLAN VILLAGE - DAY

A secluded mountain hamlet. Outside a humble bamboo hut, A RED WARRIOR points a blade at his own belly.

VOICE (V.O.)

The men of the losing clan honored
their oath, taking their lives...

CLOSE ON: The Red Warrior's face as he drives the dagger home. The slightest flinch. Then he falls.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And the lives of their families.

ANGLE ON: the floor of the hut behind him. The motionless bare feet of a woman and two children...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The Black Clan rides by the sea to a coastal village.

VOICE (V.O.)

The victors went home, uncertain of
a future without war... But they
would not be uncertain for long.

EXT. COASTAL VILLAGE - SUNSET

Huts adorned with whale bone and oyster shells. The Black Warlord rides into frame, his stoic face ashen. His eyes burning. He dismounts and drops to his knees. One by one, his warriors do the same.

VOICE (V.O.)
 Their rivals had honored their
 oath. But not before one last act
 of vengeance...

Through the door of every hut in the village, we see the bare, motionless feet of women and children...

EXT. COASTAL VILLAGE - NIGHT

A glowing red arrow head. One by one, each warrior of the Clan burns the arrow into the flesh of his palm.

VOICE (V.O.)
 They were no longer men. They no
 longer had souls. They would never
 again walk in the light of day - an
 army of vengeance with no enemy...
 Killers with no feeling. Now...
 they were merely a weapon.

AS HIS WARRIORS WATCH, the shamed Black Warlord aims the glowing arrow at his heart and drives it home.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 A weapon... in search of a master.

EXT. BAMBOO FOREST - CLEARING - NIGHT

The ominous orange glow. The Warriors of the Black Clan surround the clearing, torches in hand.

TWO PRIMITIVE WARLORDS wearing animal hide step with uncertainty into the clearing, each holding a dagger.

VOICE (V.O.)
 So the two strongest clan lords in
 the land were chosen. The winner
 would be Master of the Black Clan.

The surviving Warlord stands into frame. The Warriors all around him silently kneel and bow their heads.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It is said he was this true power
 in Japan. It is said his will
 determined her fate.

The Warlord's uncertain expression changes to one of
 eerie clam. He considers his new power and smiles.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And all who opposed him.. Would
 meet a swift and shadowy death.

EXT. BAMBOO FOREST - CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

The ominous orange glow. A CHALLENGER steps into the
 clearing to face the now Aged Master of the Clan.

VOICE (V.O.)
 In time, the Clan became an order,
 the order became belief. And the
 contest became ritual... As old as
 Japan itself.

CLOSE ON: The Challenger stands into frame, a bloody
 sword in his hand. COME AROUND SLOWLY as the Warriors
 bow. By the time we come around full circle A NEW
 CHALLENGER stands in the center of the clearing.

HOLD ON THIS as the Challenger morphs over and over
 again, marking the passing of generations, millennia,
 each man's clothes becoming more familiar, more
 modern - inching toward the twentieth century.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And the Black Clan, as with any
 weapon, were as good - or as evil -
 as the hand wielding it...

STOP. THE LAST CHALLENGER we will see - his face
 hard, his eyes hawkish and hateful. He wears the
 uniform of A JAPANESE ARMY OFFICER circa 1939...

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...silencing their master's
 enemies, enforcing their master's
 will, shaping Japan's destiny...
 With cold, unblinking eyes...

Silence. And A BLINDING ORANGE LIGHT.

Our eyes adjust, gradually making sense of an atomic
 blast and the subsequent mushroom cloud a moment
 before the deafening shock-wave brings:

WHITE

The haunting sound of cold wind. Lonely. Isolated.

AN EAGLE drifts into frame, eyes sharp, head ticking left, right, center, left again - then diving. We follow and emerge from the clouds TO REVEAL:

A brilliant green mountain valley one thousand feet below, snow-capped peaks on either side. We are one with the eagle, adrift on the wind, living only for the hunt. We fly lower, faster - skimming snow, rocks, evergreens, A MAN IN WELL-WORN LEATHER.

Blink.

AND NOW WE'RE WITH THE MAN. But he's only a man for lack of a better word. He barely glances at the eagle flying past his head, the bird wondering how the Man came to be here. Much like the Man himself.

The Man squats, knuckles in the soil - primal - his thick black hair framing an unshaven face. He is unphased by his proximity to a sheer, three hundred foot drop. He studies an animal track between his feet - wider than his two wide hands placed side-by-side - Five toes, long claws. The animal is a giant.

He stands slowly, holding up a shred of brightly-colored nylon clotted with blood and hair...

The Man hears something we can't, smells something we don't, follows his keen senses toward his quarry. We notice he is strangely equipped for a remote mountain trek. Boots, jeans, a leather jacket. No pack, no heavy weather gear. No weapons that we can see...

The sound of hard, steady wind takes us to:

INT. CAVE - DAY

Looking out from darkness to the cold gray light of day - wind howls past the mouth of the cave like a siren, a warning. The Man's silhouette approaches...

EXT. CAVE - DAY

He looks into the blackness - buffeted by the wind, noting claw marks on the cold rocks. His sharp eyes adjust, making out the empty sockets of a cleanly peeled human skull. The wind suddenly stops, changes course. The Man sniffs, turns, too late.

WHACK - He is struck across the face. He lands on his back across a sharp boulder, head bleeding. A mass of claws backed by a gaping mouth filled with teeth descends. He rolls, screaming as his dislocated arm twists. The beast slams into the boulder, dislodging it from the gravel bed. Then we see the animal whole.

A *GRIZZLY* - fur matted and rank, muscle caked with blood, breathing strained, other-worldly. An arrow is lodged in the animal's spine.

The bear lunges with surprising speed, shoving the rock as it stands upright - eleven feet fall, howling. The rock slides toward the steep drop as:

The Man scrambles to his feet, dazed - painfully wrenching his dislocated arm back into its socket, holding his partially detached scalp in place.

The ground beneath him gives way and he tumbles down a steep gravel slope, sliding toward a thick fallen redwood bristling with sharp, broken branches. The large boulder tumbles after him...

WHAM - The man hits the tree hard, inches from being impaled. The boulder skids down the slope behind him - *SHHHHHHHHHHHWHAM* - pinning his legs to the tree. He howls in pain, cries in vain to lift the tree. Then a new shower of stones behind him. The bear is coming.

The Grizzly slides down the slope in a hail of rocks and debris right for the Man's back. He tries to turn and face the attack, but the rock won't let him.

With no other choice, The Man arches himself backward over the rock, wrenching his smashed legs, sucking up buckets of pain. The world upside down now, he extends his arms as if to embrace the bear. And then:

SCHICK - Three gleaming, ten-inch blades extend from between the knuckles on both hands. In another universe, this would be inexplicable. In the world of Logan, of Wolverine, this is a day at the office.

He braces for the impact of 1000 pounds of screaming meat. Given the circumstances, he screams as well.

WHITE

A helicopter roars across the sky bearing the slightly dated rainbow striping of the very dated:

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.

EXT. CAVE/HILLSIDE - LATER

FIVE YOUNG MOUNTIES slide down the same gravel hillside to join a SQUARE-JAWED MOUNTIE staring in muted shock at something O.S. As they approach, the Young Mounties can't hide their looks of horror.

YOUNG MOUNTIE
Is... is that our man-eater?

SQUARE JAW
Judging by the contents of his stomach...

One of the Young Mounties bends out of frame and heaves. Square Jaw sighs, shakes his head. Rookies.

YOUNG MOUNTIE
Wh... What the hell did that?

2ND MOUNTIE
Whatever it was... it was mad.

3RD MOUNTIE
Look at how it cut through that tree-stump.

SQUARE JAW
Part beaver, you figure.
(off their confused looks)
Idiots. It was a man.

YOUNG MOUNTIE
One man did all this?

2ND MOUNTIE
Why'd he cut the tree in half?

3RD MOUNTIE
Why'd he cut the bear in half?

Square Jaw grabs a radio, barks into it.

SQUARE JAW
2-6-2, Alpine.

VOICE (ON RADIO)
Alpine, go.

SQUARE JAW
It's the rogue all-right. All butchered up. Send animal control. And the medical examiner. Think we have our missing campers, too.

VOICE (ON RADIO)
Alpine, copy...

SQUARE JAW
Then get me a description of that
hunter Chet was telling you about.
Ut it on the wire. I'd like a word
with him. 2-6-2 out.

He walks, his men follow - past the rock, past the
tree; hacked in half as if by rabid beavers. Drag
marks and hand prints in the dirt tell a story:

A man with three blades in each hand pulled himself
toward the nearby river. Then signs of these blades
vanish. The drag marks stop and foot-prints appear,
telling us this man managed to find his feet. The
footprints lead into the river. The story ends.

YOUNG MOUNTIE
What's this about a hunter, Sarge?

SQUARE JAW
Last night a fella comes up to the
North Barracks. On *foot*. No gear.
No gun. Smoking a *cigar*, if you can
imagine. Heard we had a rogue bear
on our hands. Told the dispatcher
it would take us weeks to find it.
Said he could track it in a day.
Dispatch asks him how he figures on
finding a half-crazed man-eating
bear in the high country all by
himself. This character with the
cigar says: '*Cuz I understand it.*'

And now the Mounties wonder if something worse than a
man-eating bear could be out there.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Logan squats hidden by the trees, watching the
Mounties across the river. He shivers, soaking wet,
his wounds gone. He pulls a three inch long splinter
from his hand, dropping it in a pile of several more.
The gash it leaves heals before our very eyes.

He picks up an arrow with distinctly colored flights
taken from the bear's spine. The tip is a broad-head
with a cruel hollow point, dripping amber liquid.

Logan turns the arrow over again and smells the
flights. Then he stands and walks into the woods.

EXT. ROAD HOUSE - DUSK

Eighteen wheelers roar through cold rain under an angry gray sky. Logan crosses the highway toward a battered road house offering beer and bait in neon.

He wanders through the mud-clotted pick-up trucks parked out front, breathing deep and slow through his nose. He stops at a truck with deer antlers in the grill, a wolf's tail on the antenna. In back he spies a bow and a quiver of arrows, the flights familiar.

INT. ROAD HOUSE - NIGHT

French Canadian country music - if you can imagine such a thing - in a smoky room filled with TRUCKERS, LOGGERS and HUNTERS - forty men all told. None small.

On the muted TV we see the RCMP around a redwood cut clean in half, a rock and two white sheets. The scroll tells of five missing campers, a rogue bear and how the Mounties shot the animal dead.

Logan, dirty, wet, brooding, walks along the bar, breathing deep and slow through his nose. He pauses behind one man in particular. A DEEP SWIGGING MEATY CANUCK in a greasy orange hunting cap. Logan drops the arrow on the bar in front of him. Pause.

MEATY CANUCK

That's a poison broad-head, mister.
They're illegal.

LOGAN

Ask me where I found it.

MEATY CANUCK

Don't care.

LOGAN

In a bear. Up the back country.
Seems whatever fat slop shot that animal didn't have the wind or the skill to track it down proper and finish it off.

The meaty Canuck glances up at the TV.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

And instead of dropping a lethal dose, this arrow bled poison into that bear for days. Made him crazy. Killed five people.

MEATY CANUCK
That's unfortunate.

LOGAN
That's murder. Five counts... for
the man who shot that arrow.

MEATY CANUCK
(half turning, glaring)
And you think that's my arrow?

LOGAN
I *know* it is. And I'm gonna hear
you tell it to the Mounties.

Logan puts a hand on the Canuck's shoulder. The
Canuck throws a punch - his hand full of beer-mug.

CRUNCH - Logan staggers back, covering his face. The
Canuck spins, ready to fight. He freezes. Confused.

Logan's hand covers what must be a pretty bad wound.
But when he wipes off the blood, there's only a small
cut on his face. He rolls tongue n cheek and a piece
of glass pops out. The Canuck watches it fall to the
floor. When he looks back at Logan, the cut is gone.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Let me show you how it works.

WHAM - Logan drives his right fist into the Canuck's
gut. He doubles over into Logan's left fist, held
anvil-steady. The Canuck collapses, jaw broken.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Now heal.
(as the Canuck tries to crawl)
Yeah, I guess you could read that
two ways. What I meant was-

WHACK - A pool cue hits Logan across the back of the
head. He merely winces and turns.

A BIG LOGGER, holding a broken cue like this is a
joke on him. Logan sighs, calms himself.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Now I don't want any trouble. This
is between me and him, not -

EVERY MAN IN THE BAR stands.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
... All of you.

A BIGGER LOGGER steps up, holding up a baseball bat.

BIGGER LOGGER
Let's see you break thi-

SCHLICK-SMACK - Logan's claws flash through the bat. In the same motion, he punches - his claws retracting an instant before he connects with the Logger's jaw.

CRUNCH - And we're off. Loggers, Truckers, and Hunters, fueled by liquid courage, rush him in waves. The fight is without grace, without choreography. A close-in 40-to-1 head-busting brawl. Then 30... 20.

CLOSE ON: A *MASSIVE* LOGGER by the back door, wisely watching, waiting. He's fondling an axe.

The last man falls. Logan is a bruised and swollen mess - his ability to heal taxed to its limit. He sees the Massive Logger coming, winding up his axe.

Logan staggers back, arms too spent for defense. But he won't surrender. He lunges with a howl. The Logger side-steps and sticks his foot out. Logan trips, dents the edge of the bar with his head and hits the floor face down. The Massive Logger places a foot on Logan's back rests the axe on Logan's neck.

MASSIVE LOGGER
Smaller chunks for th'wood-chipper.

He raises the axe and:

VOICE (O.S.)
DROP IT.

ANGLE ON: Square Jaw and his Mounties in the doorway, guns drawn.

BLACK

No sound. A bright flash. Sparks. We are looking down at a vaguely human form submerged in a tank of water - a liquid casket. Red-hot, molten metal pours from behind us into the water. An explosion of steam, images strobing like snapshots, a fast-moving flip-book of war and anguish, peppered with the presence of a woman, her face hidden by a shadow here, long hair there. Her back is to us, walking down a windswept beach. Then Logan is holding her in his arms, wailing in anguish at the sky, her body limp.

Logan opens his eyes. He does not gasp or cry out. He simply... exhales, trembling slightly, subtly betraying his fear of sleep. He looks to his left.

40 battered and beaten Loggers, Truckers and Hunters are pressed against a wall of steel bars, staring at him in mute fascination. PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Logan is seated alone in a holding cell wearing leg irons, his wrists chained to his waist. The men from the bar are in the adjacent cell. Perhaps for Logan's safety. Perhaps for their own.

The last of Logan's injuries heal slowly but visibly. The Canadians stare in mute fascination.

LOGAN

Boo.

All 40 tough, hardened men flinch and step back. Logan smiles. A beat later and the cellblock door opens. Square Jaw enters, followed by THREE MOUNTIES WITH SHOTGUNS aimed at Logan through the bars.

SQUARE JAW

You have a visitor.

A DIMINUTIVE ASIAN MAN with horn-rimmed glasses walks onto the cell block. He wears a black suit and carries a plain white envelope. He bows. This is:

ZEN

Mr. Logan, I presume. I am Zen.

LOGAN

You certainly appear to be. Should I know you?

ZEN

No. But I have been following you for some time. Your arrest enabled me to catch up to you at last. I have arranged for your release pending a few...formalities.

LOGAN

That's bully. What do I owe you.

ZEN

I assure you, Mr. Logan. The gain is entirely yours.

Zen steps forward, offering the envelope. The Mounties tense - Square Jaw grabs Zen's arm.

SQUARE JAW

Just... toss it to him.

Zen sighs, flicks the envelope through the bars. It lands between Logan's feet. He bends but, of course, he can't reach it with his hands chained to his belt.

SCHICK - A single claw stabs the envelope before retracting and bringing it to Logan. The Mounties are stunned, the men in the other cell mutter in awe.

LOGGER

You see that? I *told* you.

SQUARE JAW

I thought you searched him.

MOUNTIE

We *strip* searched him.

The envelope contains a sheet of thin parchment. Old paper from an old typewriter. As Logan reads:

ZEN

I assure you, Sergeant, if Mr. Logan was a threat to you or your men, he would not be sitting here now. And you would not be standing.

SQUARE JAW

Who- *What*... the hell is he?

ZEN

That is precisely what I've come here to help him learn.

LOGAN

(re: paper)

Where did you get this?

ZEN

First we must have an understand-

LOGAN

WHERE?

Logan lunges, claws extending, slashing chains like ribbons, Shotguns rack and aim. He *chooses* to stop.

ZEN

I can help you, Mr. Logan. But first... you must help me.

EXT. MOUNTIE BARRACKS - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Logan still reading that paper. We get to see it now:

PROJECT: WOLVERINE

Followed by dense military jargon.

Meanwhile, Zen and a mix of ASIAN and WESTERN SUITS shake hands with SQUARE JAW and some MOUNTIE BRASS. Things seem to have been worked out. They disburse.

Zen walks over to Logan. He produces a cigar which Logan accepts. As Zen lights it for him:

ZEN

Your hunter confessed. The police admit they might never have found him on their own. They are very grateful.

Logan looks past Zen to the Mountie Brass, looking this way with suspicion and disdain.

ZEN (CONT'D)

Begrudgingly so, I admit. But they have dropped all charges. With the understanding that you leave Canada and never return.

Logan nods, stung, but used to it. Waving the paper:

LOGAN

Is there more?

ZEN

All there is to know. Who you are. Where you come from. What was done to you and why. But I can only tell you what little my master permitted me to read. The rest is in Japan.

LOGAN

Japa- Did you say your *master*?

ZEN

He is in Tokyo. A plane is waiting to take us to him now.

LOGAN

(laughing/turning to leave)
Listen. It's been great. Thanks for bailing me out. Maybe I'll see 'ya'round.

ZEN

We had an agreement.

LOGAN

You had an agreement

ZEN

They will arrest you if you stay in Canada.

That stops Logan in his tracks.

ZEN (CONT'D)

And you will have to comply. Or kill to maintain your so-called freedom. You will continue searching in the wrong place for answers to the wrong questions - wasting your gifts on petty acts of justice. A vigilante, living out your days like that bear - a hunted rogue. Like that hunter - an ignorant criminal. And you will never find an end to your pain.

LOGAN

(turning back/glaring)

What do you know about pain?

ZEN

I stand in the presence of History's Warriors. Witness to centuries of combat, ages of suffering - pursued by enemies he cannot name, grieving for a love he cannot remember. You are the living Prometheus. Compared to you...I've never even *felt* pain.

Logan's face tells us Zen is pretty close.

ZEN (CONT'D)

But I know the answers you seek are not here. And while your body heals quickly, your mind never will. Not until you recover your memories and confront them. Only then will you find peace. A peace I can give you.

LOGAN

And what do I have to do for you?

ZEN

Let me take you to my master.

LOGAN

In Japan.

ZEN

In Japan.

Logan sucks on his cigar, considering this with no small amount of suspicion, then he steals a glance at the glaring Mounties across the way. He shrugs.

LOGAN

Fine. Take me to your leader.

ZEN

Master.

LOGAN

Whatever.

AN EXPLOSION OF SOUND, a stream of blue flame.

EXT. SKIES OVER THE PACIFIC - DAWN

And a sleek private jet streaks eastward, away from the rising sun over a dark and uncertain sea.

EXT. TOKYO - NIGHT

Another explosion - this time one of unearthly color, blinding light. Our eyes adjust to a world of flashing neon and LED on buildings, billboards, even many of the vehicles themselves - this place is one giant, ever changing video screen. The streets are packed with a steady flow of fast-moving foot traffic, seemingly immune to the overload of surrounding imagery. Everything shines. Everything is impossibly clean. And everything wants you.

Welcome to Tokyo.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

ANGLE ON: THE REARVIEW MIRROR and a woman's cat-like eyes, glancing at Logan from under a chauffeur's cap concealing close-cropped hair.

This is YUKIO - 26. More on her later...

Logan and Zen ride in back. As the mind-blowing light of the city rolls slowly past, the TOWERING FACE OF KINDLY OLD MAN becomes ubiquitous. God-like.

Whoever he is, he is part of the current media cycle. Keener eyes will note a faint scar on his cheek.

ZEN

Yashida-Sama. My master.

LOGAN

He's big in Japan.

His smile fades, realizing the joke is lost on Zen.

ZEN

Yashida's family line is as long as the Emperor's. He has *given away* more than Japan's richest man has *earned*. His corporation has revolutionized medical research, agriculture, education. His wisdom has shaped our government..The master *is* Japan.

LOGAN

When do I meet him?

ZEN

You will see him tomorrow. First, you must.

INT. PALATIAL HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Zen and TWO BREATHTAKING HOSTESSES escort Logan into a magnificent, penthouse suite overlooking all of Tokyo - room after room appointed in a careful mix of elegant tradition and ultra modern. In a city where space is precious, it is paradise.

Yukio stands in the hallway, her back to us, looking sharp and in a black two-piece suit.

The 100 inch TV is on, no sound - so hi-def it makes reality look grainy. Old Man Yashida is still on the news. A retrospective montage; photos with world leaders going back to JFK. Also humanitarian efforts - water, medicine, food for the Third World. The scroll is in Japanese, thus impossible to read.

Logan ignores this, scanning the surroundings, moving to the mini (actually quite maxi) bar and choosing one of ten different kinds of whiskey.

LOGAN

This'll do.

ZEN

I live close by and am at your
service day and night.

Zen hands him a business card. Logan shoves it in his
pocket. Zen stares.

LOGAN

What?

ZEN

It is customary to read the card...

LOGAN

Nice...font.

ZEN

If there is nothing else you
require...

Zen subtly gestures to the Hostesses. They bow and
smile. They'd like to stay.

LOGAN

G'night.

An impressed Zen and the clearly disappointed
Hostesses bow deeply, backing out of the room.

CLOSE ON: Yukio in the hallway, stealing a glance at
Logan as the door closes. For the first time we see
her face and realize YUKIO IS MORE WESTERN THAN
ASIAN. Perhaps hardly Asian at all.

Logan closes the door, bolts it, chains it. He takes
off his jacket, puts himself a shot, stars at the
view. Then he notices a low table in the center of
the room and he sole object resting on it:

A SAMURAI SWORD - very old by the looks. He admires
the weapon, picking it up carefully, exposing the
razor-sharp blade. He merely touches it and his
fingertip bleeds then instantly heals of course.

He notices a chain of Japanese characters engraved in
the steel. One of them appears to have age-old dried
blood in the grooves. His face suddenly changes.

FLASH

AND THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE TAKES US TO:

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Logan's repressed memory. Somewhere in the Pacific of WWII, amidst A HANDFUL OF RETREATING CANADIAN SOLDIERS engaged in a running gun-battle, vastly outnumbered by the pursuing JAPANESE. We find:

Logan, machine-gun in hand, WOUNDED SOLDIER over his shoulder. While Logan runs and reloads, the Wounded Soldier shoots and vice versa. Until:

A grenade blasts Logan off his feet. He lands in a heap, his partner dead. The dense foliage around him shreds in a hail of bullets. The last of his squad now, Logan runs as far and as fast as he can until:

CRASH - The ground under his feet vanishes and he plummets, landing with a sickening crunch.

CLOSE ON: Logan's face twisted in a silent howl of unimaginable pain. PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

He has fallen face down into a man-trap filled with dozens of bamboo spears, impaled like an insect, spikes through his out-stretched limbs, his abdomen, his shoulder. He is completely immobilized - unable to free himself. His claws extend unconsciously and we notice they are raw bone - not metal. Useless.

He can hear the enemy in the distance, searching. He struggles to pull himself free, adding to his pain.

Then a SHADOW looms over him; A YOUNG JAPANESE SOLDIER - handsome, with dark, piercing eyes - rifle in hand. After inspecting Logan's predicament, the Soldier drops his rifle and draws a sword. He rests the edge of the sharp blade on the back of Logan's neck, nicking the flesh slightly. He raises the blade high. Logan braces for the end...

CLOSE ON: The cut on Logan's neck healing:

CLOSE ON: The Soldier's eyes widening.

The Soldier lowers the blade, cuts Logan's cheek and watches it heal. A drop of blood runs from Logan's cheek onto the engraved steel - unmistakably the same blade he will hold in a Tokyo hotel room 70 years hence. The Soldier raises the sword and strikes.

WHACK - he hacks the bamboo pinning Logan's right arm. Then he drops the sword in the pit.

Confused but grateful, Logan grabs the blade as:

The Soldier walks a few yards from the pit, listening with a mixture of fear and fascination to the sound of Logan painstakingly cutting himself free. The Soldier slowly draws a secondary short sword from his belt... waiting to face this unique enemy. Then:

Logan leaps cat-like out of the pit, sword in hand, pulling the last piece of bamboo from his shoulder, the rest of his wounds already healed.

The Soldier shouts in Japanese, demonstrating with his short sword how Logan should defend himself.

Uncertain, Logan raises his sword and.

CLANK/CLANG/SMACK - The Soldier charges, hits Logan's blade, slaps him with the flat side of his sword and is back in place before Logan can blink. We can't understand his words, but the Soldier's attitude says it plain: "No, no. No. Do it like this."

CLANK/CLANG/SMACK - He does it again, smiling this time. Now Logan is mad. He raises the sword, ready.

CLANK/CLANG/SMACK - Logan blocks the last strike, simultaneously extending his bony claws - tearing the Young Soldier's cheek. The soldier staggers back, stunned, watching as Logan's claws retract, swallowed by the rapidly healing skin around his knuckles.

THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE turns their heads. In the distance, JAPANESE SOLDIERS are the ones running now, chased by A WAVE OF BRITISH SOLDIERS.

The Soldier knows he's doomed. He drops to his knees bows his head and waits for Logan to finish him.

But Logan offers the sword handle-first. The Soldier is surprised yet again by Logan. He takes the sword as he stands. Logan nods to him: "Go. That way." But the Soldier is torn. Ready to fight impossible odds. Logan puts a hand on his shoulder - his eyes desperate for the boy. "Go."

The Soldier nods and runs to fight another day.

INT. PALATIAL HOTEL SUITE - DAY

LOGAN

The' hellizzah-

Logan wakes from a deep sleep on the sofa, rain beating the windows. The sword is back in its stand.

The door opens behind him. He inhales.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Good morning, Zen.

ZEN
I trust that you slept well.

Logan sits up, sees the Old Man on the TV again, looking at him differently now.

LOGAN
I've met your master before,
haven't I?

Zen steals a glance at the sword and nods.

ZEN
Your encounter left a deep
impression. He spent a considerable
portion of his wealth to discover
all he could about you.

LOGAN
What does he want with me? Why now?

The question seems to strike a nerve with Zen.

ZEN
I will take you to him.

Logan stands and a small object drops from the collar of his shirt, bouncing three times on the table before plunking softly on the carpet.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON: An iridescent, gray-green pearl.

Zen picks it up with his thumb and forefinger.

LOGAN
What is that?

ZEN
It isn't yours?

Logan shakes his head. "No." Zen's blood runs cold.

ZEN (CONT'D)
Did you leave your room last night?

LOGAN
Never left the couch. Can we go
now? I'd like to meet the old man.

Logan heads for the door, opens it, waits.

ZEN

Mr. Logan... Unless you have another explanation as to how this came to be in this-

LOGAN

The last lady who stayed here lost an earring. Let's go.

ZEN

Or someone placed it on your person while you slept.

LOGAN

(scoffing)

My person? Without waking me? *Me?* Who would do that. Who even *could?*

We suspect Zen might know the answer to that. For whatever reason, he's not sure to answer. Then:

ZEN

... Mr. Logan.

LOGAN

Zen... Enough with the oyster droppings. Take me to your leader.

Zen sighs, walks through the door.

ZEN

Master.

LOGAN

What you said.

Logan walks out, shutting the door. We remain focusing on the chain. We distinctly recall Logan putting it on. We don't remember him taking it off.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Logan and Zen in back, the mysterious Yukio driving, a dreary rain spattering the windshield.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

Logan and Zen emerge from the limo into a crowd of SOMBER JAPANESE MEN AND WOMEN and black umbrellas.

As the only Westerner (wearing denim and leather, no less) Logan's presence is off-putting. But the too-polite attendees steal glances rather than stare.

ANGLE ON: THE LIMO across the street. Yukio's comely eyes follow Logan until she is distracted by:

An argument at the front door between THE DOORMAN and A YOUNG MAN trying to push his way inside. The crowd tries their best to pretend he is not there.

Logan stares. The kid is a dead ringer for the Young Soldier he fought in the jungle.

The Doorman shoves the Young Man down in the gutter, humiliated. He gets up and storms off in a rage.

This is KENUICHIO. Remember him.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

People remove coats to reveal MEN IN DARK SUITS, WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL JAPANESE GARB. Logan finds himself in a room filled with rows of seats facing a stage draped in red velvet. He is on a receiving line at some high occasion for a very select group. The crowd parts behind Logan and Zen.

People bow deeply to A PORTLY, BESPECTACLED, MIDDLE-AGED MAN and his TEAM OF BODYGUARDS.

He is accompanied by his CAUCASIAN SECRETARY - attractive, business suit - long, raven-black hair hiding one side of her face and glasses that subtly stir fantasies of the naughty school-marm variety.

ZEN
(whispering)
Bow, I said... Bow.

Logan doesn't. The Portly Man gives him the once over as he passes. Logan does it right back, then winks at the Secretary. She blanks him. Zen is mortified.

ZEN (CONT'D)
That man is Noburo Mori. Minister
of Justice.

LOGAN
Good for him.

Noburo barges to the front of the line and bows to the only soul here more impressive than himself:

A STANTLEY MAN in his 50s - his bald head gleaming, his pale gray suit almost pearlescent. He is:

ZEN

Lord Shingen. My master's son. We will pay our respects.

On that stage, Logan spies a porcelain urn and a portrait of the Old Man with a black sash across it. Logan notes the staunch expression on the men, a woman quietly sobbing, and it hits him.

LOGAN

Your master is dead?

ZEN

I never said he wasn't.

LOGAN

You could'a said he was.

ZEN

I have followed my master's instructions explicitly. If there was a deception, it was *his* intention... not mine.

LOGAN

If he's dad, what the hell am I doing here?

Shingen bows to Noburo, stepping aside to REVEAL:

A YOUNG WOMAN. *The woman.* A beauty cut from marble. The sort you can't touch - but *have* to touch - and will never, ever get close enough to touch.

This is MARIKO.

The very sight of her hits Logan like lightning.

Noburo and Mariko exchange a formal greeting. Mariko bows, missing the slightly leering look Noburo gives her. But Shingen catches him. There is a tense dynamic at play here that will reveal itself in time.

(Note: Take a moment. Look over the faces on the previous few pages. You've met everyone who matters.)

As Zen and Logan move closer to the head of the line:

ZEN

I am instructed to tell you one last thing.

Logan snaps out of his Mariko-induced trance.

LOGAN

Last thing?

ZEN

You are free to leave at any time.
But the knowledge you seek will
only be yours when you honor the
gift you have been given.

LOGAN

Honor the- What does that even *mean*-

But he is cut off when they come face-to-face with Shingen. Zen leans in, speaks softly in Japanese. As he does, Shingen's eyes shift suddenly to Logan.

To the mute of shock of everyone, Shingen bows deeply, showing great respect. This leaves Logan eye-to-eye with Mariko. What follows is one of those subtle yet unmistakable moments between two people instantly, mutually attracted - both unsure of what to do.

Shingen straightens, obscuring Mariko and shaking Logan's hand.

ZEN

Mr. Logan. Lord Shingen.

SHINGEN

I understand you knew my father.

LOGAN

In a manner of speaking. I'm...
very sorry for your loss.

SHINGEN

He was a great man. He will be
missed.

(pushing away his grief)

Excuse my poor manners. My
daughter, Mariko.

Shingen steps aside. Mariko bows gracefully - polite but not submissive. As Logan stares at her:

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

You'll forgive me for saying so,
but my father never once spoke
about you. When you were mentioned
so reverently in his will we were
obviously intrigued. How did you
come to know him?

Logan hesitates.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)
It is an awkward question?

LOGAN
An awkward answer.

SHINGEN
(smiling warmly)
My father and his mysteries.
Perhaps after the ceremony you will
be my guest at my home. There you
can share as much or as little as
you like. I promise not to pry.

Logan glances at Zen. Zen nods: "Say yes."

LOGAN
I would be honored.

SHINGEN
The honor is mine. I hope you will
excuse me until then.

Logan nods, steps aside with one last look to Mariko.
As Zen and Logan walk toward the back of the line:

LOGAN
What can you tell me about Mariko?

ZEN
She is to be married in three days.

Beat. Logan is stunned.

LOGAN
...Married.

ZEN
To Noburo.

Logan turns to look at the portly, high-and-mighty
Minister of Justice.

LOGAN
That guy? She's marrying that guy?

ZEN
The marriage was arranged by her
father. It will be a merging of two
great houses. A powerful dynasty.

LOGAN

What does she have to say about it?

ZEN

She has a duty to her family. She will honor her father's wishes.

LOGAN

(reassessing Shingen)

And I was just starting to like the guy.

Just then, A MAN WITH A PITTED FACE reaches the head of the receiving line. Shingen does not recognize him but remains cordial. Pit-Face bows deeply - a bit mocking. Then he lashes out with a tanto knife.

Shingen is surprisingly fast, deflecting the blade, taking a slash to his forearm instead of his throat. A WOMAN IN THE CROWD SCREAMS, igniting chaos as:

Logan leaps, reacting on pure instinct as:

Shingen drives his good hand into Pit-Face's throat, crushing his windpipe as:

SEVEN MORE THUGS rise up from the crowd brandishing knives. They rush Shingen. BYSTANDERS PANIC, getting in their way. Shingen calmly stands his ground, covering Mariko, as the FIRST THUG reaches him. As:

Logan vaults over two rows of seats and crushes the First Thug's head under his heels, landing face-to-face with Shingen. The two men have an instant to make eye contact. They share a nod and turn to face the approach of six more knife-wielding thugs. But:

SCHINCK - Logan has six blades of his own.

MARIKO

Kuzuri.

Logan glances at a stunned Mariko staring at his claws, fascinated? Terrified? Shingen looks at Logan with more than a few questions of his own.

They have to wait. The Thugs attack. Shingen and Logan meet them head-on.

Despite the use of only one arm, Shingen holds his own, dodging slashing blades and striking one-handed. Shingen is a master, fighting with dignity and honor.

Logan, on the other hand, kicks, slashes, brawls and cheats. Anything to win. Meanwhile:

Noburo's bodyguards draw weapons, but the cavalry is not coming. They whisk Noburo and his Secretary to the exit. Logan sees this, more annoyed than angry.

CLOSE ON: Noburo's secretary. She practically has to be dragged out, lingering to study Logan and his claws with fascination. Remember this.

AN EIGHTH THUG comes up behind Shingen. Zen leaps in the Thug's way despite having no weapon. The Thug sends him back with a single punch and then:

MARIKO STEPS IN FRONT OF HIM. The Thug stops, thrown for a beat, unsure of how to handle her. Then he grins, changing his grip in the knife. Ready to kill.

Slap - Mariko BELTS HIM ACROSS THE FACE, stunning him. She raises her chin, fearless.

The Thug's grin is gone. He swings his blade:

THUNK - Logan drives three claws clean through the Thug's forearm, punching him off with his other fist, turning to take on another attacker when:

Yukio steps in his path, stopping him:

YUKIO
I have Shingen. Protect Mariko.
(when Logan hesitates)
GO.

Yukio draws a knife and follows Shingen into the fray, breaking knees and kicking asses. Logan grabs Mariko's hand, spies the exit and goes. To his surprise, this door flies open to REVEAL:

ANOTHER THUG - aiming a gun and pulling the trigger. Logan leaps in front of Mariko and TOWARD the Gunman, slamming the door just as the gun goes off.

BA-CLANKCLANKCLANK - the steel door sports three shiny bullet-induced dents in front of Logan's face.

EXT. ALLEY - OTHER SIDE OF STEEL DOOR - DAY

The Gunman kicks the door, trying to open it. He bashes his shoulder into the door once, twice, backing up and rushing for a third when:

Six razor-sharp adamantium claws rupture the door, pointing straight out. The Gunman can't stop.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

CLOSE ON: Logan, knuckles pressed to the steel door.

WHAM - something hits the other side of the door hard. Then silence. His claws retract and he opens the door, grabbing Mariko and stepping over what we assume is the Gunman lying out of frame.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

The rain is pouring now. Up the alley, Logan sees the limos at the front of the building and SEVERAL POLICE CARS ARRIVING. He leads Mariko that way until:

GUNFIRE. GUNMEN emerge from PARKED CARS and engage the police. The street is suddenly a wild-west show. Logan turns, pulling Mariko the other way when:

SCHLING-SLICE - Logan recoils, the front of his shirt cut open, a slash down his chest healing in front of Mariko's stunned eyes. Logan pushes her back as:

A gleaming steel blade four feet long swings for his head. He ducks and rolls as the blade chops time and again, gashing concrete like it were clay. The blade hits a dumpster and wedges in the thick steel, giving Logan time to take in a chilling sight.

A FIGURE IN GLEAMING ARMOR - derived from the ancient Japanese noble warriors, chest emblazoned with a red sun. He rips the blade from the dumpster and turns. His face is hidden by his gilded helmet - black shadows for eyes. His sword hums, raindrops sheeting off the crackling cushion of distorted air around it.

Logan extends his claws and prepares to take his first piece out of SILVER SAMURAI.

The Samurai is pretty sure it will go the other way. In one fluid motion he swings his charged sword, slicing the steel door and tearing a gash through the brick wall in an arch that ends at Logan's neck.

CHING - The Samurai is surprised to see his sword stopped so decisively by six adamantium claws. Logan is just as surprised to see the Samurai's blade doesn't break. Instead it throws off blue arches of energy between Logan's claws, blistering his flesh.

Logan screams and shoves the blade back, attacking. But the Samurai is fast, calm, almost prescient. Where Logan slashes, the blade is there to meet him. The few times he hits armor his claws encounter the same barrier of energy, raking across harmlessly.

Samurai raises his blade. This is going to hurt.

CLOSE ON: LOGAN'S RIGHT FIST. Two of his three claws retract.

SCHUNK - Then an unholy scream of agony and rage.

CLOSE ON: LOGAN'S RIGHT FIST, a single claw, driven neatly between two plates of armor in the Samurai's side, the energized metal scalding Logan's hand.

The Samurai kicks Logan back, momentarily slowed by the wound to his side. Logan lands hard, pushing himself up, noticing his hands are planted on:

A MAN-HOLE COVER

He considers his options, the vulnerable Mariko...

SCHING-SLAM - Logan jams his claws into the man-hole cover and yanks it out, slinging the sixty-pound slab of steel. Samurai sees it coming, hacks it in half. One piece goes wide, but the other one hits him square in the forehead, knocking him flat.

Logan moves Mariko to the man-hole where a ladder leads down into darkness. She hesitates. But when Samurai sits up and finds his sword, she scrambles down the ladder. Logan turns as Samurai charges, blade high - ready to cut Logan in half.

Logan calmly steps back and drops like a stone.

INT. DRAIN-TUNNEL - DAY

Logan lands in a torrent of knee-deep, rushing water. Mariko clings to the other side of the ladder, her heavy gown pulling her under. Logan expertly slashes, sending all but Mariko's essentials downstream.

Samurai looms over the man-hole above. His armor gives him too much bulk to come down. He hacks at the man-hole, making it larger.

Logan takes Mariko by the arm, salutes Samurai, and lets go of the ladder. Together they are swept away.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Samurai continues to carve up the pavement until A LONE COP at the end of the alley points and yells. Samurai sees him and freezes.

The Lone Cop looks away long enough to call OTHER OFFICERS over. When he turns back, Samurai is gone.

INT. DRAIN-TUNNEL - DAY

Logan catches another ladder with one hand, holding Mariko with the other. They climb, emerging into:

INT. BOILER ROOM - DAY

A giant heating system hums. Logan's claws pierce a man-hole cover and shove it aside. He climbs out, pulls Mariko up and then collapses, exhausted.

Mariko kneels over him, his wounds miraculously washed away. Their eyes meet. Mariko kisses him - gentle but lingering - a little more than thank you.

LOGAN

Have we met before?

MARIKO

I think I would have remembered.

LOGAN

Don't be too sure.

(standing, sore)

'Should get you someplace safe.

He heads for the door and opens it to:

Sirens walking, POLICE EVERYWHERE. Chaos. He shuts the door quickly, looking around.

MARIKO

I'm safe with you.

She stares at him, her eyes hypnotic.

LOGAN

In case you hadn't noticed, lady,
I'm barely holding my own.

(she keeps staring)

And whatever kind of trouble you're
in... I'm worse.

MARIKO
You're the trouble I choose.

LOGAN
Aren't you getting married?

MARIKO
Eventually.

Logan looks toward a staircase on the far side of the room, leading up. He sighs.

LOGAN
This way, then...

And he reads her up the stairs...

EXT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Chaos and confusion as the police cordon off the area. In the rain-soaked crowd we find Zen and Yukio escorting Shingen to an ambulance.

SHINGEN
(in Japanese)
[Where is my daughter?]

ZEN
[We'll find her, Sama. First we need to tend to that arm.]

They reach the ambulance and Shingen steps in back. MEDICS swiftly slice off his jacket and shirt, revealing a surprisingly ripped frame for his age.

LOW ANGLE LOOKING UP as Zen goes to shut the door:

SHINGEN
[Find Mariko, do you hear me?
Nothing else matters.]

ZEN
[I will search high and low, Sama.]

He is unaware that BEHIND HIM AND HIGH UP, Logan and Mariko make their getaway along the rooftop.

Shingen slumps back into the ambulance. The medics go to work as Zen and Yukio shut the doors and stand guard. ACROSS THE STREET THEY SEE:

Justice Minister Noburo talking to a MOB OF PRESS.

NOBURO

[... but my staff reacted swiftly and the would-be assassins were pacified. I credit the fine men of the Tokyo Police for putting down the second wave of the attack.]

REPORTER

[Witnesses say Lord Shingen was the target of the attack and not you. Do you have any idea why someone would want to kill Lord Shingen?]

NOBURO

[This brazen and cowardly act happened just days after I proposed a crackdown on organized crime-]

REPORTER

[Are you saying this is the work of the Yakuza?]

NOBURO

(stepping away)

[I am saying this brazen and cowardly act happened just days after I proposed a crackdown on organized crime. Draw your own conclusions. No more questions.]

Noburo, his Bodyguards and his knock-out Secretary pile into two waiting limos amid a flurry of shouted questions that will remain unanswered. Just before he gets in the car, Noburo looks ACROSS THE STREET TO:

Shingen, emerging from the ambulance, his wounds hidden under a new suit. The Reporters rush to get his statement. As Noburo gets in his limo, Shingen steals a look at Noburo's back, smart enough to know he was being watched, smart enough not to let on.

EXT. HOTEL - BALCONY - DAY

LOOKING DOWN FROM A DIZZYING HEIGHT as Logan drops to the top floor balcony and forces the door with a single claw. He looks up at us and extends his arms.

ANGLE ON: Mariko, seated on the edge of the rooftop. The balcony is a short drop - no more than twenty feet. But to miss it is a fall of several hundred.

Without hesitating, she drops. Logan catches her. She wraps her arms around his neck, holds him tightly.

INT. LOGAN'S PALATIAL HOTEL SUITE - BATHROOM - LATER

The opulence of the suite provided by Zen stands in stark contrast to the wet, bedraggled occupants entering. Logan carries Mariko across the threshold.

Mariko is chilled to the bone. Logan rushes into the shower, clothes and all, turning the water on full. He tries to put her down, but she clings to him, staring into his eyes. He moves to speak and she puts a hand on his mouth. She doesn't want to talk.

When he tires to talk anyway, she kisses him. Then the gentleman gives way to the animal...

INT. PALATIAL HOTEL SUITE - BATHROOM - LATER

A trail of wet clothes leads from the shower to-

INT. PALATIAL HOTEL SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT/DAY

-the bed where Mariko sleeps peacefully.

Logan stands over her, wounded look on his face, put there by deep suffering in his forgotten past. AN anguish without a name. DISSOLVE AS:

The sun rises. Logan has hardly moved. Mariko stirs, looks around, about to ask "did we?"

LOGAN

You were asleep before you were out
of the shower.

She is at once relieved and disappointed.

MARIKO

How long have you been-

LOGAN

All night.

Pause. Logan stares at Mariko.

MARIKO

The way you look at me.

LOGAN

What about it?

MARIKO
I remind you of someone you used to
know.

LOGAN.
No... Someone I used to be...

She studies him for a moment.

MARIKO
Why are you here? In Japan.

LOGAN
Are you really going to marry him?

This catches her off guard. She recovers. Nods.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Just like that.

MARIKO
It is my duty. I accept that.

LOGAN
But is it what you want?

MARIKO
What I want doesn't matter. I serve
something greater.

LOGAN
The House of Yashida.

MARIKO
You understand.

LOGAN
Not really.

MARIKO
... You should sleep.

LOGAN
I gave it up.

She smiles, doesn't buy it. After a beat:

MARIKO
Come.

She moves over in the bed, making room for him. Logan
hesitates, but her eyes insist. He sits on the bed,
unsure. Mariko gently pushes him back on the pillow.

She touches his cheek, tracing a finger gently across his lips, his eyebrows.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

Close your eyes.

(as he does)

When I was a little girl I had terrible nightmares. My father would say go back to sleep. Face your fears.

LOGAN

There's a few fears I'd like him to meet.

MARIKO

(ignoring this)

My grandfather was different.

LOGAN

Tell me about your grandfather.

MARIKO

You knew him.

LOGAN

We only met briefly.

MARIKO

Another time. Where was I?

LOGAN

Your father said 'face your fears.'

MARIKO

Ah, yes. He did. But my *grandfather* would tell me stories about *Kuzuri*. A fierce and terrible creature that would do whatever I commanded. He would protect me from my fears.

LOGAN

... *Kuzuri*.

MARIKO

Mmm-hmmm. Half-man, half-beast - a heart filled with rage... And six... long claws.

He opens his eyes. She nods: "You heard right."

LOGAN

Did the nightmares stop?

MARIKO

Yes... But even as a little girl, I never believed he was real.

She touches his eyes, closing them gently.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

So now... *Kuzuri*... Do as I say. Close your eyes. And let me watch over you.

She kisses him once, twice, a third time. Logan beings to respond, but then:

MARIKO (CONT'D)

Now sleep.

He closes his eyes and exhaustion takes over as:

MARIKO (CONT'D)

He needs help, Zen.

INT. PALACIAL HOTEL SUITE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mariko whispers into the phone. Logan sleeps fitfully in the next room, tortured by his nightmares.

ZEN (ON PHONE)

That does not mean you have to-

MARIKO

He *saved my life*. I am in his debt.

Long silence. Zen sighs.

ZEN (ON PHONE)

What do you want me to do?

MARKIO

You came here looking for me. You did not find me.

(when there is no reply)

Say it. On your word.

ZEN (ON PHONE)

I came there looking for you. I did not find you. You... have my word.

MARKIO

I will be home in a few days.

She hangs up before Zen can say another word and walks back into the bedroom to be with Logan.

CLOSE ON: Logan as he closes his eyes, as the warm pink light of sunrise on his face gives way to the bright light of day, the tangerine of sunset and the pale blue of night. His eyes open with a start.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: Darkness outside and a full-moon over Tokyo. Logan is alone, a rhythmic tapping O.S.

INT. PALATIAL HOTEL SUITE - LIVINGROOM- NIGHT

Candle-light, a warm fire. Logan comes out of the bedroom to find the table set for two, Mariko is in the kitchen putting the finishing touches on dinner.

MARIKO

Sit.

She brings him something more akin to art than dinner.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

Eat.

And he does.

CLOSE ON: The dinner table as the moonlight fades to pale blue, giving way to sunrise again. The dinner plates are gone replaced by breakfast.

The sun rises and sets two more times as Logan and Mariko live a stolen, ordinary life.

Standing in front of the massive bay window overlooking Tokyo, Mariko teaches Logan the slower, more graceful forms of Aikido - a discipline for which he has no patience. Balancing on one foot he manages to fall more than once, but in time, he and Mariko move in perfect unison. Combat becomes meditation and - in their case - a dance.

She also teaches Logan how to cook, with an emphasis on cutting tools. Every meal is an unconscious lesson in perfecting the use of edged weapons. Logan's claws are offered to help and summarily rejected.

Logan is a disaster with chop-sticks, determined to eat with his fingers. Mariko slaps the back of his hands any time he even tries. He uses his claws like skewers to stab his food and Mariko surrenders.

INT. PALATIAL SUITE - BEDROOM NIGHT

Each night she lays him down, talking softly in his ear, holding his hand or rubbing his shoulders - then watching over him while he sleeps fitfully, touching him reassuringly at the slightest sound of distress.

And, each night, he sleeps a little easier.

INT. PALATIAL SUITE - BEDROOM - LATER

Mariko is picking up his clothes when something drops from his pocket and plunks on the carpet. She picks the object up, her expression darkening.

INT. PALATIAL SUITE - BEDROOM - DAWN

CLOSE ON: Logan's eyes rolling behind his eyelids in REM sleep. He wakes not with a start, but a mere flinch, happy to find Mariko watching over him.

MARIKO
Another nightmare?

LOGAN
No. A dream.

He smiles. She doesn't. She holds out her palm, revealing the green pearl. There is fear in her eyes.

MARIKO
Where did you get this?

LOGAN
What is it with that thing?

Mariko signs and sits on the edge of the bed. Beat:

MARIKO
Before Kofun, before Asuka, there was the age of Jomon... The darkest days of a remote island kingdom. Before it was called Japan...

EXT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - DAY

Est. The ancestral home of the Yashida family, high in the hills overlooking the Port City of Agarashima.

High-walled, sparsely-lit garden pavilions, elegant, understated buildings, sprawling gardens, a placid pond. An oasis. A fortress. A home in mourning.

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - SHINGEN'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON: Two ancient, magnificently ornate swords. The symbols of a venerated family empire. They are behind Shingen, seated at his desk, his collar open, hands to his temple, a bandage on his forearm. He is surrounded by ADVISORS and STAFF, all in dark suits.

ADVISOR

We have done what we can to control the press, but... word is quickly spreading that you personally fought off the attackers.

Shingen looks up at him as if to say: "So?"

ADVISOR (CONT'D)

You have honored the family name, Sama.

SHINGEN

Where is *my daughter*?

All of the Advisors shift uncomfortably.

ADVISOR

The... police have every available man looking for Mariko... and they are interrogating the assassin who survived. But...

SHINGEN

... But.

ADVISOR

He is not a kidnapper, Sama. He is an assassin.

SHINGEN

What about this other man? The gai-jin with the...

At a loss for words, he holds up three fingers on each hand. No one speaks up.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

No one here can tell me *anything* about him?

ADVISOR

We have only your... remarkable description, Sama.

SHINGEN

Bring me my father's will... And find Zen.

MARIKO (PRE-LAP)

I think you have been marked.

INT. PALATIAL SUITE - LIVINGROOM- DAY

Mariko pours tea as Logan studies the green pearl.

LOGAN

Marked...

MARIKO

By the Black Clan.

(as Logan scoffs.)

It is said they do not eat or sleep until they've killed their intended victim. But first they send a warning. A single, sea-green pearl.

LOGAN

Come on. What sort of assassins *tell* you they're coming?

MARIKO

Assassins bound by a strict code of honor. They do not kill for a living. Killing is their way of *life*... it is their *faith*. And this pearl is a warning. Your only chance for survival.

LOGAN

Yeah, howzzat?

MARIKO

According to myth, you must challenge their master and kill him in combat. Not only will you be spared.. You will become the new Master of The Clan.

LOGAN

Done. Who is he?

MARIKO

That is the riddle. No one knows.

Logan laughs, bounces the pearl on the table.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

It is no laughing matter. You should leave.

LOGAN

Japan?

MARIKO

Tonight.

LOGAN

I'm not ready to do that.

MARIKO

Logan... why did you come here?

LOGAN

That's a long story. With a lot of holes.

MARIKO

Tell me.

Logan smiles, shakes his head. Mariko places her hand on his arm, speaking firmly now.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

You're safe here. *Tell me.*

Logan casually opens his mouth to speak but he freezes, at a loss for words. It isn't that he won't speak. He can't. We hold on him for the longest time as he struggles to tell her who he is, what he is. But the harder he tries, the harder it becomes. His eyes burn with tears, his face trembles, overcome with centuries of repressed emotions, lifetimes of forgotten pain. Logan is paralyzed.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

I'm here for you, Logan. I'm here. Talk to me...

She wraps her arms around him, holding him tight.

INT. PALATIAL SUITE - BEDROOM - DAWN

Logan sleeps soundly. And for the first time when he wakes, he does so slowly, quietly. At peace.

LOGAN

I didn't dream. Not at all.

He looks, expecting to find Mariko. But she isn't there. Confused, he gets up, walks expectantly to:

INT. PALATIAL HOTEL SUITE - LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Silent. Empty. No food on the table. No candles, no fire. The television silently shows the funeral aftermath. Noburo's flabby face fills the screen.

Curious at first, Logan moves from one room to the next, his anxiety increasing. He cannot find Mariko.

Then he finds a note, resting on the table by her grandfather's sword. He unfolds it. It reads.

Kuzuri-

*Go where you will, looking only to the future.
I go where I must, taking comfort in the past.*

-Mariko

Logan lets the note fall to the floor, stunned. Crushed. He might stand there all day but then:

He freezes, sensing something. He follows his keen ears to the front door, listens for a beat then:

With blinding speed, he rips the door open, grabs A MAN from the hallway, pins him to the wall and

SCHINK - presses the tips of his claws to the man's chin. But then the killer look leaves Logan's eyes.

ZEN

I've turned a blind eye long enough.
Where is she?

LOGAN

I get the feeling she doesn't want to be found.

ZEN

Mr. Logan, please...

Logan lets him go. Zen walks into the suite, looking around for Mariko.

LOGAN

Where's the information you promised me?

Zen is momentarily confused.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Who am I. Where I come from. What was done to me and why. You said you had answers. Where are they?

ZEN

I... I told you. What you seek will be yours when you-

LOGAN

Honor the gift that was given to me, yeah, yeah- She's not here.

Zen stops searching, turns back to Logan.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

So your master spared my life. As far as I'm concerned I spared his. Since then I saved his son and his granddaughter. The way I see it, the old man is into me for some honor - not the other way 'round. So give me what I came here for.

ZEN

There is more to honor than doing what is so obviously right.

LOGAN

What other kind of honor is there?

ZEN

When you can answer that, you will have the peace you're looking for.

LOGAN

Zen, I gotta tell you, you're being kind of a stereotype right now. Just a little bit.

ZEN

We have no time for this. We have to find Mariko.

LOGAN

When were you going to tell me about the Black Clan?

Zen can't hide his surprise. Beat.

ZEN

Would you have believed me?

LOGAN

Doubt it. Are they the ones who tried to kill Shingen?

ZEN

(almost laughing)
Those men at the funeral were Yakuza. Tokyo Underworld.

LOGAN

That's a shame. They were pretty soft... These Clan guys - they don't wear... crazy-ass electrified silver armor, do they?
(off Zen's bewildered look)
A little conspicuous. Maybe not.

ZEN

What... happened after you left with Mariko.

LOGAN

(ignoring this)
Why would the mob want to kill Shingen?

ZEN

I cannot say.

LOGAN

(nodding to TV)
Does it have something to do with this guy? The Minister of Justice.

ZEN

I am not permitted to discuss it. I'm sorry.

LOGAN

There was a kid outside - before the funeral. He was trying to get in. Very angry-

ZEN

(a little too fast)
He is not Yakuza.

Logan's hit a nerve. Now he looks at Zen.

LOGAN

No... He's a Yashida.

ZEN

What... Makes you think that?

Logan taps the side of his nose.

LOGAN
It always knows... Who is he. Zen?

ZEN
It's not important.

LOGAN
He tried to kill Mariko.

Zen cannot believe his ears.

ZEN
What *happened*?

LOGAN
You scratch my back, bub...

ZEN
(agitated)
I am not permitted to discuss the family with outsiders. I am bound by an oath to my master.

LOGAN
Your master is dead.

ZEN
My loyalty to him is not.

Logan can see he's hurt Zen. He might even feel a little sorry. A *little*.

ZEN (CONT'D)
Please. We must find Mariko. If you care at all about her you'll-

Logan turns to the window, looking out over Tokyo. Now it is Zen who has hit a nerve. After a beat:

ZEN (CONT'D)
I see... You have feelings for her.

LOGAN
I have feelings. I don't remember who they're for... But they fit nice on her.

ZEN
You must forget her.

LOGAN

She's about the only thing I can remember.

ZEN

I mean put her out of your mind.

LOGAN

(facing Zen)

My *mind*? What makes you think I trust my *mind*, Zen? My mind is broken.

(points to his heart)

I trust this. *This* is never wrong. This *never* forgets. It goes where it wants... And when it gets there it stays... Forever.

(turning back to the window.)

I didn't ask for that. Anymore than I asked to be... what I am.

ZEN

I'm sorry, Logan. Truly. But even if she were not promised to another man, she could never be for you. She is noble blood. Sole heir to the House Yashida. You are.

LOGAN

Say it... *Unworthy*...

Zen's silence tells him he is right. Logan nods bitterly, used to that sort of thing. He thinks, grabs his jacket, heads for the door.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

I may not be worthy in the eyes of your precious family... But I can save it.

ZEN

Where are you going?

LOGAN

Someone wants to kill Mariko. *And* her father. Now they'll have to deal with me.

And the door slams behind him, blending nicely with the sound of twelve hundred pounds of slapping fat.

INT. SUMO ARENA - DAY

The rippling back of a SUMO WRESTLER, his diapered back-side roaring toward us, feet scrambling for purchase. The wall of blubber flies over our head and

WHAM - Lands like so much uncut Kobe at Logan's feet where he sits calmly puffing a cigar in the front row of a CHEERING, CHAIN SMOKING AUDIENCE.

ON THE PLATFORM ABOVE, THE WINNING SUMO raises his arms in victory, flinging sweat. Logan blinks, rubs one eye, disgusted but cool. Then he looks over at:

AN EXECUTIVE BOX containing a DOZEN MEN IN SHARK-SKIN SUITS and SUNGLASSES. Kurusawa's Goodfellas. The Mob.

YAKUZA

Rank is obvious, factoring age, body-language, amount of overall movement. The OLDEST MAN, mid-60s, sits dead center, motionless, with GOONS whispering in each ear. He is obviously the top dog. The Big Man.

THE OYABUN

Logan studies the box for a while then stands and heads that way. It takes a moment before he sense someone walking in step behind his right shoulder. He stops, turns, comes to face to face with:

YUKIO

LOGAN

'The hell are you doing here?

YUKIO

I am your bodyguard.

LOGAN

My what?

YUKIO

Your bodyguard. Orders of Mr. Zen.

LOGAN

Go wait in the car.

Yukio doesn't move. Logan sighs.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

I don't have time to spar with you. Just follow me and keep your mouth shut, KATO.

YUKIO

Yukio.

LOGAN

I *what*?

YUKIO

Yukio. It's my name.

Logan sighs, approaches the executive box. BODYGUARDS block his path. One tucks a hand in his jacket.

LOGAN

That hand comes back empty or I break it off, Cagney-hito.

BODYGUARD

[Private party. Go round.]

LOGAN

I want to talk to the Oyabun.

The Bodyguards blanch - the very word should not be spoken. Logan points right at the top man.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Right there. The Oyabun. That's what they call him, right?

The Oyabun does not react, even if every other Goon in the box does. The Bodyguards press close, one of them jabbing a gun in Logan's ribs.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

You're going to have to eat with a fork when I'm done with you-

VOICE (O.S.)

YOU.

Logan turns. A SLICK, LEAN GANGSTER, Japan's answer to Frank Sinatra, stands in the box, pointing at Logan. Over his shoulder, the Oyabun sits stone-like.

SINATRA

What is it you want?

LOGAN

I want to talk to your boss.

SINATRA

Why would he want to talk back?

LOGAN
 'Cuz I'm the white devil killed
 three of his clowns the other day.

Beat. Sinatra jerks his head to the two bodyguards.

SINATRA
 [Bring him around.]

They shove Logan and Yukio. Logan plays along.

INT. SUMO ARENA - BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - DAY

Logan and Yukio are escorted down a long, narrow corridor lined with FAT, FAT MEN waiting to go on.

LOGAN
 Like a drive-thru car-wash in here.

Yukio cracks a smile. A door opens to REVEAL:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

"Sinatra" stands, The Oyabun sits, motionless. The air is already thick with their cigarette smoke.

SINATRA
 He clean?

The Bodyguards nod. Sinatra nods back. The Bodyguards push Logan in, stop Yukio from following, and shut the door. Logan pulls a cigar.

LOGAN
 Mind if I... you know what... I'll
 just breathe.

He puts the cigar away.

SINATRA
 You wanted to talk. Start talking.

LOGAN
 Leave the Yashida family alone.

Beat.

SINATRA
 Is that the speech.

LOGAN

That's the speech. Anything happens to Shingen or his daughter, I'll skin your boss and turn him into a track-suit.

Long pause. The Oyabun laughs. More of a bark, really. Then Sinatra laughs, genuinely amused.

SINATRA

The stones on this guy. How do you walk those stones? *Sonkei*.

But Logan is not laughing.

SINATRA (CONT'D)

Let me ask you something, Cowboy. Does The Oyabun look stupid to you?

LOGAN

Really?

SINATRA

Do you have any idea the heat we have on us right now? Do you have any idea the heat we *would* have it Shingen was *dead*? Does The Oyabun look like a man who *likes* heat? *Asks* for it? Sends button men to a *funeral*? In *broad daylight*? The *Minister of Justice* sitting there?

LOGAN

You're saying you didn't try to put a hit on Shingen's family?

SINATRA

We took a bid, sure. We don't run a tea shop. And the job was for Shingen *only*. No one else. The money was tempting too. But we turned it down.

LOGAN

Who was the bidder?

SINATRA

Hey, whoa. I don't know and I don't want to know. I'm management.

LOGAN

But you're sure those thugs weren't yours.

SINATRA

I didn't say that. I said we turned the job down. Couple-six guys from the outfit didn't hear so good. Took it on themselves to carry out an un-sanctioned hit. You can bet when the one you left alive gets out of the hospital he's gonna fall on a knife two-three times in jail. Going after a big fish like Shingen is just bad business. We leave jobs like that to The Black Clan.

Beat. That name again.

LOGAN

What do you know about them?

SINATRA

I know not to ask... you start looking at The Clan, The Clan looks back... you follow? We're just Yakuza. We know our place...

He lets that hang in the air a beat, then:

SINATRA (CONT'D)

But listen. From me, on behalf of the Old Man here; Shingen and his family are protected. Off limits. As for you... The only reason you don't have a bullet in your eye right now is the Oyabun thinks you're funny. And he wanted to thank you personally.

LOGAN

Thank me?

SINATRA

If you hadn't killed our guys, they might've killed Shingen. Then we'd really be in the toilet. So hey... Cowboy. Arigato. And I mean *Domo*.

The Oyabun stands, bows ever so slightly.

OYABUN

Domo arigato.

He walks out, leaving Logan to wonder what the hell just happened. Sinatra follows, stopping at the door.

SINATRA

You need anything while you're in Tokyo, anything at all. You come see me.

(turns to leave, stops)

And uh... Just out of curiosity... Why do you think we'd want to kill Shingen, anyway.

LOGAN

Because he backs Noburo. And Noburo's cracking down on the Yakuza.

SINATRA

Crack-down?

(laughs)

Do you see a crack-down anywhere? The cops arrest some low level guys, shut down a few strip-clubs, Noburo makes a speech. After the elections it's business as usual. You do it different in The States?

LOGAN

I'm Canadian.

SQUARE JAW

That's... unbelievable. Anyway it's all politics. Noburo's in our picket. Always has been. And we pay him very well... But, hey... Don't take my word for it. Ask him.

Sinatra walks out, past the Bodyguards and Yukio. She smiles. Logan smiles. And slams the door in her face.

INT. SUMO ARENA - BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - DAY

Yukio grabs the knob, hears the door lock. Shit. She steps back and with one kick, shatters the bolt.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door slams open. No Logan. Yukio enters, sees a second door at the back of the room opening onto:

EXT. ALLEY - BEHIND ARENA - DAY

Trash cans one way, a crowded street in the other. Logan is gone.

EXT. STATE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

A far cry from the ancient Yashida Stronghold. This mountain-top estate is modern, with imposing iron gates, a moat, garish lights and ARMED SECURITY.

INT. STATE RESIDENCE - SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

MORE GUARDS watch security monitors - cameras covering nearly every square inch of the compound.

INT. STATE RESIDENCE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Noburo's Secretary, working late, types on a laptop, looking over the rims of those glasses. She doesn't see the shadow slide past the open door behind her...

INT. STATE RESIDENCE - NOBURO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noburo is even pompous in his sleep. That is until:

SCHANK - Three blades impale his pillow close enough to nick his earlobe. Noburo's eyes spring open, along with his mouth. Logan looms over him in nothing but jeans and a t-shirt, soaking wet, he came by moat.

Noburo inhales to scream and:

SCHLICK - A second set of claws spring forth, the middle blade gently resting on Noburo's tongue.

LOGAN

Shhhh. Don't want to wake the babe.

Noburo glances to his left where a TRAMPY YOUNG WOMAN is sleeping, snoring slightly, a hand-cuff dangling from one wrist. On the floor we see an assortment of leather props and sundries. Noburo's a freak.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Tying up a few lose ends before the wedding?

Noburo's eyes darken. Startled, but not scared.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

The truth is a funny thing. Nobes. It always comes out. Always... I know about your deal with the Yakuza.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

And when it comes to light, you'll bring disgrace on Mariko's family. Now as the House Yashida's self-appointed enforcer, I can't have that. So... tomorrow morning you'll make a formal announcement calling of the wedding. That, or I come back here and take out your tonsils... Through your forehead.

SCHINK - His claws retract, leaving a hairline cut down the center of Noburo's tongue. Noburo laughs.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

You need counselling, bub.

NOBURO

Me disgrace Mariko's family? I am the only thing standing between her and disgrace. The Old Man was a fool. How much money do you think was left after a lifetime wasted helping the sick and the poor? Where d you think Shingen's money comes from now? It's the first rule of money, gai-jin. Behind every green fortune... is a crime.

Logan considers this, knowing it's unusually true.

NOBURO (CONT'D)

And you're wrong about the truth. It doesn't have to come out, Not if you marry the man in charge of looking for it... TAKE HIM.

Logan springs without looking half an instant before an arrow punches into the head-board directly over Noburo. A single drop of liquid drips from the shaft and onto Noburo's forehead. He screams as:

Logan rolls and comes up on his feet. A second bold catches him between his neck and shoulder. It over-penetrates, exposing the narrow steel tip, Steaming poison drops from a hollow point.

CLOSE ON: A mechanical, auto-loading compound crossbow swiftly prepping another shot.

A pair of slender, **GREEN GLOVED HANDS** shoulder the crossbow to **REVEAL THE FACE OF:**

NOBURO'S SECRETARY, no longer in her business-attire, but a skin-tight, backless green number, complete with a black gun-belt and boots. The butt of the cross-bow pushes back that sultry lock of hair to reveal a long, strangely appealing scar on her cheek. We liked her before. Now we'd gladly let her beat us to death.

This is VIPER

KA-SHUNK KA-SHUNK KA-SHUNK - The crossbow spits out bolts, two per second. Logan dodges, charges, closing the gap and hacking the crossbow in two.

But, nimble minx that she is, Logan can't seem to catch Viper. In turn, she draws her pistol and fires, but she can't stand still long enough to place a shot. Logan's claws rake her forearm. She drops the gun but never makes a sound.

She pulls a knife, deftly avoiding his claws. Logan catches her wrist, driving his claw deep into the wall, slamming his body into hers. She's pinned.

Time stops. Logan and Viper are nose-to-nose now, breathing hard. She has the slightest smile.

Logan looks at his forearm, marked with a single superficial cut one that doesn't heal.

Logan's P.O.V. of Viper's knife-hand, clutched in his. The blade gleams with a honey-like oil.

Suddenly, his vision blurs. He instinctively glances at the crossbow bolt in his shoulder.

Viper kisses him. Then heaves hard and kicks him back across the room. Logan staggers, wipes out an end-table, collapses. He grabs the cross-bow bolt.

NOISES O.S. The sound of feet running up the stairs.

Viper straddles Logan like a bull. She grabs him by the hair, pulls his head back and puts her knife to his pulsing jugular.

LOGAN'S P.O.V. A bay window and darkness beyond.

Logan roars, thrusting himself up, bucking Viper off his back and into a full-length mirror. At the same time he launches himself through the bay window...

EXT. STATE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Crash - Down he falls, landing flat on his back with a sickening smack, sinking like a bleeding stone.

INT. NOBURO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The coast clear, Noburo leaps from his bed, a perfect pit burned into the center of his forehead. Viper gets up as SECURITY GUARDS charge in. They all rush to the window and look down at the settling water.

NOBURO
[WHAT ARE YOU DOING JUST STANDING
HERE? FIND HIM.]

The Guards rush out. Noburo's Trampy Mistress stirs, wakes up. She looks at the wrecked room, the smashed window, Viper in her green get-up. She rubs her eyes.

TRAMP
[this is too much even for me.]

Viper picks up the bolt Logan pulled from his shoulder, studying traces of his blood. Fascinated.

EXT. STATE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

In the distance, SECURITY GUARDS search the inner bank of the moat with dogs and flashlights. Now floodlights are coming on. An alarm wails.

IN THE FOREGROUND: Logan emerges from the moat, trembling, pale and weak. The wounds on his arm and shoulder are welted and purple.

One by one, the flashlights turn this way. VOICES SHOUTING. DOGS BARKING. Then GUNSHOTS. This whole thing is going to hell fast.

Logan plunges into a nearby line of trees and-

EXT. STATE RESIDENCE - CAR-PARK - NIGHT

-emerges at the top of a high garden wall overlooking the long driveway, bullets nipping the foliage behind him. He falls, landing on his head.

Lying there he spies a row of vehicles with government insignias. Noburo's.

INT. GUARD HOUSE - SECURITY GATE - NIGHT

A heavy steel security gate just outside.

TWO GUARDS load rifles. There is too much traffic on the radios to make sense of what's going on.

1ST GUARD
[What is it? What are they saying?]

2ND GUARD
[An intruder at the house, I th-]

WHAM - a heavy Bentley sedan blasts through the gate behind them. The Guards are still staring when FOUR GUARD VEHICLES come roaring after it.

1ST GUARD
[Was that the Boss' car?]

The sound of screaming rubber takes us to:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RAODS ABOVE TOKYO - NIGHT

The Bentley roars past, winding along the narrow cliff-side roads, fishtailing wildly.

EXT. BENTLEY - NIGHT

Logan navigates treacherous roads, struggling to stay conscious, vision blurring badly. Through the window behind him we see the cars in pursuit, vanishing and appearing again with every hairpin turn.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

The Bentley and the four security vehicles whip past. We linger, turning and looking down the mountain at:

DOZENS OF FLASHING LIGHTS. POLICE CARS coming.

INT. BENTLEY - NIGHT

LOGAN'S P.O.V. The dashboard is a blur, the road alternates from serpentine to hallucinatory serpent.

PA-KACK - His brow furrows, annoyed. He's being shot at. He punches the gas, yanks the wheel:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

And careens off the mountain road, down a steep rocky slope, banging off trees and-

Smash - landing hard on the same road, just lower down the mountain. Logan's idea of a shortcut.

INT. SECURITY VEHICLE - NIGHT

TWO SECURITY MEN see the Bentley's tail-lights vanish around a curve. The DRIVER guns it, gaining speed. The road ahead narrows, enters a dark tunnel and:

TAIL-LIGHTS APPEAR. The Bentley is stopped. The Driver hits the breaks, tires wailing and

INT. BENTLEY - NIGHT

Logan leans back in his seat as

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM... WHAM - All four pursuing cars pile up into the Bentley's ass-end. A moment later:

A FLEET OF POLICE CARS come screaming up the road from the opposing direction. Logan shields his eyes.

Twelve police cars smash into the Bentley's grill.

EXT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Dazed and battered COPS and SECURITY PEOPLE stagger out of their smashed vehicles. The Bentley is crushed to about five feet long. And empty.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

ABOVE US, steaming engines and shouting men.

BELOW US, Logan lets gravity carry him staggering down the mountain toward the distant city lights.

EXT. STREETS OF TOKYO - NIGHT

Logan drags himself toward the hotel, stopping when a massive outdoor TV screen shows a familiar face:

HIS OWN

The news is covering a home invasion at the residence of the Minister of Justice. Just then, POLICE CARS drive up to the Hotel and a dozen police jump out.

Logan slinks into the shadows - a fugitive now.

EXT. TOKYO BACK-ALLEY - NIGHT

Agonized, trembling, he huddles between two dumpsters, fading in and out of consciousness.

ACROSS THE ALLEY: Bright lights blaze through the floor-to-ceiling windows of a clean white room.

Inside, MEN IN WHITE KARATE GI'S all black-belts practice champion-level martial arts. This is not a school about show. These guys play for keeps, honing their skills with open hand knives, swords, staves. Logan stares at it absently until his eyes go.

BLACK

No sound. A bright flash. Sparks. A liquid casket. Red-hot molten metal, an explosion of steam. Logan's dreams mix with semi-waking reality in feverish delirium images of war and anguish blend with the increasingly intense fighting of the martial artists.

THAT WOMAN walks down a long, windswept beach - then her limp body in Logan's arms. Then the Young Soldier in the Jungle, nodding to him, running away to live another day. Then Noburo. Mariko. Shingen...

NOBURO (V.O.)

Behind every great fortune... is a crime.

Logan opens his eyes to the blaring of car horns, the noise of traffic and blinding sunlight. We are:

EXT. TOKYO BACK-ALLEY - DAY

His wounds have closed, but they have not fully healed. In fact, they look almost... human.

The martial arts school is empty. Maybe it always was. Logan stands, a determined look in his eye.

He walks out of the alley, through the dense foot traffic and into the street. A horn blares, breaks shriek, a truck skids to a stop, just missing him.

Logan ignores it, keeps walking. A TRUCK DRIVER screaming at him from behind the wheel. We notice a name emblazoned across the truck's container:

YASHIDA

EXT. SHIPYARD - DAY

MATCH FRAME to an identical container. PULL BACK SLOWLY TO REVEAL another and another... then thousands more. PULL BACK WIDE TO REVEAL:

The Port of Agarashima.

ANGLE ON: A chain link fence torn asunder by six adamantium claws and Logan, walking with purpose.

EXT. SHIPYARD - DAY

He breathes slow and deep through his nose, walking through row after row of shipping containers. In the distance, cranes off-load and upload hundreds more per minute, to and from ships of all nations.

He stops, follows his nose to one container in particular. He scowls.

SCHINK - He slashes the lock on the container, prying open the rusty doors to REVEAL:

DIAPERS. Cases and cases of diapers. He slashes a box at random TO REVEAL:

Tightly bound two-kilo plastic bundles. He slashes one and precious white powder scatters in the wind.

INT. SHIPPING CONTAINERS - VARIOUS - DAY

Logan rips opens one container after another, smashing and slashing the packaging of everyday goods inside to expose the contraband they hide.

Rifles, rocket launchers, grenades, mines. And:

Steel drums. All painted drab green, all marked with the unmistakable symbol:

Nuclear waste.

Logan's disgust boils into rage, his gaze shifting to the name emblazoned on the side of the container:

Yashida

And the sound of a ringing phone takes us to:

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - SHINGEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Looking down on the distant port from the wall-to-wall window. We can see the flashing lights of police cars and fire trucks. Helicopters hover.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: Shingen, watching, motionless for a long time. Finally, he picks up the phone.

SHINGEN

Yes... yes, I am looking at it right now... Yes... Thank you.

(he hangs up)

You understand this family has holdings in hundreds of businesses in dozens of countries - one fraction of one tenth of one percent of which is a majority ownership in a company that rents out... shipping containers.

PULLS BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL: Logan, standing in front of Shingen's desk - a nervous Zen just behind him.

LOGAN

Well, right now the police are impounding twelve of them thanks to an anonymous tip.

SHINGEN

We own the *containers*. Not... what is in them.

LOGAN

Which is just what Noburo's Justice Department will conclude for you. Right after the wedding tomorrow.

ZEN

Logan, do you have any idea the seriousness of this allegation?

SHINGEN

You would do well to keep your mouth shut, Zen. As far as I am concerned, you are responsible for this...*man* even being-

Shingen freezes, looking past Logan and Zen. Zen turns and freezes as well. Logan just inhales.

LOGAN
Hello, Mariko.

She stands in the doorway, a blank look on her face.

SHINGEN
How long have you been standing th-

LOGAN
Long enough.

MARIKO
Is it true what Logan says?

SHINGEN
Absolutely not. Logan has twisted lies and circumstantial evidence to fit his predetermined conclusion. All In misguided attempt to fulfill some cryptic bargain he had with your grandfather.

Shingen opens his desk drawer, pulls out a stack of legal paper and throws it on the desk.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)
It's all there in his will.
(to Zen)
What is this thing my grandfather left him? Give it to this gai-jin so he can leave us in peace.

ZEN
Lord Shingen, your father's will was explicit-

SHINGEN
Explicit? 'Honor the gift that was given to you?' Honor, he says.
(to Logan)
As if you knew the meaning of the word.

LOGAN
We're not here to talk about my honor.

SHINGEN
YOU *HAVE* NO HONOR. You have impugned my family's name.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

You have publicly implicated one of Japan's oldest families in a crime. You. A fugitive.

MARIKO

What is this?

SHINGEN

He broke into Noburo's home last night and assaulted him. Then he attacked his secretary.

Zen and Mariko both look at Logan in shock.

MARIKO

Is this true?

LOGAN

Not the way he tells it.

Wrong answer. Zen bows his head. Mariko's hand goes to her lips, stunned.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Mariko, your father is using you.

ZEN

For God's sake, Logan, hold your tongue.

LOGAN

He's corrupted your grandfather's legacy for profit and he's selling you to the Minister of Justice for protection.

SHINGEN

How *dare* you?

LOGAN

Okay, say I'm wrong. Do you love him? Do you love Noburo?

He speaks to feelings she can never openly admit. She struggles to remind herself:

MARIKO

I... Have a duty to my family.

LOGAN

That's not what I asked. I asked if you love him.

He asks as much for himself as he does for her.
Mariko looks down.

SHINGEN

I am her father. She is my heir.

LOGAN

I'm not talking to you, I'm talking
to her.

Logan never takes his eyes off of Mariko. She struggles to
answer him, tears in her eyes.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Mariko... Just tell me you love him
and I'll go. Otherwise you're
serving a lie. His lie. You give
yourself over to noth-

MARIKO

ZEN

FATHER-

LOGAN.

WHACK - Logan staggers from a blow to his neck. A
blow that would kill any other man. He lands on his
hands and knees, a bruise swelling, not fading.

Shingen stands over him holding two wooden swords. He
lets one drop to the carpet.

SHINGEN

Defend yourself.

LOGAN

Afraid to use a real blade?

SHINGEN

The wood is not for my protection,
Logan-san.

Shingen strikes Logan rolls, grabs the sword and
springs to his feet. Zen pulls Mariko out of the way.

Shingen attacks with the speed and ferocity of a man
twenty years his junior. Logan is in immediate
retreat, doing more blocking with his body than his
blade. The duel carries them into:

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Where the destruction is wholesale. Furniture, china,
windows, art. Nothing is spared as the two men go
head-to-head, sword-to-sword. Shingen is an artisan.
Logan is a brute. And the brute is losing.

But a strange thing is taking place. For all the pain he suffers, Logan's focus on Shingen is unwavering - the way he moves, the way he attacks.

LOGAN'S P.O.V. Shingen in slow motion, the looseness of his wrists, his grip on the sword.

CLOSE ON: Logan's hands as they adjust, relax, learn.

Shingen attacks again. With each strike, Logan becomes stronger, faster, more adept. And then:

WHACK - Logan's sword catches Shingen in the ribs, sending him back hopping on one foot. Real pain.

LOGAN

They made me a quick study, old man. Keep it coming.

Shingen focuses, attacks. The speed of swords increases, the bone-jarring impact decrease. Soon, the blades are a blur and neither man seems able to strike the other until:

WHACK - Another strike snaps Logan's sword in half.

WHACK - Shingen hits him in the ribs. Logan backs up, defenseless. Shingen presses the fight. Logan blocks the wooden blade with his forearms, taking the pain.

WHACK - Shingen catches Logan in the jaw. Logan struggles to stay on his feet. He'd love to kill Shingen, only Mariko's presence holds him back.

SHINGEN

He is not human, Mariko. You saw that for yourself. What you have not seen is the true nature of the beast.

WHACK - Mariko cries out. Zen cannot bear to look.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

He is determined to hide his true self from you.

(*WHACK*)

But I-

(*WHACK*)

Will bring it-

(*WHACK*)

OUT.

Shingen swings with everything he has for Logan's neck and:

SCHINK-WHACK - Logan's claws hack Shingen's sword in two. He grabs Shingen by the throat, driving him into winding up to drive them home when:

MARIKO

LOGAN.

Time stops, Logan is suspended in a state of pure rage, unable to back down, unable to finish.

He sees the look of horror in her eyes - sees what she sees in him now. Shingen sees it too. But he is too cool to smile or gloat. Instead:

SHINGEN

I give you... the beast.

Logan seems to melt back into something more human, claws retracting slowly, his grip on Shingen loosening. And with the melting comes devastation.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

Out of respect for my father, I will give you the opportunity to leave Japan. Tonight.

Logan ignores this, turning to:

LOGAN

Mariko-

MARIKO

Leave... Please... Leave this house and never return.

Crushed, Logan walks out. When he is gone, Shingen turns angrily to Zen.

SHINGEN

What is this thing my father left him in his will? And where is it?

ZEN

With all respect, your father instructed that only Logan-

SHINGEN

MY FATHER IS DEAD. I AM YOUR MASTER NOW YOU WILL ANSWER TO *ME*.

ZEN

(trembling with anger)
Your father *lives*...

ZEN (CONT'D)

So long as I honor him. Under pain
of *death* I will not answer.

SHINGEN

Death and pain... are two very
different things, Zen.

And the way he says it chills Zen's blood. Then:

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

You are discharged. Leave this
house at once.

MARIKO

Father-

Shingen silences her with a look. With tears in his
eyes, Zen bows to Shingen, then Mariko and leaves as:

A bell tolls long and slow, over and over, deep and
resonant. A ring to inspire a sense of mourning.

INT./EXT. BUDDIST TEMPLE - DAY

Cherry blossoms fall like snow as Shingen escorts
Mariko resplendent in generations-old bridal
regalia - up the stairs of an ancient pagoda.

At the top of the stairs, Noburo waits in black tails
and white gloves, looking like an emperor penguin.

CLOSE ON: Mariko, reaching deep down inside of
herself for strength, her soul falling with every
step closer to her husband-to-be...

EXT. BUDDIST TEMPLE GATE - DAY

WEDDING GUESTS wave as Mariko and Noburo depart in black
horse-drawn carriage. A fairy-tale nightmare.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: Logan, standing in a grove of softly
molting cherry trees, watching the carriage leave, his eyes
betraying unbearable anguish.

PULL BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL: Yukio, behind the wheel
of a limousine in a long line of same. Her cat-like
eyes peer over her sunglasses at Logan.

CLOSE ON: Mariko in the carriage, sitting stone-like
slightly dazed. Noburo gently pats her hand,
patronizing, cold. Neither of them notice:

KENUICHIO, that angry young man from the funeral, standing unnoticed by the temple wall, glowering at the departing carriage. Death in his eyes. Then:

CLOSE ON: A stack of thin paper - at least one thousand pages - a familiar, crisp, typewriter paper, yellowed with age. A pair of hands picks up the stack and turns it over. The top sheet reads:

PROJECT: WOLVERINE

Followed by dense military jargon. PULL BACK TO:

INT. HUMBLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Small, sparsely furnished. A SMALL SHRINE in the corner features a portrait of OLD MAN YASHIDA. It's just the sort of place you would expect Zen to live.

ANGLE ON: A section of floorboard has been carefully pulled up, revealing a deep hole.

Zen seals the contents of Project Wolverine in a metal box and places it in the hole before putting the floorboard back in place. It fits perfectly. He stands, brushes dust off his hands and:

WHAM - He flinches as the door bursts open.

Viper stalks in, followed a beat later by Shingen. Zen is confused to see them together.

SHINGEN

(re: Viper)

My eyes, my ears... and occasionally... my teeth.

(shutting the door)

It is my daughter's wedding day, Zen. You did not send a gift.

Zen takes a half-step back.

CLOSE ON: The handle of a small knife on the desk behind Zen just a few paces away.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

This made me wonder if I had not... offended you somehow. I thought to myself, perhaps I have been too harsh with Zen.

Zen's right hand drops to his side, just a short reach from the knife handle.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

Then another part of me thought...
I have not been harsh enough.

ZEN

I know what you've come for, Lord
Shingen. I thought I made myself
clear; you cannot make me talk.

SHINGEN

No... I can't... But *she* can.

Viper holds up a steel syringe, the five inch needle
dripping thick amber liquid. Zen lunges for the
knife, grabbing the handle just ask:

THWACK - another knife pins his hand to the desk. Zen
screams in pain.

ANGLE ON: Shingen, frozen at the end of his throw,
pleased with his marksmanship. He turns to Viper.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

By all means take your time.

Viper smiles and moves toward Zen. We cover Zen's
scream with the steam whistles and rattling steel of:

EXT. TOKYO WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Not far from the rail-yards, the city itself is a
distant gleam. We settle on a run-down bar.

INT. RUN-DOWN BAR - NIGHT

PATRONS stare in mute awe at the drinking prowess of:

Logan, sitting at the bar wit ha single-shot glass
and THREE EMPTY WHISKEY BOTTLES, HAMMERED OUT OF HIS
MIND, BARELY ABLE TO SEE. As a fourth arrives, Logan
takes cash from his pocket to pay, unaware of:

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON: THE GRAY-GREEN PEARL dropping
from the folded bills and bouncing down the bar. A
WOMAN'S SLENDER HAND catches it. Meanwhile:

CLOSE ON: Logan's shot-glass as he pours. Just as the
whiskey reaches the brim, another shot-glass slides
in next to his, pushing it aside and slowly filling.
Logan looks up, letting his woozy eyes focus on:

A STUNNING PAIR OF CAT-LIKE EYES, under a hanging shock of otherwise closely-cropped hair. Yukio has traded her chauffeur's outfit for cargo pants and a tank-top showing off lean, hard arms.

YUKIO
Drinking to forget?

LOGAN
I don't remember.

YUKIO
You want me to leave you alone?

Logan sizes her up, inhales deeply.

LOGAN
Eventually.

And off her sly smile...

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - SHINGEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A FLY, crawling along the edge of Zen's metal box laying open on Shingen's desk.

Inside is a single sheet of that thin typewriter paper. A hand reaches for it. The fly zips away.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: Shingen, the pages spread out on the desk - some dense with military jargon, others containing schematics, diagrams, eerie da Vinci-like sketches of dissected arms and legs. And claws.

PROJECT: WOLVERINE

Shingen sits back, contemplating what he has read, turning a silver letter opener on his fingers. Viper enters and sits, putting her feet on the desk.

VIPER
Well... what is it?

SHINGEN
It's his life. A life he can't remember. And several other lies they implanted to try and hide it.

VIPER
They...

Shingen hands her a few pages. As she reads.

SHINGEN

Even if he could remember... he
would never know what was truth and
what was fiction. Not without this.

He gestures to all of the paper on his desk.

VIPER

Does it tell you anything useful.

Shingen holds up a finely detailed schematic - a
densely rendered cut-away of Logan's body, complete
with lines pointing to specific vitals.

SHINGEN

He's as easy to kill as any other
man. One just needs to be *precise*.

Shingen flings the letter opener and we hear it strike O.S.
Viper turns to find the letter opener stuck in the doorjamb -
impaling the fly.

VIPER

First you have to find him.

SHINGEN

You forget who I am... I know
exactly where he is right now.

LOGAN (PRE-LAP)

(singing)

You've got to get up,
You've got to get up,
You've got to get up in the
moooooorning...

EXT. RAIL-YARD - NIGHT

Logan is hammered, taking a long pull of whiskey.
Yukio is under his arm, propping him up as:

LOGAN

Some day I'm going to murder the
bugler/Some day they're gonna find
him dead/I'll amputate his
reville/And step upon it heavily/
And spend the rest of my life in-

Logan trips and falls, taking Yukio down with him.
They land on hard gravel, laughing.

YUKIO

What is that from.

LOGAN
A war.

YUKIO
Which one?

He realizes he can't recall.

LOGAN
You smell nice.

YUKIO
Car wax.

LOGAN
Gasoline, too. I like that.

YUKIO
A little dab behind each ear.

LOGAN
I'm hungry. Where can a guy find
pizza in this town?

She looks deep in his eyes, shaking her head.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Gotta be a decent pizza somewhere.
You want some pizza?

YUKIO
Eventually.

She kisses him. We notice the knife handle sticking
out the back of Yukio's belt.

LOGAN
Marikommmmm.

YUKIO
Yeah, okay.

CLOSE ON: LOGAN'S EYE, springing open, realizing. He grabs
Yukio and tries to roll over. She wraps her legs around him
and pins him back, kissing him hard.

LOGAN
Get... off.

YUKIO
I'm trying.

The harder he fights, the harder she digs in. Finally he grabs her by the throat, pushing her back. She looks down at him with a wild look in her eyes.

YUKIO (CONT'D)

YES.

Logan shoves her and they roll over as:

AN EXPLOSION OF SOUND. A screaming wall of steel streaking past at two hundred miles per hour. Logan and Yukio have been making out between the rails of a bullet train. Yukio is laughing, Logan is yelling at her. We can't hear any of it until the train is gone:

LOGAN

-US BOTH KILLED.

YUKIO

Death is waiting for all of us.
Might as well make it interesting.

And she means it.

LOGAN

You're crazy.

YUKIO

And worth all the trouble.

She kisses him again. He shoves her back, stands - wobbly, but sober from adrenaline. He walks away.

YUKIO (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

LOGAN

Australia.

YUKIO

Aw. Come on. It was just getting-

THUNK - Something clouts her on the side of the head and knocks her out. She falls without making a sound.

ANGLE ON: Logan, calling back over his shoulder.

LOGAN

Look, you're a very nice girl. And by that I mean smokin' hot and completely out of your mind which has one very invigorating upside, b-

He turns to finish and freezes. Yukio is gone - vanished - despite wide open space in any direction.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Yukio?

(tense beat)

YUKI-

VVVVVVVP - An arrow pierces Logan's forearm. Where you might scream:

LOGAN (CONT'D)

What the-

VVVVVVVP - Another arrow through his other forearm. That hurt. He goes to grab it but his hand is pulled back. Each arrow is attached to a long, thin cord.

Annoyed, he tries to extend his claws. But they extend only an inch or two. The arrows have disabled them. Suddenly Logan is stretched in two directions at once, the pain intensifying.

VVVP-VVVP-VVVP - more arrows, more cords, more pain.

Then A DOZEN FIGURES emerge from the darkness - MEN IN BACK KARATE GI'S, short hair slicked back and glistering skin died black as pitch.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

You must be the Black Clan.

(beat)

That ink you have on? Hides your scent. Very clever.

Each man draws a blade - nothing fancy. There are no flashy moves. No bullshit, showboat choreography these men are hunters. And Logan is a snared trophy.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Tell you what I'm gonna do. Let me go now, and I'll leave you with some back teeth for chewing.

But the keep coming.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Guys, guys guys. Seriously. I've been drinking. It makes me mean.

Still they keep coming. Logan sighs.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Damn. This was a nice jacket, too.

Despite the pain, Logan grabs the arrows by their heads and pulls them *through* his forearms.

SCHINK - Then he cuts the cords before attacking the stunned Men of the Clan. They've seen a lot, but never that. But their amazement is short lived.

Without a sound - not a scream, not a yell, not even the sound of feet on loose gravel - twenty-four men with swords attack: Meanwhile:

EXT. RAIL-YARD - ELSEWHERE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Yukio, a smear of blood on the side of her head, a bruise on her temple. Her eyes flutter open to the sound of clanging steel O.S.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: She is flat on the ground behind a railroad car, her hands bound behind her back. Instinctively they reach for the blade back there, finding only an empty sheath. She lays on her belly and contorts, her entire body curling backward until he heels nearly touch the small of her back. She pulls a three inch blade from her boot and slashes through her restraints. The she kicks off her boots, exposing something shiny in the lining. Meanwhile:

EXT. RAIL-YARD - NIGHT

Logan deliberately, literally, meets a blade head-on.

CLANG - The sword has cleanly split the skin on Logna's forehead, but not his skull, much to the stunned bewilderment of the swordsman. Logan growls and his claws close in, pincer-fashion, on the swordsman.

SCHLUNK - Logan's head heals as he catches the man's sword letting the body fall. He grips the sword in hands bristling with blades, cocking it like a bat.

LOGAN

Let it be said... I did warn you.

He charges. They charge. Meanwhile:

THWIP THWIP THWIP - Three of The Clan go down, clutching their necks. Yukio emerges from the darkness, her left fist full of scalpel-like knives. She snatches up a sword as she runs through the gap she's created, landing back-to-back with Logan.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Thought I'd lost you there.

YUKIO
And miss out on getting killed by
The Black Clan? Never?

LOGAN
I preferred the bullet-train.

YUKIO
Are you asking me out?

LOGAN
Please try to focus.

The Black Clan circles, studying, looking for a weakness. They nod to one another as if reading each other's minds. Creepy.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
COME ON.

YUKIO
Hey man, if you're in a hurry...

Yukio screams and attacks.

LOGAN
Chick's out of her *mind*.

He goes after her - met halfway by two flailing swordsmen. He takes one out but the other drives a sword clean through his belly. Another swordsman attacks from behind, stabbing Logan through the back.

Logan screams, grabs the blade of the swordsman in front of him and drives it through his own body, impaling the swordsman behind him. He grabs the swordsman in front of him and impales him on the blade protruding from his belly.

We notice the swordsmen die with oddly peaceful expressions. Eerie. As they both fall, the man behind Logan takes his blade with him. The man in front leaves his sword in Logan's belly. He pulls it out and uses it to challenge all comers.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
WHO'S NEXT. WHO IS NEXT. YOU?

But no one will fight him. The Men of the Black Clan back away and drop to their knees, bow their heads.

Stillness. Logan is woozy, neck bulging in severe pain. He collapses. Yukio kneels beside him - astonished as she watches his wounds slowly heal.

Suddenly, A NEW MAN is there - wearing the same black clothes as the others but with no ink on his face. It is a placid, serene face. Young. Strong. But not a killer. More like a MONK. That's what we'll call him.

As the Monk studies Logan, the surviving Men of the Black Clan nod, one by one, almost like a vote. The Monk kneels and places an object on Logan's chest.

CLOSE ON: A SINGLE, BRILLIANT WHITE PEARL.

The Monk stands and walks away as A DOZEN MORE CLAN emerge from the darkness, implying an inexhaustible supply. They gather the bodies of the dead and dying and vanish into the shadows. Not a single sound.

Logan grabs the pearl in his bloody fist and tries to stand but can't. Yukio tries to help, but he is dead weight. She grabs him by his tattered leather jacket, dragging him along the gravel. Logan screams in pain.

Yukio looks around: empty rail-yard as far as the eye can see - no sign of life, no help. It's a last cause, but she won't quit. She is walking backward, her pace slowing until she hits a wall of steel.

She drops Logan, turns and comes face to face with:

SILVER SAMURAI

Bravely, Yukio grabs for a blade without thinking. Sadly, she isn't fast enough.

FWACK

BLACK

No sound. A bright flash. Sparks. We are looking down at a vaguely human form submerged in a tank of water. But this is not Logan's dream... What emerges this time is shining metal, water sizzling off in sheets. Steam clears TO REVEAL:

Armor. The tachyon-charged suit of Silver Samurai.

Logan's eyes spring open. He sits up suddenly as:

SCHINK - He readies to fight.

YUKIO

Wait-WAIT.

Yukio rushes to him, grabbing his wrists and gently urging him back. Logan's eyes focus on:

INT. FORGE - DAY

Part smelter, part loft apartment, part shrine to the lost code of Bushido, the Samurai's forge is where one imagines hell's blacksmith might kick back.

Emerging from the steam, in a leather apron and no shirt, is Kenuichio, the Angry Young Man from the funeral and wedding. His only weapon: a cup of tea.

KENUICHIO

Drink.

YUKIO

This is Kenuichio. He's a friend.

Logan spies a nice new bruise on Yukio's chin.

LOGAN

Your friend's give you that?

YUKIO

I might have tried to kill him a little. My blood was up.

LOGAN

We weren't exactly friends at the funeral, either.

KENUICHIO

My apologies. I thought you were trying to kidnap Mariko. Not save her life.

LOGAN

I understand. You were just looking out for your sister.

Beat. As Logan takes the tea:

KENUICHIO

Half-sister. But how did you know?

LOGAN

I knew you were related to Shingen. I didn't know how until just now.

YUKIO

Lord Shingen... is your *father*?

KENUICHIO

Not according to Shingen... I don't mean to say he neglected me. He's given me money, education.

(gestures to the Forge)

Without knowing it, he's made all of this possible.

(face darkens)

But he will not see me. He will not even acknowledge that I exist.

YUKIO

Where's your mother?

KENUICHIO

She took her own life. The shame of having a bastard was...

That's as far as Kenuichio can go without cracking. Yukio is genuinely touched by this.

LOGAN

Does Mariko know she has a brother?

KENUICHIO

No. But I watch over her. That is how you and I met.

LOGAN

And tonight you just *happened* to be out fora stroll at the rail-yard in your Sunday-go-to-meetin'

KENUICHIO

You have been marked by The Black Clan. I first sensed they were watching you at my Grandfather's funeral. I knew if I followed you, I would eventually find them.

LOGAN

An Assassin groupie. Very kinky.

(re: Yukio)

I'm not judging. She has a thing for getting run over by trains.

KENUICHIO

(ignoring this)

I had hoped to find their master and challenge him. I wish to be Master of the Black Clan.

LOGAN

Not a doctor? The front end of a Cadillac, maybe?

KENUICHIO

Warlord, Samurai, Shogun. Prime Minister, Parliament, Emperor... These come and go. But The Clan is eternal. Undying. The true keepers of Japan's destiny. They believe that one man and one man alone must rule, bound only by his will. Not politics or popular opinion. And at his command, they gently steer Japan through the ocean of time.

YUKIO

Removing those who would stand in her way.

LOGAN

So... they're fascists.

KENUICHIO

They tend to soil, prune the tree. Without sentiment or sympathy.

Logan and Yukio share a look, Kenuichio clearly gets it even if they don't.

LOGAN

Wow... Okay. Uh... Digest that later, right now bigger fish to fry. Being as I'm marked for death and you seem to be the guy to ask, who is the Master of the Clan?

KENUICHIO

Was.

LOGAN

Pardon?

KENUICHIO

Who was the Master? He is dead, as far as I can tell. But he must not have died in combat. This would mean The Black Clan are Ronin, now. Leaderless. There will be a contest to choose a new master from champions selected by The Clan.

LOGAN

And how do you know this?

KENUICHIO

Because you... have been chosen.

Kenuichio holds up the white pearl left on Logan's body after his encounter with The Black Clan.

KENUICHIO (CONT'D)

For as long as I can remember, I have dreamed of receiving such an honor. It is the mark of a true warrior. And now it is yours.

Logan takes the simple pearl, suddenly imbued with intense symbolic power. After a beat:

LOGAN

So... what happens next?

KENUICHIO

You will kill or be killed.
(off Logan's look)
You have no choice in the matter. Your opponent will hunt you to the ends of the Earth to win the prize.

LOGAN

What if neither of us want to be Master?

KENUICHIO

You're saying you *don't*?

LOGAN

Well... I've got my thing. It's a big change, you know?

KENUICHIO

You hold immense power in your hand, Logan-san. A nation's destiny. The fate of millions. It is not to be taken lightly.

LOGAN

Yeah. No. Clearly not. Just out of curiosity, where does this leave us? You and me.

KENUICHIO

I will wait for the match to be decided. Then I will challenge the new Master. You understand this is in no way personal. I have great affection for you.

LOGAN
... Affection.

KENUICHIO
You saved the lives of my family.

Yukio can't help but make a sound of sympathy in her throat. Logan shoots her a look: "Are you nuts?"

LOGAN
So... we're gonna go. Thanks for letting us freshen up and... I'll see you on the field of battle, I guess.

KENUICHIO
I look forward to it.

LOGAN
I'm sure you do.
(to Yukio)
Ready? Good. Let's go.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A remote section of industrial Tokyo's warehouse district. Desolate at night. Logan and Yukio step out as a massive steel door closes slowly behind them.

LOGAN
I'll say this... Lord Shingen has one messed-up family.

YUKIO
This matters to you?

LOGAN
It matters to Mariko. Her father's disgraced the family. And she's caught in the middle of it with no one to help her.

YUKIO
You have problems of your own right now. You're wanted by the police, not to mention the Black Clan-

LOGAN
That can wait. Right now I need to help Mariko. She needs to see that her father is her own worst enemy.

YUKIO

How can you prove that?

LOGAN

Somewhere in that third bottle of hooch my mind went back to the funeral - the men who tried to kill Shingen. *Someone* wanted him dead. Someone had a *reason*. My gut says that reason is the key to everything. If I could just find out who gave the order...

But it's hopeless. Until:

YUKIO

When I'm lost... I go back to where things began.

Logan considers this and nods.

LOGAN

You're right... You're absolutely right, Yukio.

(starts walking)

Thanks. I'll see you around.

YUKIO

(going after him)

Where are you going?

LOGAN

To see a sick friend.

YUKIO

I'll go with you.

LOGAN

Not this again, please.

She grabs his arm, stopping him.

YUKIO

I can help you.

LOGAN

Some people are gonna get hurt.

YUKIO

Then I can *really* help you.

LOGAN

What's Shingen giving you for following me?

Her smile fades. She tries to play dumb until:

LOGAN (CONT'D)
My bodyguard, Yukio? Come on.

Awkward pause. Then Yukio caves.

YUKIO
I'm an orphan. Not even a half-blooded Japanese. Shingen promised to be my master. A servant of the House Yashida. Can you understand what that means?

LOGAN
It means you're a servant with better clothes.

YUKIO
He said you're a mindless killer - that you threatened his daughter. I can see now that he was lying. I can tell you're an honorable man.

Logan scoffs. She drops to one knee.

YUKIO (CONT'D)
I wish to serve *you*, Logan-san.

LOGAN
You wish to serve the next Master of the Black Clan, you mean.

Yukio can't hide her wry grin.

YUKIO
This had *also* crossed my mind.

LOGAN
There won't be a death-match, Yukio. I'm not gonna be the Master of the Black Clan.

YUKIO
But you heard Kenuichio. You have no choice.

LOGAN
I *never* have a choice, That doesn't mean I have to play along.

He turns and walks away. Again she follows.

YUKIO
Please. Logan-san. Take me with
you.

LOGAN
Leave me alone.

YUKIO
I'll show you I am worth-

He turns, showing enough rage to stop her cold.

LOGAN
Don't you get it. I want to be
alone. I don't *need* you, I don't
want you and certainly don't *trust*
you. NOW GET LOST.

Yukio recoils but stands her ground, her eyes filing
with tears. He raises a hand and now she backs away.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
GO.

YUKIO
I should have let them kill you.

Yukio turns and runs. Only then do Logan's eyes
betray his true feelings. He turns and heads the
other way, disgusted with himself.

INT. FORGE - NIGHT

Kenuichio at the window, watching Yukio and Logan
part ways.

VOICE (O.S.)
You should have killed him.

KENUICHIO
After the new Master is chosen.

And from out of the darkness, Viper emerges to stand at his
side, taking his hand.

VIPER
Do you think you can kill him?

KENUICHIO
With your help? It's certain. But
first we deal with Mariko.

KENUICHIO (CONT'D)

When she is dead, I will be
Shingen's only child. He will have
no choice but to recognize me as
his sole heir.

He looks around at the Forge with disgust.

KENUICHIO (CONT'D)

Then, finally, I can emerge from
the shadows and be called by my
true name

VIPER

Kenuichio Yashida.

KENUICHIO

(taking her in his arms)
And when the House Yashida and The
Black Clan are gone... No one... No
one... will ever ignore me again.

They kiss. And as they do we MOVE IN CLOSE ON:

A NEEDLE in Viper's hand. It pierces the back of his
neck and he shivers. Whatever this concoction is, it
works for him. He smiles, looking deep into her eyes.

VIPER

Never forget who you love. Never
forget who you serve.

KENUICHIO

Never... Never.

And they kiss again.

EXT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Est.

INT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

MOVE SLOWLY down a corridor toward TWO POLICE
OFFICERS standing guard outside a private room.

Quiet at this hour, save the sound of heart monitors,
the faint chatter of nurses, the odd page on the PA.
We linger long enough to get used to it. Then:

A faint sound stirs the Cops from their thousand-yard
stare. They share a look, wait. They hear it again.

Ka-chunk Ka-chunk - Very far away.

They open the door they are guarding and look into:

INT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

A MAN lies in the only bed- a mass of tubes, casts and traction wires sucking air through a mask. Thanks to his distinctly ruddy complexion, we recognize:

THE PIT-FACED THUG who cut Shingen at the funeral.

The Cops share another look, shrug, close the door. Then we hear the sound again:

Ka-chunk Ka-chunk Ka-chunk.

EXT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN - TEN STORIES UP - NIGHT

THE SOURCE OF THE SOUND is Logan, legs dangling, sweating buckets, arms strained to the breaking point. All six claws are sunken into the brick facade of the hospital. After a brief rest, he tears the left claws out and drives them back in again - slowly scaling down the otherwise smooth wall-

KA-CHUNK KA-CHUNK KA-CHUNK - until he finds himself dangling by the window he's looking for. He hangs from one hand and uses the other to slice the latch.

INT. TOKYO METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Pit-Face, his chest rising and falling as he struggles to breathe. A hand comes into frame and gently removes the oxygen mask from his face.

Pit-Face gasps. His eyes open to find Logan looming.

LOGAN

Remember me?

Pit-Face tires to speak, to call out. His hand reaches for the remote call button, but Logan takes it away without effort.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Easy. Eeeeeeasy.

He puts the mask back in place and Pit-Face breathes, eyes fluttering with relief.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

I was hoping to avoid bettering you but I'm fresh out of options. And I know you're supposed to be resting so I'll be brief. Who hired you to kill Shingen?

Pit-Face manages a brave front, shakes his head.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

I know, I know. The cops asked you a hundred times already and you told 'em you don't know nothin.' But - bein' they were cops - I'm willing to be they didn't say the magic word.

Logan pulls the mask off again. Pit-Face' eyes widen, his heart monitor starts racing.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Please... Tell me who hired you to kill Shingen.

SCHINK - Logan extends his claws to the tangle of tubes connecting Pit-Face to life, adding tension.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Pretty please....

The heart monitor races faster, taking us to-

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

- where Logan emerges from the elevator. He compares the Japanese characters on the familiar business card in his hand to those on the name plates of each door.

He finds the one he wants and notices the door is already ajar. He pushes it open and finds:

INT. HUMBLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Zen lying on the floor - swollen purple track marks on his forearm. Logan rushes to him and kneels.

LOGAN

Zen. Ah, geeze... Zen. Who did this to you>?

Zen's eyes are slits, his voice a trembling whisper.

ZEN

Shingen.

Logan notices a hole in the floorboards. Empty. Zen's eyes fill with tears.

ZEN (CONT'D)

He took what... belongs to you. I tried to resist... drug... too strong... I failed you. So ashamed.

LOGAN

Zen... It was you that hired those men to kill Shingen, wasn't it?

Zen tries to resist, then nods.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Why?

ZEN

Please...

LOGAN

Why?

ZEN

Shingen...ordered...me.

LOGAN

I don't understand. Shingen *wanted* the Yakuza to come after him?

To his amazement, Zen manages a nod, exhaling. Spent.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Why?

ZEN

The Black... Black...

LOGAN

The Black Clan...

(thinks, realizes)

He needed to prove himself in combat... Is that it? Shingen wants to be chosen. He wants to be the new Master of the Black Clan. He had to fight those men to prove himself worthy.

Zen nods. Logan shakes his head bitterly.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

And I helped him...
 (things a beat)
 What else haven't you told me?

ZEN

*Please... No more... I swore an
 oath... To my master.*

LOGAN

Well now you're gonna break it. The
 Old Man brought me here for a
 reason, Zen. What is it? Tell me?

Zen's eyes drift to the Old Man's portrait.

ZEN

*First you must remember... He was a
 good man... an honorable man...*

LOGAN

Sure... And then what happened?

ZEN

*Years ago... Master of the Black
 Clan... wanted war... Killed
 those... in his way... Yashida came
 home... Japan destroyed... angry...
 heartbroken... Yashida went
 looking... for Master of the Clan.*

PUSH IN ON the portrait as Zen takes Logan back and:

SHINGEN (PRE-LAP)

What do you mean you *lost* him?

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - SHINGEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

SLAP - Yukio takes five across the eyes from Shingen, bravely
 straightening up for another.

YUKIO

I did as you instructed. I seduced
 him. I tried to learn his
 intentions. But we were attacked.

SHINGEN

Attacked. Attacked by whom?

YUKIO

The Black Clan.

SMACK - Shingen backhands her with such force Yukio drops to her hands and knees, blood trickling from her mouth. Her eyes darken: "That does it."

We stay CLOSE ON her face as Shingen paces above her.

SHINGEN

Idiot. If it were The Black Clan you would not be here.

YUKIO

They could've killed us, I'm sure.
(pausing for effect)
Instead they gave him a gift.

SHINGEN

(stops pacing)
What... *kind* of gift.?

Yukio smiles to herself. She's got his full attention now. With her voice she continues to play fearful.

YUKIO

A pearl. A single white pearl.
Perhaps it has symbolic meaning.

CLOSE ON: Shingen unable to hide a mix of emotions.

SHINGEN

What did *Logan* think it meant?

Yukio hesitates, weighing her loyalties.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

STAND AND SPEAK.

YUKIO

(standing)
He... he thought it was a peace offering. A sign of surrender.

SHINGEN

Arrogant fool.

YUKIO

Then he became angry. He accused me of betraying him, . Of leading him into an ambush.
(pointing to her bruised temple)
That's when he struck me. When I woke up, he was gone.

Long, tense moment. She studies him as he stares into space, wondering if he's buying any of this. Finally.

SHINGEN

Logan is an animal. As I said.

YUKIO

Yes. As you said, Lord Shingen.

Shingen snaps out of his thoughts, locking eyes on Yukio now. Does he know she's lying? Tense pause.

SHINGEN

You may call me Master.

Yukio is stunned. Deep emotions well up inside her.

YUKIO

... Master?

He puts a hand on her shoulder. She flinches, then looks at his hand, aching for a father. But this one?

SHINGEN

This information is of great value.
You have done well, Yukio. You are
now a servant of the House Yashida.

Stunned, conflicted, Yukio bows.

YUKIO

Domo arigato, Sama.

Shingen waves her away. She backs out of the room, wiping tears from her eyes. When she is gone, Shingen turns to face the window, his reflection a specter over the whole of the port city below.

SHINGEN

Him... They chose *him*. How could *he*
be worthy and not I? How could-

SCHINK - Three blades appear across his throat - the top one pressing tightly against his jugular. Shingen does not dare to move. But he shows no fear.

HE studies the blades in his reflection as they slowly, silently retract. To our confusion, the top and bottom blades retract left-to-right. The middle blade retracts right to left. Shingen turns to face:

THE MONK and TWO MEN OF THE BLACK CLAN, each holding one knife - the blades he thought were Logan's

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

I... have been expecting you.

The Monk throws a punch, his fist stopping just a hair from Shingen's nose. Shingen doesn't blink.

The two men behind the Monk nod. He nods in return. He turns his fist over and opens it TO REVEAL:

A SINGLE, BRILLIANT WHITE PEARL.

Shingen inhales ever so slightly - the closest thing to a bridal-gown gasp he'll ever produce. He extends a hand. The Monk drops the pearl in Shingen's palm. Shingen's eyes follow it.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

I am most deeply humbled by the-

But when he looks up, the Monk and his cohorts are gone. Shingen looks down at the pearl greedily.

VOICE (O.S.)

Master. I-

Shingen shuts his fist as Yukio enters, oblivious.

SHINGEN

What is it, Yukio.

Her eyes flick to his hand as he casually places it behind his back. She bows.

YUKIO

Apologies, Master. I came back to ask if you wish me to find Logan again. Or are you done with him?

SHINGEN

Oh, by all means find him. I'm not quite done with Logan yet.

CLOSE ON: Yukio bows and leaves, her smile fading quickly, glancing back at Shingen studying something hidden in his palm with the wonder of a child.

BLACK

And the sound of blasting steam. A bright flash. Sparks. A vaguely human form emerging from a tank of water. A red-hot skeleton on a steel grate. Horrific.

INT. SMELTER - DAY

Shingen observes STEEL-WORKERS as they pick up pieces of the glowing skeleton with iron tongs.

CLOSE ON: NUMEROUS HANDS assembling the skeleton, connecting joints with wooden pegs and leather.

PAN OVER TO: Schematics taken from the box intended for Logan - blueprints for the design of Logan's own adamantium skeleton. PUSH IN ON THIS AS:

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES carry us over:

INT. NOBURO'S BEDROOM

Mariko in a night-gown at a dressing table, removing make-up, revealing the unhappy woman underneath. She looks in the mirror at:

Noburo, his corpulent frame lying on the bed in black socks, boxers and an undershirt, snoring.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Viper studies the crossbow bolt pulled from Logan's shoulder and the traces of dried blood there. She then consults select pages from *PROJECT: WOLVERINE*.

CLOSE ON THE HEADING

TOXINS: KNOWN VULNERABILITIES

INT. FORGE - NIGHT

Kenuichio carefully sharpens the edge of his sword with a well-worn stone, resting a piece of paper on the blade and watching its own weight cut the parchment in two. Then he sharpens some more.

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - NIGHT

Shingen in a workout room, shirtless, honing his martial arts skills on something O.S.

He hits it with hands, swords, spears, knives, the intensity of the workout ever-increasing until we:

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: His practice dummy: A blackened steel copy of Logan's skeleton - right down to his six claws - arms raised in defense. Sinewy leather joints it together. Animal-hide bladders - representing internal organs - fill the chest cavity.

Shingen learns how to avoid Logan's indestructible skeleton altogether. From across the room, he throws a knife with stunning accuracy - the blade passing between two ribs, impaling the soft heart. With a simple short sword he charges, hacking off one arm at the elbow, the other at the shoulder. Then he strikes the neck precisely, finding the space between two tightly fitted metal vertebrae and:

SCHAK - "Logan's" skull rolls across the floor.

A winded, sweating Shingen smiles. Ready.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

We end on Yukio, staring up at the forboding Yashida Stronghold - her home if she wants it. But does she?

She shakes her head as if to say she regrets what she is about to do. Then she puts her car in drive.

INT. GAMBLING PARLOR - NIGHT

Tracking shot through the energized chatter of a smoke-filled late-night underground city of sin for the international high-roller. Lots of tables, all of them packed - a large bar backed by a mirrored aquarium filled with choral and man-o'-war jellyfish.

It's strictly jacket-and-tie. Stunning women decorate the men who can afford/don't deserve them. Big money changes hand, most of it Euro and Yuan. The Oyabun himself plays dominoes with a few minions.

AT THE BAR "Sinatra," (or at least Japan's answer there-to) keeps one eye on the scene while fending off numerous carnal opportunities. Then she walks in:

She wears a red dress cut dangerously low, a slit up one side riding scandalously high. Men step aside at her approach as if she might set them on fire. One has to admit, Yukio cleans up nice.

Sinatra sees her coming and quickly shoos a BRAZILIAN BOMBSHELL off her stool.

Yukio eases into the opening and offers a mind-melting smile before whispering in his ear. Sinatra's smile fades to disappointment. He stands, looks Yukio up and down, and motions for her to wait.

INT. BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

Sinatra enters to find Logan, shuffling cards, bored. A caged animal. Sinatra jerks his head.

SINATRA
You know this biscuit?

Through the one-way glass making up the aquarium's mirrors back, Logan sees Yukio at the bar. He sighs.

LOGAN
Ah hell.

SINATRA
You want I should take care of her?

LOGAN
You don't mean *kill* her.

SINATRA
I mean *marry* her. She's got legs up to her neck.

LOGAN
She say what she wants

SINATRA
Has information for you. Wouldn't say what. Says you'd know what it is about just by looking at her.

Through gently drifting tentacles, Yukio sips a cocktail. A ring conspicuously parked on her finger features a large white pearl.

SINATRA (CONT'D)
So are you two... uh-

LOGAN
No.

SINATRA
(smiles/straightens tie)
Got her number?

LOGAN
I'm not sure I do.

INT. BACK OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sinatra shuts the door behind him, leaving Yukio and Logan alone. She sits opposite from him and crosses her legs, letting the slit in her dress say hello.

LOGAN
How did you find me?

YUKIO
Who lese could hide you on a tiny island full of short people?

LOGAN
What do you want?

YUKIO
The police aren't the only ones looking for you. Shingen's been chosen by The Black Clan. He knows you have been, too.

LOGAN
How'd he find that out?

YUKIO
Slip of the tongue.

LOGAN
If I kill him, you won't have a master.

YUKIO
Who says I want *him* dead?

Logan shakes his head and smiles. She smiles back.

YUKIO (CONT'D)
What will you do?

LOGAN
Maybe I'll turn myself in. I can do thirty years standing on my head. Spend it watching Shingen trying to break into jail so he can kill me.

YUKIO
Hardly practical.

LOGAN
But funny.

She drops the cool act and leans in.

YUKIO

Everyone has someone they'd like to know was dead. They may not want to do the deed, but they'd like to know the deed was done. Someone who's escaped justice. Someone willing to harm the innocent. Someone who cares more about power than they do about human life.

(off his blank look)

Come on, Logan... Master of The Black Clan. The finger of God. The power to take life with no fear of consequence. Doesn't that tempt you in the least?

Still Logan says nothing. She stands, waving a dismissive hand and turning for the door.

YUKIO (CONT'D)

*Why do I bother? Shingen is my master now. I win if you lose. I have *nothing* to gain by convincing you to fight.*

Then she lunges, kissing him deeply. He might even kiss back. In ends with a bite. A little anger. Then:

YUKIO (CONT'D)

For God's sake, fight.

LOGAN

Can't do it Yukio.

YUKIO

Why?

(when he doesn't answer)

Never mind. I know why.

She turns and opens the door TO REVEAL:

MARIKO in a raincoat, hiding behind big sunglasses.

Logan stands, stunned to see her. Yukio holds a hand out. Mariko gives her a large bundle of cash. Then, scoffing, Yukio walks out.

Alone now, Logan and Mariko stare at one another for a moment, each unsure what to say. Finally, Mariko takes off the shades TO REVEAL A RAISED BRUISE on her cheek. Make-up hides A SMALL CUT ON HER LIP.

LOGAN

Noburo?

She nods ever so slightly, her lip trembling.

CLOSE ON: Logan. A flash of rage, a tide of fury. Then he takes her arm in his arms, closes his eyes, exhales to the bottom of his soul, whispering:

LOGAN (CONT'D)
It's all right. I'm here.

MARIKO
I'm so sorry.

LOGAN
You're sorry? What for?

MARIKO
You only wanted to protect me. And I rejected you.

LOGAN
I knew you'd come around.

This almost makes her smile.

MARIKO
I went to see Zen at the hospital. You may have saved his life.

LOGAN
He may have saved mine.

MARIKO
Yukio told me what she could. Zen said you would tell me the rest.

LOGAN
You know about The Black Clan. That your father and I have been chosen.
(off her nod)
Did you know your Grandfather was the last Master of the Black Clan?

Mariko is shocked.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
He used The Black Clan to make sure Japan would never see another war. But someone discovered his secret and challenged him... That someone was your father.

Mariko's hand goes to her lips.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Your Grandfather was faced with an unthinkable dilemma. To win, he'd have to kill his only son. If he lost, The Black Clan would belong to Shingen; a man willing to kill his own father for power.

MARIKO

Are you saying... my father... killed my grandfather?

LOGAN

Your grandfather was smarter than that. No... he took his own life. He deliberately left The Black Clan without a Master.

And now tears fill her eyes.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

The last thing he did was mark me for death. A man he'd met only once. But a man he'd been watching for seventy years. A man he knew better than his own son. He knew when The Black Clan faced me *Kuzuri* - they would choose me as a champion.

MARIKO

But my grandfather was a good man-

LOGAN

He was a *great* man. Cursed with a terrible responsibility. Confronted with a terrible choice. He did the best any man could do. And now he expects me to avenge his death... To restore his family's honor. But to do that, I'd have to kill his only son... I'd have to kill your father.

Mariko considers this dilemma until she accepts the inevitable, prove her mettle:

MARIKO

Then you must honor his wish.

Logan is at once impressed and saddened.

LOGAN

No.

MARIKO

You mustn't think of my feelings.
Think of Japan. My family.

LOGAN

Mariko, as long as I don't face
your father. The Black Clan will
have no master. Japan will be free
to choose her own destiny - for
better or worse.

MARIKO

MY father will hunt you for as long
as he lives.

LOGAN

Then the joke's on him.

But she is not amused.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Hey, I've been on the move for as
long as I can remember. At least
now it'll mean something.

MARIKO

Then take me with you.

Logan wasn't expecting that part. His heart swells,
but he stuffs it back down.

LOGAN

You don't know what you're asking.

MARIKO

(pointing to her bruised face)
Look at me. I know *exactly* what I'm
asking.

She kisses him. Logan gives in, taking her in his
arms. She buries her head in his chest.

MARIKO (CONT'D)

I don't even know you. And yet...

LOGAN

You know I'll always protect you.

MARIKO

I do... I do...

The door opens. Sinatra stops halfway through when he
sees what's going on. Just past him we see Yukio. She
sees Mariko in Logan's arms and quickly turns away.

LOGAN
We're adding a passenger.

SINATRA
We have plenty of room.

The low bellow of a ships horn takes us to:

EXT. TOKYO WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Where a massive cargo freighter is casting off its moorings and getting ready to make way.

Three Mercedes sedans race to the edge of the pier. Logan, Mariko, and TWO YAKUZA GOONS get out of one. Sinatra, Yukio and SIX GOONS get out of the others.

Logan hears a thumping noise coming from the back of Yukio's car. She tries to look innocent. Logan pops the trunk TO REVEAL:

Noburo, bound and gagged, putting up quite a squawk.

Logan glares at Yukio. She shrugs.

YUKIO
When I went to get Mariko he put up a fuss, so...

LOGAN
Put him back.

YUKIO
First thing tomorrow-

LOGAN
Tonight.

Logan slams the lid. He shakes hands with Sinatra. Yukio looks jealously down her nose at Mariko. Mariko, behind Logan, smiles back.

SINATRA
If you're ever back this way.

LOGAN
Not ever.

SINATRA
Then sayanora, Logan-sa-

A deafening explosion of glass cuts him off.

ANGLE ON: SILVER SAMURAI leaping off the crushed roof of a Mercedes, drawing his sword in mid-air as:

SINATRA'S EIGHT GOONS all draw weapons and fire.

LOGAN

Dont-

He grabs Mariko and covers her as a hail of bullets ricochet off of Samurai's charged armor and kill six of the goons before he lands. Once on the ground, a single sweep with his sword takes out the other two.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

TAKE HER.

Sinatra grabs Mariko as:

SCHINK - Logan attacks. Not to be out-done, Yukio kicks off her heels and, with a single yank, rips off the business end of her evening gown, exposing a harness high up on each thigh filled with scalpels.

Sinatra gets Mariko into a car before turning and pulling a pistol, aiming at Samurai's back.

WHAM - Samurai mule kicks him without even looking. Sinatra is out in the same instant.

Logan and Samurai charge at one another, colliding in mid-air. Logan has learned a lot since their last encounter and he knows not to let his claws linger too long. We notice that his hands, despite his claws being extended, are open and flat - not fists. His movements are more elegant, less brutish. With his time in Japan, Logan the warrior has evolved.

Yukio keeps Samurai distracted. She can't do much with strikes, but she's good with those scalpels and manages to get them between the plates of his armor. Not deep enough to kill, but certainly painful.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

TAKE MARIKO AND GET OUT OF HERE.

YUKIO

I STAY WITH YOU.

LOGAN

YOU'RE GONNA GET YOURSELF KILLED.

YUKIO

GLORIOUSLY-

WHAM - Samurai cracks her across the face and sends her flying, raising his sword to finish her off.

Logan leaps onto Samurai's back - the armor throwing off bolts of energy and burning his flesh. Logan takes the pain, grabbing the brow of the Samurai's helmet from behind, and locking his feet into the small of Samurai's back. Logan pushes with his feet and pulls with his hands, causing Samurai to bend back impossibly. Samurai screams in agony, flailing his sword behind him, trying to stab Logan.

LOGAN

GO. NOW.

Yukio gets to her feet, runs for the Mercedes containing Mariko as:

Samurai presses a recess in the Red Sun on his chest.

FOOM - A supercharged shock-wave blows Logan off his back. Logan skids across the pavement, convulsing. Samurai drops to his hands and knees, gasping for air. He hears the Mercedes engine starting and turns.

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

Yukio just gets the car in gear when:

MARIKO

LOOK OUT.

Samurai's blade hacks horizontally through the windshield. Yukio ducks as the sword cuts off the headrest of her car-seat. She sits up again and

WHAM - A metal fist comes through the window and knocks her out cold. The car is in gear. It rolls.

Samurai rips off the back door and drags Mariko from the car, coming face-to face with his sister for the first time. She looks at his eyes through his visor, unafraid. His eyes soften with admiration. Then he remembers himself and drags her past:

Logan, Just now recovering, struggling to find his feet. Samurai swings. Logan blocks and:

SCHUNK - Logan howls in pain.

CLOSE ON: Samurai's blade between Logan's claws and deep into the center of his hand. Meanwhile:

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

Yukio come to, dazed. Unaware the car is moving, she opens the door and steps out, landing hard. The Mercedes rolls off the pier and into the water.

The trunk opens on impact, REVEALING NOBURO - eyes wide with terror - just before the trunk inhales water and the car sinks like a stone.

ANGLE ON: Samurai, as he kicks Logan onto his back.

SAMURAI

Accept your destiny, gai-jin. Go to
the Stronghold. Face Shingen. If
not, she dies.

WHACK - Samurai kicks Logan under the chin, snapping his head back and knocking him out cold. Mariko is dragged away, looking back at Logan as things go:

BLACK**INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - SHINGEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

WHITE GLOVED SERVANTS take down the Yashida Family swords, carrying the precious relics reverently.

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - NIGHT

Viper scrapes the small traces of Logan's dried blood from the crossbow bolt into a porcelain bowl, mixing it with a minute amounts of other compounds in a thin glass tube, distilling it over an open flame. The result:

A SINGLE DROP OF BLOOD RED LIQUID. The care with which she handles it tells us it is highly lethal.

LATER: Viper melts pale green wax over a candle until it is the consistency of water. She adds the single drop of red liquid to the green wax, mixing it in.

LATER: she dips A DAGGER, its blade ornately engraved, into the molten wax. As it cools, the wax in the blade's engraving appears pale green - more like patina than lethal poison.

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - TEMPLE - NIGHT

Shingen prays on his hands and knees, incense burning, sensing a presence. Opening his eyes.

Viper offers the green-bladed dagger.

VIPER

One cut... And you'll kill him.

Shingen shakes his head, no. Viper grins, shrugs.

VIPER (CONT'D)

If all else fails.

He reaches for the blade but stops himself, unsure.

SHINGEN

Victory without honor

VIPER

But *certain* victory.

Now she's got him. Shingen considers this temptress, his hands hovering over her knife, interrupted by:

VOICE (O.S.)

SHINGEN!

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Samurai, still in his armor, helmet under one arm, casts a long shadow across the floor of the grand entrance. He holds Mariko by the wrist.

SAMURAI

SHIIIIINGENNNNN.

SHINGEN (O.S.)

What is the meaning of-

Shingen emerges on the second floor balcony. When he sees Samurai's face:

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

You.

SAMURAI

I have come home, father.

MARIKO

Father?

Mariko blinks. She can tell by her father's face that Samurai is not speaking metaphorically. Shingen descends to greet his bastard face-to-face.

SHINGEN

How dare you show your face here.
How dare you lay a hand on m-

SHING - Samurai drops his helmet and draws his sword - the tip cracking just under Shingen's chin.

SAMURAI

-my sister.

SHINGEN

What do you want?

SAMURAI

The animal is coming to claim her.
You will face him Whoever is left
will face me and then I... Will be
Master of The Black Clan.

Shingen considers, clearly plotting. Then:

SHINGEN

Very well. I accept. Let her go.

SAMURAI

You are not the Master yet.

SHINGEN

Ignorant boy... I am Lord Shingen
of the House Yashida, standing in
the great hall of my ancestors and
I am telling you now... I *will*
win... In fact, I *cannot* lose.

The sound of a weapon cocking O.S. Samurai hauls Mariko in front of him, his blade to her throat as a figure appears at the top of the stairs.

Viper aims a crossbow right at him. Samurai's eyes widen, his soul drops.

SAMURAI

No...

SHINGEN

You see? I gave you more than you
ever knew...

Viper smiles, shrugs, "What can I say, kid?" Samurai lets Mariko go, heartbroken. Shingen waves to Viper. She lowers her weapon.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

The boy has too much potential.

(to Samurai)

It would be a shame to waste it.

EXT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - FRONT GATE - NIGHT

Logan and Yukio arrive in her car. Guards merely glance at them before letting them pass.

EXT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - TREELINE - NIGHT

A treeline at the edge of the property. Nothing remarkable. Until A PAIR OF EYES OPENS.

The Monk is standing right in front of us. He is watching the car head toward the stronghold.

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - GREAT HALL - NIGHT

The house is still. Dark. Eerie. Logan enters, inhaling deeply through his nose.

LOGAN

This way...

EXT. JAPANESE GARDEN - NIGHT

A full moon casts cold blue light over a magnificent garden complete with ponds, bridges, pagodas - like a painted backdrop for a grand staging of the Mikado.

Ground lights come on, one by one, illuminating a light mist in the trees, simultaneously making the landscape more visible and creepy. The last light illuminates the open center of the garden and:

MARIKO, more worried for Logan than herself. Logan takes half a step. Yukio grabs his arm, stopping him.

YUKIO

Just... wait.

Shingen and Viper step out from the shadows on one side of her. Silver Samurai steps out from the other.

ANGLE ON: The Monk, draped in shadow, looking down from atop the high garden wall. Watching. Waiting.

SHINGEN

Are you ready to face your destiny?

LOGAN

Sure, why not?

SHINGEN

Then come forward.

LOGAN

Mariko leaves with Yukio first.

SAMURAI

She leaves when I am satisfied.

Logan sighs, whispers to Yukio.

LOGAN

Is everybody here such a blowhard?

She shrugs: "pretty much." Logan approaches his opponents as they form a wall in front of Mariko.

Shingen wears a robe bearing the Yashida symbol - the family's two swords in the sash around his waist.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP AS: He reaches inside his robe, adjusting the POISON DAGGER PREPARED BY VIPER. He took the dishonorable option after all.

Logan stops a few yards from Shingen. Yukio just behind him. Logan and Viper make eye contact - the first time since their lethal encounter at Noburo's.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Don't you get around?

She shrugs, smiles. Samurai bristles at the remark.

SHINGEN

(to Yukio)

You may go.

YUKIO

I stay with Logan.

SHINGEN

Then you'll die with him.

YUKIO

Better I die serving him than live
serving you.

LOGAN

Now, now, we're all friends here.

SAMURAI

Kill this dog, Shingen.

LOGAN

(re: Samurai)

Look at this vulture, waiting to
feast on the leftovers.

(to Shingen)

What say we team this punk? Then
you and me can settle up as the
main event.

SAMURAI

(drawing his sword)

IMPUDENT-

SHINGEN

ENOUGH.

Samurai freezes humiliated Yukio laughs Viper
shakes her head embarrassed for Samurai.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

(to Logan)

I expected you to bring dishonor to
this affair.

(to Samurai)

But you? Where is your dignity?

(back to Logan)

You think you can turn y our
opponents against one another and
steal a victory. As a man with no
interest in the prize at stake,
that is your advantage.

Logan smiles at Samurai.

LOGAN

He's smarter than you.

SHINGEN

Pick up your weapon.

That's when Logan sees an object on the ground a few
feet in front of Shingen: Old Man Yashida's sword.

SHINGEN (CONT'D)
An appropriate choice, I thought.

LOGAN
I won't be needing it, thanks.

SCHINK

SHINGEN
I had hoped we could fight man-to-man. Not man-to... mechanism.

Logan considers this.

YUKIO
(quietly, to herself)
Don't dooo iiiit.

LOGAN
Y'arright.

SCNICK - his claws retract.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Man-to-man.

MARIKO
No...

SHINGEN
I have your word of honor, then.

LOGAN
For what it's worth.

Logan hooks a toe under the scabbard and kicks the sword up into his hands. He draws the blade and inspects the weapon he first saw seventy years ago.

Shingen slowly draws the ancient blade of his family, placing the flat side reverently to his head. After a short prayer, he holds the sword in both hands, getting into position with a flourish.

Logan just stands there. Sword at his side. Pause.

SHINGEN
... Begin.

Shingen attacks. Mariko gasps. In a flash, Logan brings his sword up one-handed, blocking a strike aimed right for his neck.

Shingen steps back, waits... Strikes again. Again Logan blocks him, then lets the sword hang.

Shingen adjusts, moving in combinations of blows rather than single, precise strikes. Again, Logan manages to block. The energy of the fight leaves one with the impression of a train leaving the station, gaining in speed and intensity, steel on steel, hitting faster and faster. Logan grips the sword with both hands now, his form matching Shingen's until blades collide five times a second and still...

Shingen cannot hit Logan.

Shingen stops, steps back, a little winded, the blades ringing in a long, sustained chord.

Viper is in awe. Samurai is impatient. Mariko trembles. And Yukio smiles.

Shingen screams and attacks with renewed ferocity. Logan's blade responds as if magnetized, meeting Shingen's no matter what direction it comes from.

ANGLE ON: The Monk, expressionless, emotionless, watching from high atop the garden wall. Keener eyes will notice two more Men of the Clan are with him.

Shingen stops again, frustrated.

YUKIO

You can't hit him.

LOGAN

I told you. I was built to learn.
And you're one hell of a Sensei.

SAMURAI

(to Logan)
Finish him then.

LOGAN

No.

SAMURAI

Kill or be killed. That is the contest.

LOGAN

Stuff your contest. I won't kill him. And he can't kill me.

(to Shingen)

Take as long as you like, baldy. I got all the time in the world.

No more composure, Shingen freaks- charging at Logan with everything he has. Logan moves back, sideways, around, absorbing every move in Shingen's arsenal. The Lord of the House Yashida is reduced to a primal shrieking maniac. Logan is the picture of calm. Then:

SNAP

Time stops. Shingen holds up his family sword, the blade snapped in two. He throws it, draws his short sword and goes after Logan again. But now it's just sad. Logan has reach on him. Shingen can't win.

SHINGEN

(to Samurai)

Together. We take him together.

Samurai cannot hide his surprise.

SAMURAI

That is not the-

SHINGEN

They can choose another champion.

LOGAN

(to Shingen re: Samurai)

Sooner or later you'll have to face him. And having fought you both I gotta say... The kid's got you beat Shingen. What with all that armor.

SAMURAI

I'LL FIGHT HIM WITH MY BARE HANDS.

LOGAN

Big man.

SHINGEN

Kenuichio presents no real threat to me.

SAMURAI

I don't?

LOGAN

He doesn't?

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

I'm your father, Kenuichio. Kill me and what will you be? Master of The Black Clan? Perhaps. But what name? What house? You will still be living in the shadow. Without a father to call your son you are, and always will be, *nothing*.

CLOSE ON: Samurai - the eyes behind his mask show he's been hit on a gut level.

SAMURAI

I am nothing now. What difference does it make?

SHINGEN

Swear your loyalty to me. Here and now. I will acknowledge you as my son. I will name you my successor.

Mariko is stunned. Samurai slowly removes his helmet to better hear words he has waited for all his life.

SAMURAI

And The Black Clan?

SHINGEN

You will swear off any claim to The Black Clan until I am dead and gone. Then you will earn the right to be chosen, just as I have done. You will fight for your father's prize just as I do now. With a champion... Chosen by The Clan.

LOGAN

Use your head, kid. He's sucking you in. Don't do it.

SHINGEN

The Empire my father left will be *nothing* compared to the one I leave you. I will extend the shadow of The Black Clan until it covers the Earth. Bow to me... and in time it will all be yours.

Samurai considers things very carefully. Logan grimaces. He's in the shit now. After a beat:

SAMURAI

I accept your terms... Father.

Shingen smiles. Logan wince, nods to Shingen.

LOGAN

Well played.

SAMURAI

On one condition.

LOGAN

Uh oh.

SAMURAI

I must have a guarantee.

SHINGEN

I give you my word of honor. What better guarantee is there.

SAMURAI

The word you gave to my mother? Before she killed herself? Your word means nothing to me. I pledge my sword to you here and now, *father. But...* I must be the sole heir to the House Yashida. The sole *living* heir.

All eyes shift to Mariko now. Terrified, she looks to Logan, then to Shingen. He looks at his daughter with deep pity, a tinge of regret. Then he sizes up Samurai, Logan, his overall chances...

SHINGEN

Very well..

MARIKO

Father-

SHINGEN

Kill her.

In a flash, Samurai turns his blade on Mariko.

In that same instant: Logan attacks Samurai.

In that same instant: Shingen attacks Logan.

LOGAN

LITTLE HELP HERE.

Yukio springs into action. Viper cuts her off, drawing the knife she sued on Logan, that familiar amber oil dripping from the blade. Yukio forgoes weapons of any kind and sticks with hand-to-hand.

Five bodies dance around Mariko in a blur of blades, fists and feet. Logan is taking hits now, fighting a two front war - Shingen trying to hit his vitals, Samurai trying to get past him to kill Mariko. The resulting frustration leads to anger, anger turns to rage. His rage boils over and Logan goes completely, totally, utterly

Berserk

Logan swings his sword at Samurai's chest, the blade exploding like glass. Samurai's armor holds, but the force of the blow momentarily staggers him as:

Shingen swings his blade at Logan's neck for the kill. To his horror, Logan spins and catches the speeding blade with his bare hands. It cuts his flesh, but not his adamantium bones. Meanwhile:

Samurai closes on Logan from behind, distracted when:

Yukio throws a roundhouse kick to the side of Viper's head, dropping her before firing a scalpel at Samurai, slicing his cheek. Enraged, Samurai attacks Yukio. She just barely stays ahead of his sword as:

Logan grips Shingen's glade, feeling no pain, enraged. Shingen is scared of him now. He lets his sword go with one hand and reaches into his robe, PULLING OUT THE GREEN DAGGER. THE DEATH BLOW.

But as he lashes out with the dagger, Logan tears the sword from Shingen's grasp and clubs him over the head with the handle. Shingen goes down.

CLOSE ON: The green dagger tumbles into the grass as:

Logan throws Shingen's sword, the adamantium visible through his flayed palms. Samurai sees his moment.

Forgetting Yukio, he stabs Logan in the back. Logan screams and turns, striking the sizzling blade with his elbow and ripping it from Samurai's hand. The blade stays wedged in Logan's body, crackling.

Viper staggers to her feet and lunges at Yukio. Yukio catches her. They Grapple for Viper's knife as:

Logan roars and kicks Samurai square in the chest. Samurai's heavy armor adds to his momentum and he staggers back and falls as:

Viper sweeps Yukio's legs and drives her to the ground, jumping on top of her and coming down with the knife in both hands as:

Logan turns to Mariko.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
PULL IT OUT. DO IT.

He turns his back to her. Mariko can't bring herself to touch the weapon.

CLOSE ON: A drop of poison dangles from the tip of Viper's trembling blade, just above Yukio's eye. As:

Samurai gets to his feet and heads for Logan.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
DO IT. DO IT NOW.

Mariko tears the blade from Logan's back. In one fluid motion he spins, snatches the sword from her hand and comes back around to meet Samurai.

WA-CRACK - The charged blade hits the charged armor. Samurai and Logan are both blasted back. The resulting, waist-high shock-wave of energy knocks Mariko flat and blasts Viper off of Yukio.

Silence.

Samurai - his armor no longer charged - is the first to stir, shaken and dazed, but protected by his own armor from real harm. Logan, meanwhile, struggles to sit up, overwhelmed by his wounds.

Samurai hauls him up by his neck.

WHACK - Enraged, he punches Logan with his armored fist over and over, squeezing Logan's throat with his other hand. Logan's neck snaps back repeatedly until:

SCHUNK - A scream of agony. Samurai drops on his knees, clutching the upper half of his right arm.

CLOSE ON: The severed forearm of Samurai's glimmering armor lying in the grass.

CLOSE ON: Samurai's sword still clutched in Logan's hand. That is until Logan throws it.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Maybe now you can teach.

MARIKO
LOGAN.

He turns, but too late.

SCHUNK - And Logan gasps. PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Shingen, his broken family sword buried up to the hilt in Logan's belly. He savors it, pulls the blade out and lets Logan drop down on all fours.

Logan is badly wounded, unable to get up. Shingen stands over him, triumphant. He rests his sword on the back of Logan's neck, much like his father did seventy years ago, marking his spot.

SHINGEN

One just needs to be...precise.

He raises the sword to strike and...

Yukio attacks him. Shingen senses her coming, turns and back-hands her. Yukio is out cold.

Shingen raises the sword above his head. Logan is too weak to resist. Then Shingen freezes. His face changing when he sees:

SHADOWS moving at the top of the garden wall. Dozens of them, rising one by one. Silent. More shadows emerge from the garden. Suddenly, they are surrounded on all sides, not by some Men of the Black Clan, but all of them. Hundreds. Watching silently. Waiting...

ANGLE ON: Mariko coming to, seeing her father over Logan, ready to behead him. She looks around, sees a dagger in the grass. She grabs it. Meanwhile:

SHINGEN (CONT'D)

In the end, Logan-san... you were worthy.

MARIKO

Father-

He turns, catching Mariko's hand before she can stab him. She twists her wrist and shakes the dagger from her grasp. Then he shoves her back. He turns quickly to finish the job, taking the sword in both hands...

AND NOTICES A SMALL CUT ON THE BACK OF HIS HAND - superficial really - between his thumb and forefinger. A trace of pale green. He sees the green dagger in the grass. The dagger Mariko was holding.

His hand trembles, convulses. The skin blisters and bubbles. The bubbles crawl up his arm, under his robe. He drops his sword, puts a hand to his throat as his blood boils. As his eyes turn bright red.

And Shingen collapses. Dead.

Mariko rushes to Logan as Yukio comes to. She crawls over to Viper, lying face down on the ground. Yukio rolls her over. Viper has fallen on her own knife.

Mariko helps Logan to his feet as his wounds slowly heal. Meanwhile The Black Clan slowly gathers around him. As always, without a sound.

At the front of the mass of assassins is the Monk. He kneels before Logan and the others do the same. It is a solemn moment.

SAMURAI

(through bitter tears)
You have been chosen. You are
Master of the Black Clan.

LOGAN

But... I didn't kill him.
(to the Monk)
I didn't kill Shingen. Mariko did.
No winner, no master.

The Monk just bows solemnly, waiting.

SAMURAI

You have been chosen, Logan. They
await your command.

LOGAN

No. I don't want this. I didn't ask
for it.

YUKIO

Then don't give them a command.
What difference does it make.

LOGAN

(re: Shingen and Samurai)
Look at them. There'll always be a
challenger. I'll be the one who has
to kill them. One day, one of them
will win. Maybe someone even worse
than Shingen. No. I won't do it.
(to Yukio)
Take Mariko. Get her out of here.

Mariko holds on to him.

MARIKO

What about you?

LOGAN

I'm gonna deal with them.

Mariko sees too many killers to count. Logan and the Monk share a look, an understanding between warriors.

MARIKO

No. Logan, please.

LOGAN

They're a curse, Mariko. They've been a cruse on your people for two thousand years. It ends tonight.

MARIKO

Logan-

LOGAN

Do as I say. Please. Go.

Mariko knows there is no convincing Logan. Yukio takes her by the arm and leads her away.

MARIKIO'S P.O.V. of Logan standing at the center of an army of Assassins, who live only to kill. Samurai rocks gently on his knees a few feet away, clutching what's left of his arm his instrument.

ANGLE ON: Logan and the Monk, staring at one another.

The Monk seems to read Logan's mind. The Monk nods.

INT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - NIGHT

Mariko and Yukio are crossing the grand entrance, headed for the front door when a sound O.S. stops them in their tracks - countless voices screaming at once. A war-cry to chill the blood.

MARIKO

LOGAN.

And then silence. Mariko's eyes fill with tears. Yukio cannot hide her sympathy. They share a look of deep sadness and walk out.

EXT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Mariko helps Yukio into the car and shuts the door, walking around to the other side. She gasps:

ANGLE ON: Logan, standing in the doorway of the stronghold, not a scratch on him. He walks toward Mariko. She runs to him. They embrace. Then:

MARIKO
What did you do?

LOGAN
I'm Master of the Black Clan. I
spoke. They obeyed.

MARIKO
What did you say?

LOGAN
... Seppuku.

EXT. YASHIDA STRONGHOLD - GARDEN - NIGHT

The ground is littered with bodies - Assassins in black lie everywhere, each man with a sword in his chest. Each man dead by his own hand.

At the center of it sits Silver Samurai, Kenuichio. He takes in the bodies of the men he'd hoped to lead, the father he'd hoped to honor and the woman he'd been seduced into serving, all dead...

And he sobs as though he might never stop.

CLOSE ON: A green bladed dagger in the grass... waiting to be found.

EXT. STREETS OF TOKYO - NIGHT

A familiar explosion of unearthly color, blinding light. Our eyes adjust to a world of flashing neon and LED. One giant, ever changing video screen.

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

Logan in back, Sinatra and Yukio in front. Logan looks out at the city rolling past, a familiar face on every television:

His own. Logan is still a wanted man.

The low bellow of a ship's horn takes us to:

EXT. TOKYO WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Logan, Sinatra and Yukio stand at the bottom of a gangway to a massive cargo ship in a dense fog.

Logan is anxious. The ship's horn blasts. Sinatra checks his watch.

SINATRA
It's time.

LOGAN
Where is she?

The ship's horn blasts again.

SINATRA
Logan.

Just then the headlights of an approaching car slice the dense fog. Logan sighs, walks toward it as a lone figure gets out. Logan is confused when he sees:

LOGAN
Zen...

He's looking a little worse for wear but well enough.

ZEN
Apologies for the delay. I wanted
to be here to say goodbye.

Logan is touched. Another figure emerges from the fog: Mariko, as stunning as ever. He extends a hand:

LOGAN
Ship's leaving, come on.

MARIKO
I'm not going.

Stunned pause. Zen bends his head. Yukio and Sinatra share a look.

LOGAN
Mariko-

MARIKO
I am the sole heir of my family. I
have a duty. A responsibility. I
cannot go... And you cannot stay.
(touching his cheek)
Perhaps one day... when I can make
people see the truth...

But that's a long way off. She kisses him gently:

MARIKO (CONT'D)
I will never forget you. I will
never forget what you have done for
my family. For this country.

He just stares at her, the pain in his eyes is too much for
her. Her eyes fill with tears:

MARIKO (CONT'D)
Dream of me, Kuzuri.

And despite himself, despite his pain, Logan wipes the look
away and says the only thing he can:

LOGAN
Goodbye, Mariko.

They kiss again. Yukio looks away. Sinatra puts a comforting
hand on her shoulder.

Mariko turns and walks back to the car, wiping tears from her
eyes as the fog swallows her. Logan turns to Zen who holds a
familiar object in the hands.

THE BOX left to him by Yashida. The box containing the
mystery of his identity.

ZEN
The answers you seek.

Logan mumbles something inaudible.

ZEN (CONT'D)
What?

LOGAN
He said 'honor the gift I was
given.' The Old Man saved my life.
I repaid him by killing his son.
(re: box)
I haven't earned this Zen.

ZEN
After all this time, you still
don't understand... Inside that box
are the answers to all of your
questions... Except the answer to
the only question that truly
matters.

LOGAN
Which is?

ZEN
 What happens now?
 (pointing to the box)
Honor the gift you were given.

Logan looks at the box and realizes:

LOGAN
 What was done to me.. What I am.

ZEN
 Is a blessing. Not a curse.

LOGAN
 It doesn't matter how I came to be
 what I am... It only matters what I
 do with it.

ZEN
 (smiles/nods)
 The lesson has ended.

As if on cue, the ship's horn blows again.

SINATRA
 Logan, you have to go.

LOGAN
 Goodbye, Zen.

ZEN
 I will say... Until we meet again.

Zen smiles, bows, and leaves. Logan heads for the gangway. Yukio tries to not run after him. She tries not to get in his way. But she's Yukio.

She runs, blocking his path, standing on to the bottom of the step of the gangway as it slowly rises.

YUKIO
 You would leave me without a
 master?

LOGAN
 It's time to be on your own.

Perhaps for the first time in her life, Yukio is speechless, considering the unthinkable. Logan takes her hand, easing her off the gangway and stepping on.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
 And who knows... You might even end
 up the one in charge.

He says this wit ha nod to Sinatra, waiting anxiously for Logan to leave. And Yukio to stay.

YUKIO

Remember me, Logan-sama.

LOGAN

How could I possibly forget?

She smiles. Logan smiles back. Then they lose one another in the fog...

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT

MOVING SWIFTLY over dark water turning white. We are in the wake of a ship, heading to sea.

We spy something in the water and slow to take a look. A single sheet of yellowed parchment, floating on the surface, slowly dissolving, the words no longer legible. No longer important.

We move on, finding more pages - hundreds of them - the story of a man being untold, forgotten. And then we reach the beginning...

A MASSIVE FREIGHTER, the YASHIDA MARV, leads toward a fog-bank over calm seas, horizon unseen.

We find a man in battered leather on the stern, smoking a cigar, looking back at the fading lights of Tokyo, shrouded in mist, like a vague memory.

The man holds a box in his hands. The box with the answers to the riddle of his past. But his past doesn't matter anymore. Only his future.

He takes one last sheet of parchment from the box, reads it carefully, and tosses it into the sea.

BLACK