

Territory
by
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FADE-IN

EXT. ROXAS BOULEVARD, PASAY CITY (PHILIPPINES) - NIGHT

Storefront signs hang over the boulevard, written in a mix of English and Tagalog.

STREETWALKERS dot the sidewalk; most seem young for their occupation. Their faces show varying degrees of wear.

A large black DOG pads down the street. Black eyes shine under matted fur.

It weaves through CROWDS, past GIRLS negotiating prices.

OTHER GIRLS watch the dog in disinterest. One throws a can. The dog ducks down a side street.

EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS.

The dog sniffs the air, heads off through the urban maze.

Bare bulbs flicker against stone - make the dog's shadow seem larger than life.

The canine crosses an alley, and the shadow disappears. It reappears on the opposite side, considerably changed.

The SHADOW OF A WOMAN moves through the maze. Her fingers end in jagged points.

The figure turns a corner. Towards a dead-end, and a pile of rags. A leg sticks out, from underneath trash.

The woman bends over the body. The sound of TIK TIK TIK hovers in the air.

A long black tongue snakes out. It touches the leg, slides under the victim's skirt.

The tongue probes, then retracts violently. The woman backs away from the corpse.

FOOTSTEPS echo nearby. The woman peers around a corner, still in shadow. Her stomach RUMBLES with hunger.

EXT. BAR - BACK ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

A TOURIST (40s) stands a few feet away. Heavysset and sweating, he rifles through his wallet, counting bills.

The tourist looks up - confusion on his face. It quickly turns to fear. His SCREAMS don't last long.

EXT. KAT'S KARAOKE - NIGHT

A dented sign hangs over a shuttered window: "Kat's KTV" Underneath are the words "Karaoke" and "Girls!!!"

Below that - in smaller letters: "No Minors Allowed."

INT. KAT'S KARAOKE - CONTINUOUS

Inside is equally seedy. PATRONS sit at tables with GIRLS. The Karaoke machine is covered in dirt. Smoke obscures both furniture and faces.

JAMES (38) sits at the bar, clad in khakis. He's accompanied by DANIELLO (32) - local to the area.

IMEE (23) hovers nearby. An ID tag hangs from her neck, identifies her as a G.R.O. ("Guest Relations Officer.")

The door CHIMES as KEVIN (35) enters the bar. Heavier than James, he's dressed in a uniform, drenched in sweat.

James and Danilo flag him over.

Kevin collapses in a chair, waves towards the bar.

Imee moves in for the kill. Within moments, she's draped on his shoulder. A drink is thrust into Kevin's hand.

JAMES

You're late.

KEVIN

4 o'clock, and the boss decides we need the storage bins moved by Monday.

Kevin gulps from his glass.

KEVIN

Wouldn't be fucking possible, even if we weren't short staffed!

JAMES

Told you to take that job at the complex. Better hours, less crap.

EVA (45) walks over, dishrag in hand. The hostess of Kat's, her clothing is far more modest than Imee's. Her eyes seem reddened from the smoke of the club.

She wipes the counter, nods sympathetically at Kevin.

KEVIN

Boss gets up my ass about every little thing. But locals can't do anything wrong. They shit gold, far as he's concerned.

James pokes Kevin, points at Daniello. Daniello shrugs, unconcerned.

DANIELLO

Don't worry. I'm used to him.

KEVIN

James, you should have seen it. This guy named Mike just transferred in from Cebu. Two days ago, he brings in Baluut for lunch, and eats it in front of us. Baluut! You know what that is, right?

JAMES

Fertilized duck egg. Yeah, we know.

KEVIN

Boss didn't say shit to him about it. I was sick for hours.

Danilo takes a drag from his cigarette, and grins.

DANIELLO

Don't knock it 'til you try it. Baluut's not so bad. Crunchy on the outside, chewy on the inside.

Kevin pantomimes RETCHING. Eva tops off his glass.

JAMES

Look, we've all had a rough week. Time for some R&R...and I&I.

He raises his glass to Kevin and Daniello.

KEVIN

Here's to Intercourse and Intoxication - two of life's great pleasures.

Eva turns to James. She nods towards a girl, MAYA (21), several tables away.

EVA

Maya's available. Her card's good - got checked last week. Would you like to buy her a drink?

James eyes Maya. Long legs, doe eyes. He'll rent that.

James nods, and Eva gestures to Maya. The girl strolls over - hips roll with every step.

James places money on the counter. It disappears into Eva's pocket. Maya joins the group; drink in hand.

Daniello's the only one going stag. He stares out the window. The night's pitch black.

DANILO

It's getting late.

Kevin squeezes Imee to his side.

KEVIN

But the night's young...

DANILO

I'm serious. When you guys head home, you should take a cab.

Kevin rolls his eyes.

KEVIN

Like anyone should be walking in this neighborhood at night.

A shadow of concern crosses Daniello's face.

DANILO

Yeah, but it's worse than usual. You hear about the tourist they found last week? Dead, in an alleyway off of Roxa Boulevard...ripped open from his stomach to his betlog.

He gestures to his crotch as a visual aid. James eyes him soberly.

JAMES

What was it, a robbery?

Imee snickers, face obscured by the drink's umbrella.

IMEE

Maybe it was an Aswang.

Daniilo shoots the girl a disgusted look.

DANILO

Please. Don't bother the Kano with wives' tales.

He turns to his buddies, apologetically.

DANILO

Probably just a drug deal gone bad. Still, I'd be careful out there for awhile.

He looks to Eva for support. She turns her attention to washing glasses. Kevin leans back, and props his feet on the bar.

KEVIN

Okay, I'll bite. What's an Aswang?

Maya speaks up. Turns out she's not a mute, after all.

MAYA

They're monsters, like vampires. But much worse.

Imee GIGGLES.

IMEE

They can change shape, and they suck blood. They only come out at night, and they especially like to feed on livers and hearts - all the tasty bits.

Kevin squeezes Imee again.

KEVIN

Come here, you tasty bit!

Daniello ignores Kevin, turns to James.

DANIELLO

Even if they were real, they'd never bother tourists.

He shoots a look at Imee.

DANILO

Everyone knows that Aswang only go after women, children and sick people. Plenty of those around these days....

Maya shudders suddenly.

MAYA

If there's anyone who needs to be worried, it's us. And not because of the Aswang. The last few weeks, girls in the barrios have turned up strangled. By clients.

Eva wanders over, rejoins the conversation.

EVA

That's why it's better to work indoors. Much safer. And we have Edgardo to handle any trouble.

She nods towards the door where a man stands at post. EDGARDO (25) is all muscle, topped off with spiky hair.

EVA

Outside, it may be Bahala Na - God's Will. But we take care of our G.R.O.'s in here. It's good for business, and good for regulars.

KEVIN

(smirks)

Don't shit where you eat? Good policy.

Eva eyes the Americans meaningfully.

EVA

It's getting late. Would you gentlemen be interested in paying the bar fine?

Kevin and James nod - they know the routine. They dig into pockets, hand Eva money.

Kevin slaps Daniello hard on the back.

KEVIN

Night, buddy. Get yourself a girl, one of these days?

James and Kevin escort their dates towards the back room. Daniello smiles at Eva, and pays his bill.

INT. KAT'S KARAOKE - LATER

Back at the bar, James gathers his coat. It's the last one on the pole. Kevin's already left.

The room's deserted, the patrons gone. James nods to Edgardo, steps out into the night.

EXT. ROXAS BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

James wanders down a side street, kicks trash out of his way. He hears a soft sound. TIK TIK TIK.

He spins around - nothing at face level.

He looks down, sees a large black dog with matted hair. He shoos the mutt away. It cowers, darts into an alley.

James continues his travels. The neighborhood gets darker, the further he walks. STREET WALKERS CALL in his direction.

He ignores the invitations - until he sees KARA (14). Dressed in a skirt and halter top, she's perfect. Exotic. And a lot younger than Maya.

James approaches the girl. They WHISPER under a streetlight (MOS).

He hands her bills. She leads him into an alley.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

There's no foreplay.

James releases himself with one quick movement. He pins Kara against the wall, hikes up her skirt.

He's in quickly, and she doesn't object. It doesn't take long. A few hard thrusts.

Then he wraps his hands around her throat and squeezes. That doesn't take long, either.

No sounds escape the girl. She crumples to the ground - her skirt around her waist.

James rifles through Kara's purse, pulls out a wad of cash. He pockets the money and zips up.

TIK TIK TIK.

James spins around, prepared to duck. This time, there is no dog. But there is a female, blocking the exit.

JAMES

What..?

The woman is older. Considerably older, compared to Kara. Tangled hair falls to her shoulders, not thick enough to hide her face.

JAMES

Eva? Is that you?

Eva walks towards him slowly, her voice chill.

EVA

You were supposed to go home.

JAMES

(panicky)

It's not what you think. I found her here...

Eva stops in front of him. James can see his reflection in her eyes. It looks somehow wrong, in the alley's dim light.

EVA

These are my grounds. You don't belong.

James fishes in his pocket, wraps his hand around a knife. He prepares to slash.

He looks down, sees Eva's hands. They're elongated - ending in dirty talons. He looks up, stunned.

Eva glances at James' most recent victim.

EVA

She was clean. And with child.

A long tongue slips from Eva's mouth, runs along her lips. Black, snakelike, and hollow like a tube.

EVA

A first born. It would have tasted good.

James stares at her, and again sees his reflection in her eyes. He realizes what's wrong. It's upside down.

He tries to talk, can't find the words.

Eva shrugs sadly, and stares at the girl's corpse.

EVA

No longer fresh. You'll have to do.

Eva lunges. James' SCREAMS echo for a long, long time.

FINAL FADE-OUT.