

COOPER'S PROMISE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - DAY

COOPER CHANCE, white, early 20s, weaves his way along the sidewalk of a colorful African street. Vendors hawk everything from dried fish to cigarettes. He wears remnants of a U.S. Army uniform - boots, shirt with the sleeves ripped off, cut-off fatigues.

A torrential rain starts and everybody scrambles to protect their merchandise. Cooper starts to run, stops to help a woman lift a box into a truck, and dashes off again.

He turns onto a street lined with bars playing loud music. Drunks stagger about while teenage PROSTITUTES, standing in doorways, shout to Cooper:

PROSTITUTE ONE

You going to drown, American Cooper,
before you see Little Sister again!

PROSTITUTE TWO

Why you go all that way, American
Cooper, when you got a Little Sister
right here?

Cooper runs backwards a few steps, spreading his hands to ask, 'What choice do I have?'

Their laughter follows him down the street to a bar with a sign that reads 'The Mining Pan'. Parked outside is a white jeep with the logo for GlobOil - a globe dripping with black oil.

Cooper pushes through the bar's saloon doors.

INT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

The place is jumping with girls and their johns, talking and dancing to jukebox music. Cigarette smoke blurs the colorful neon beer signs.

Everyone's black except for a couple of white OILMEN partying it up with girls in a booth. One is paunchy, pockmarked and smokes a cigar. Both wear sunglasses and khakis.

Cooper makes his way to the bar and slips onto a stool.

COOPER

(to the barman)

A G and T, Juma, and this time, try to
remember the ice.

JUMA, tall with a shaved head and looped earring, takes a hit off a joint and passes it back to another customer.

JUMA
Americans always want too much ice.

COOPER
If you're worried about running short,
I don't see a lot of my compatriots
around.

Juma scoops ice into a glass from a decrepit ice machine.

JUMA
Ice makes the gin no good.

COOPER
It's no good anyway.

JUMA
It's distilled properly for our
weather.

COOPER
You've got that right. It sucks and
leaves you thirsty.

The barman slides him a drink, and Cooper frowns at the little ice in it. He takes a sip, and hearing boisterous laughter, glances in the long mirror behind the bar.

He sees the POCKMARKED OILMAN pawing one of the girls.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Must be payday.

JUMA
They're celebrating.

COOPER
What's to celebrate?

JUMA
They found oil.

COOPER
Sure they did.

SAM BROWN, an African-American with a soul patch and graying sideburns, slides onto the next barstool. His face is peppered with small, irregular scars.

SAM BROWN
This time, it's been confirmed by
experts.

Cooper doesn't bother to look at him.

COOPER
What the fuck do you want?

SAM BROWN

They've got nice girls in here, or
haven't you noticed?

At that moment, LULAY - 15, an almond-eyed beauty who
attracts attention - splashes her way out a beaded curtain.

SAM BROWN (CONT'D)

She's a pretty one.

COOPER

She's a kid.

Lulay, popping bubblegum, crosses to the bar. Juma hands her a
glass of ice water and nods in the direction of a fat man
squeezed into a booth.

Sipping her water, she looks into the mirror and catches
Cooper's eye. She touches up her hair, and walks to the fat
man's booth sashaying her ass for Cooper's benefit.

She slips onto the seat opposite the fat john, who offers her a
cigarette. She takes it, lights it, and turns around to face
Cooper. Her face is hard, and she blows smoke at him.

Cooper chugs his drink and leaves money on the bar.

JUMA

You leave too much money, Cooper.

COOPER

Buy Lulay some bubblegum, will you?

He slides off his stool to leave.

SAM BROWN

Aren't you going to say goodbye...
Sergeant?

Cooper stops, swallows hard, turns to face him.

COOPER

You got a reason for calling me that?

SAM BROWN

You just look the part, with your half
uniform and all.

COOPER

I bought it at a half-price shop.

SAM BROWN

Sounds like you could use somebody to
buy you a whole drink.

COOPER

I thought you preferred little girls.

SAM BROWN
 Maybe we should finally talk business.

COOPER
 I don't want any business with you.

He pushes his way through the crowd and out the saloon doors.

EXT. BAR DISTRICT - DAY

The street is busy and wet from the earlier rain. Cooper turns into a rundown neighborhood with laundry strung-up.

EXT. WHARF - DAY

He emerges onto the wharf where women are bargaining with fishermen. Nearby, several oilmen watch workers off-load crates from a ship that bear GlobOil's distinctive logo.

A yacht approaches a dock. It's ominous-looking, with a black hull, tinted windows, a sophisticated radar atop its bridge. As it swings around, its name - *African Lady* - comes into view.

Two CREWMEN are perched fore and aft on the deck. They both wear sunglasses, flamboyant shirts, tight trousers.

CREWMAN #1, in the bow, leaps onto the wharf and ties his line too quickly. The boat lurches, and CREWMAN #2 misses his chance to jump ashore.

The stern starts to drift away from the dock.

CREWMAN #2
 (to Cooper)
 HEY!

He tosses Cooper a line, who pulls the yacht back in.

Crewman #2 leaps to the dock and high fives Cooper as he takes the line from him.

The CAPTAIN emerges on the bridge and climbs down a ladder to the deck. He reprimands Crewman #1 before descending more steps into the main cabin.

Angrily Crewman #1 trims his line, and notices Cooper.

CREWMAN #1
 You need something?

EXT. DIAMOND ARCADE - DAY

Cooper approaches the DIAMOND ARCADE, a block-long stretch of gingerbreaded shops painted pastel colors. He steps onto its spongy boardwalk and walks along it to AL-BASMA DIAMONDS.

INT. AL-BASMA DIAMONDS SHOP - DAY

SADIQ AL-BASMA, 18 and wearing a beige caftan, peers into a large iron safe. He's behind a cage that bisects the room.

When Cooper enters, Sadiq nudges the safe closed.

SADIQ
May I help you?

COOPER
You must be Sadiq.

SADIQ
I am.

COOPER
Your father said you were coming home.

SADIQ
He seems to have told everybody.

Sadiq steps out of the cage. He has a headful of dark curls, a short black beard, and astonishing blue eyes.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
Do you have business with my father?

Cooper reaches into his pocket and displays two stones.

COOPER
Do you know diamonds?

SADIQ
For five generations, my family only knows diamonds.

(bowing dramatically)
I am Sadiq Al-Basma, the grandson of many grandsons of diamond dealers.

COOPER
Cooper Chance.

They shake hands, and when they let go Sadiq touches his heart.

SADIQ
Will you take a tea? Or no, you're an American, you'll want coffee. I have learned about your national addiction.

Sadiq crosses to a table, where he pours water from a jug into a small pot, spoons coffee into it, and lights a burner.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
How long have you been in Lalanga?

COOPER
A few months. Make that six.

SADIQ
Are you an oilman?

COOPER
No.

SADIQ
I heard that all the other
Americans had left.

COOPER
You can't believe rumors. Besides,
I can't think of anyplace else I'd
rather be.

SADIQ
You haven't been to Beirut, have
you?

COOPER
I've been here and Iraq and a few
airports in between, and nothing
I've seen so far makes me want to
see much of the rest of the world.

SADIQ
Beirut would change your mind.

MAZEN AL-BASMA enters. He's 50s, silvery hair, wears a caftan.

MAZEN
Cooper! Welcome! I see you have met my
son.

COOPER
You must be happy that he's finally
home.

MAZEN
A father is always happy to have his
son come home!

COOPER
I'll remind mine, the next time I see
him.

MAZEN
You will take a tea?

Sadiq carries over two demitasses.

SADIQ
I've already made him coffee, Father.

MAZEN
My son has come home with radical
ideas.

SADIQ
Coffee is hardly a radical idea.

He sets the cups on a second small table alongside a weighing scale and goose-neck lamp.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
Besides, Mr. Chance prefers coffee,
and the customer is always right.

MAZEN
I send my son to Beirut for
education, and he comes back home
thinking he is smarter than me! So,
have you brought some diamonds?

SADIQ
He's my customer, Father.

MAZEN
So he is, and I have other things
to do.

Mazen stands aside.

Sadiq and Cooper sit at the table, and Cooper passes him two stones which Sadiq rubs with a chamois. He weighs them, then perching one on the tip of his fingers, examines it with an eye loupe as he slowly rotates it.

Cooper becomes entranced by how nimbly Sadiq turns the stone.

SADIQ
Where did you get these?

COOPER
They're legal.

Sadiq starts to examine the second stone.

SADIQ
There are no legal diamonds in
Lalanga. Not according to the
United Nations.

COOPER
The United Nations doesn't pay my
rent.

Sadiq pushes the stones across the table to Cooper.

SADIQ
They both have impurities.

Cooper pushes them right back.

COOPER
All diamonds have impurities. That's
why you have diamond cutters.

Again Sadiq pushes the stones across the table.

SADIQ
These have too many fracture lines.

Mazen reaches around his son to pick them up.

MAZEN
Cooper is a good customer.

SADIQ
But Father-

MAZEN
There's a good market for diamonds
now, even for small ones.

He steps into the cage, places the two stones in the safe, and
grabs a wad of bills from a cashbox.

Sadiq looks annoyed, and Cooper gives him an encouraging smile
while he says to Mazen:

COOPER
Yeah? Who's buying?

Mazen hands him the wad of bills.

MAZEN
Buyers are buying. Come back when
you have more diamonds, so Sadiq
can practice his English.

COOPER
His English is already perfect.

MAZEN
He can always improve.

They shake hands, and then he shakes Sadiq's hand.

SADIQ
Thank you, Mr. Chance.

COOPER
It's Cooper. Let's be friends.

EXT. WHARF - TWILIGHT

Cooper walks past the *African Lady*. The two crewmen watch
him. He hears loud music from below-decks.

EXT. COOPER'S BUILDING - NIGHT

The back yard of a two-storey stucco building. A large mango tree looms over it. The sky is ghostly with moonlight.

Cooper enters through a gate. He looks around and finds a mango on the ground. Pulling a knife from his boot, he peels it, and hungrily eats it as he mounts the outside steps.

INT. COOPER'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's a large room, white in the moonlight, with a corner kitchen. Cooper enters and flicks a switch. Nothing comes on.

COOPER

Fuck.

He crosses to his bed, flicks another switch and looks at the ceiling fan - which doesn't start to turn.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Fuck it all.

He tosses out the mango pit, rinses off his knife, takes a beer from the mini-fridge. He pops its top which rolls away.

He stacks his money on a bedside table, sets down his beer, and starts to undress. When he's naked he sits on the bed to pull off his boots, and rolls onto his back.

He reaches for his beer and sees the bottle cap on the floor. Picking it up, he balances it on his fingertips just as Sadiq had balance the diamond, and slowly turns it.

INSERT - COOPER'S IMAGINATION

Cooper imagines that he's looking at Sadiq's fingers again, the bottle cap becomes a diamond, and just past his hand, he visualizes Sadiq sitting there - dark, blue-eyed, beautiful.

BACK TO SCENE

With his free hand, Cooper reaches down and touches himself.

INT. INDIRA PHARMACY - NEXT MORNING

A bell tinkles when Cooper enters.

The PHARMACIST and his WIFE, both Indians, glance up. The wife, who is helping a customer, frowns when she sees him.

Cooper approaches the counter passing an assortment of exotic medicinal products: skins, herbs, murky things. The pharmacist gives him a pleasant smile.

PHARMACIST

It's a good morning, Mister Cooper.

COOPER

It seems a lot like yesterday - hot
and miserable.

PHARMACIST

It's our weather.

COOPER

Like I said.

PHARMACIST

Will that be the usual dozen rubbers?

His wife shoots them both a reproachful look.

COOPER

Yeah, I like to count my women by the
dozens.

Cooper gives the woman a big smile while her husband sets a
box on the counter and counts out condoms.

PHARMACIST

Are all Americans so vigorous?

He looks mournfully at his wife: it's been a long time since
they used a dozen condoms.

Cooper stuffs the slippery packets into his pockets, which are
already filled with wads of money.

COOPER

Yeah, we're a fucking empire.

He leaves some money on the counter and walks out.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - DAY

He's only steps from the pharmacy when he hears cries of
alarm and gunfire from around a corner. Everyone on the
street disappears except Cooper.

He presses himself against a building and edges forward.

A ragtag band of REBELS suddenly appears dragging two PRISONERS.
When they see Cooper, they point their assorted weapons at him.

Their leader - JOSEF NIMWE, 40s, bearded, wearing a gold chain
and mirror sunglasses - signals his men to lower their weapons.

As they do, Nimwe lifts his own rifle to aim squarely at
Cooper's chest. His trigger finger tightens.

When a long moment goes by and he doesn't shoot, his men start
to glance at each other: *What's happening?*

Suddenly Nimwe swings his rifle up and fires into the air.

His men shoot rounds into the sky, too, as the terrified prisoners cower on the ground. Shells bounce off them.

Nimwe quells his men.

REBEL LEADER

Today is your lucky day, white man.
Today you meet Josef Nimwe, the next
President of Lalanga. I am Lalanga's
future!

His men shoot more rounds into the air.

COOPER

(referring to prisoners)
What about these guys? Can they have a
lucky day, too?

JOSEF NIMWE

You want to trade your lucky day for
them?

Cooper doesn't respond, and Nimwe smirks and gestures for his men to move along. The prisoners look pleadingly at Cooper as they are marched off.

Cooper finally has a chance to look around the corner.

He sees two GRANNIES trying to pull a man's body out of the street. The instant they see Cooper, they run off squawking.

Cooper walks to the body, squats and swats away flies. He takes the man's pulse while women observe him from windows and doors.

He takes off his shirt and pulls it through his belt, and heaves the dead man over his shoulder. Staggering under the weight, he manages to stand up and looks around expectantly.

No one says or does anything.

Finally Cooper starts to turn slowly in a circle with the dead man's feet sticking out like a dial. When they're pointing at his house, his WIDOW steps outside.

Cooper carries the body inside.

INT. DEAD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

The other women hiding in the house move out of his way. There's not much in it except a mat and two simple chairs.

Cooper kneels on the floor, and rolls the body onto the floor, catching its head so it doesn't hit too hard.

The widow follows him inside, anguished and choking back sobs.

Cooper slips back outside. His bare back is covered with blood.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - DAY

Cooper walks away from the house, and pauses when he hears the woman's first long wail.

EXT. WHARF - DAY

Cooper walks along noticing the debris in the water, and stops when he comes to a relatively cleaner spot. It's only a short distance to where the *African Lady* is docked up. Crewman #2, smoking on the deck, watches him.

Cooper drops his shirt on the wharf, and hanging onto a short dock ladder, splashes water on his back. He touches his back to see if he's clean - his fingers are still bloody.

He takes off his boots and places them next to the ladder.

COOPER
(to Crewman #2)
HEY! WILL YOU WATCH MY STUFF?

The crewman barely nods an acknowledgement.

Cooper stuffs his money and condoms deeper into his pockets and jumps into the water. Sinking feet first, he thrashes around trying to get the blood off him.

When he floats to a stop, he kicks towards the surface but he's suddenly caught in a rip current. He tries to fight it and can't as he's dragged down.

He's thrown against the seawall, and puts his feet against it to propel himself to the surface.

When he surfaces, he hears a GUNSHOT.

A YOUNG BOY is running down the wharf with Cooper's boots, one in each hand. He's so small he can barely carry them.

Crewman #2, holding a pistol, is aiming for the boy.

COOPER (CONT'D)
DON'T SHOOT HIM!

Other children have appeared, and they cheer the boy on. A few mimic Cooper.

CHILDREN
Don't shoot him! Don't shoot him!

The crewman takes a shot.

Dust explodes between the boy's feet and the children cheer.

COOPER
NO! DON'T SHOOT!

CHILDREN
No! Don't shoot!

Cooper scrambles up the ladder to the wharf.

The boy is almost at a corner that he can duck around.

Crewman #2 raises his gun to aim squarely for the boy's back.

COOPER
HE'LL HIT YOU THIS TIME!

The boy drops the boots, his little legs pumping hard to get around the corner. He does, just as the crewman fires and blows off a chunk of stucco where the boy had been.

The children cheer.

Cooper grabs his shirt and sprints for his boots.

Other boys race for them, too, and one beats Cooper, but he only jumps over the boots with his arms raised victoriously. Again the children cheer wildly.

Cooper arrives, panting, grabs his boots.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You little shit.

He checks his boots for his knife. It's still there.

He looks up, sees Crewman #2 staring at him. Cooper lifts his boots over his head, saying under his breath:

COOPER (CONT'D)
Fuck you, too.

EXT. DIAMOND ARCADE - DAY

Cooper puts on his shirt as he steps onto the boardwalk. He tries to appear nonchalant as he approaches Al-Basma Diamonds.

Checking his appearance in a window, he almost bumps into Mazen when he steps outside.

MAZEN
Sabah al-khair, Cooper!

COOPER
Sabah il-noor.

Mazen holds out a pack of cigarettes, which Cooper waves off.

MAZEN
You Americans drink coffee but do not smoke. You have many strange habits.

Mazen tries to light a cigarette but there's a breeze. He looks up to see storm clouds. He finally manages to light it by cupping his hand.

MAZEN (CONT'D)
Are your shorts wet?

COOPER
I went for a swim.

MAZEN
In your clothes?

COOPER
I was afraid they'd be stolen.

MAZEN
Things used to be different here.

Mazen takes a thoughtful drag on his cigarette.

MAZEN (CONT'D)
We shall see better times again,
and soon - now that we have oil.

COOPER
That rumor travels fast.

MAZEN
One of the biggest reserves in the
world!

COOPER
That should be good for business.

MAZEN
It already has been.

Mazen stubs out his half-cigarette and saves it.

MAZEN (CONT'D)
So come inside and show me your
diamonds.

COOPER
That'll have to be tomorrow. It's
not like I keep a stash at home.
I thought, uh, that Sadiq might
want to practice his English.

Mazen brightens noticeably.

MAZEN
Now every morning Sadiq goes to the
hammam! Before he went to Beirut,
he never wanted to go, and now he
won't stay away!

COOPER

So maybe Beirut wasn't such a good idea?

MAZEN

Of course it was a good idea! Sadiq has become a man! But I don't know why foreigners insist to call our hammam a Turkish bath when they are an Arab tradition.

EXT. WHARF - MARKET - DAY

Cooper walks back along the wharf. A storm is blowing in, and he helps a woman roll up a straw mat being whiplashed by the wind. When their knuckles touch, she smiles - her mouth is stained bright red - and she presses something into his hand.

He opens his hand to a small 'package' made from a leaf.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - DAY

Cooper is examining the leaf's contents when he turns a corner and runs into Sadiq outside the Indira Pharmacy. His hair is wet and plastered to his forehead.

COOPER

Sadiq?

SADIQ

Kupah?

COOPER

That's close enough. Why do you have an English accent?

SADIQ

I had an English nanny when I was growing up.

COOPER

You must be coming from the hammam.

SADIQ

Do you know our baths?

COOPER

I know they are an Arab tradition, not a Turkish one.

SADIQ

Obviously you have spoken with my father!

COOPER

He's waiting for you at the shop.

SADIQ
My friend needed something.

They glance into the pharmacy where MUNIR - early 20s, dark-complected, with a ragged pink scar that disappears under his beard - stands at the counter.

The pharmacist pulls out the box of condoms, and as he does, he catches Cooper's eye and winks at him.

Munir glances around, sees them watching him. He frowns, and turns back and says something sharp to the pharmacist.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
It's a couple of streets over, just off the main road.

COOPER
What is?

SADIQ
The hamman. You can't miss its stone arch.

COOPER
Why bother going to a steam bath when we live in one?

SADIQ
There is the cold pool.

COOPER
(suddenly interested)
The cold pool?

SADIQ
It's so cold, you can't stay in it for more than a minute.

COOPER
It sounds a lot better than sweating.

SADIQ
Americans always tip too much, when almost nothing is enough.

COOPER
That won't be my problem.

Munir comes outside. He has a pronounced limp.

SADIQ
(to Munir; in Arabic and subtitled)
Mr. Chance is one of my father's customers.
(MORE)

SADIQ (CONT'D)
 (to Cooper)
 This is my friend Munir.

They shake hands.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
 Munir is visiting from Beirut.

COOPER
 It's a long way to come for a
 visit, especially when you end up
 in Langatown.

Munir scowls at the leafy package in Cooper's hand.

MUNIR
 Is that betel nut?

COOPER
 I think so.

MUNIR
 Do you chew it?

COOPER
 Not yet. Do you want it?

Munir rears back.

MUNIR
 No!
 (to Sadiq; in Arabic)
 I am going!

He limps off.

COOPER
 I guess he doesn't like betel nut.

SADIQ
 It's *haram*.

Cooper doesn't understand.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
 Munir is very devout. He doesn't
 approve of drugs.

COOPER
 It's a drug?

SADIQ
 The natives chew it so they won't
 feel hungry.

COOPER
 Really? Where can I get a lot of
 it?

SADIQ
You're funny, Cooper.

COOPER
No I'm not. I'm hungry!

There's thunder, and they look up at the advancing clouds.

SADIQ
I suppose I should return to the
shop before the rains come.

COOPER
I suppose I should get someplace too.

SADIQ
Bring your diamonds in the
afternoon, when my father is gone.

Sadiq touches his heart and hurries off. Catching up with
Munir, he steers him around a corner and out of sight.

Cooper touches his heart.

EXT. HAMMAM - DAY

Cooper walks past the hammam's stone arch, doubles back, stands
on the corner of the main street where he can observe it without
being noticed. As he does, he nibbles on the betel nut.

EXT. HAMMAM - LATER

Cooper is observing his bright red teeth in a shop window when a
black man with a baseball cap exits the hammam. His cap blows
off, and Cooper recognizes Sam Brown.

The CIA man chases after his cap, and Cooper walks off in the
opposite direction as the skies open up and pour rain.

INT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

As soon as Cooper enters the bar, a BOY tugs on his shirt.

BOY
You buy me a beer, mister?

COOPER
No money.

BOY
Juma give you credit.

COOPER
I'm already over my limit.

BOY
You want me? I come cheap-cheap.

COOPER
Not today.

BOY
Tomorrow?

COOPER
Not ever.

Cooper slides onto the bar stool.

COOPER (CONT'D)
(to Juma)
A glass of ice with a large splash of
water.

JUMA
You pay for water.

COOPER
So give me another reason to love this
dump.

Cooper glances around, sees Lulay with a JOHN in a booth.

Juma delivers his water and Cooper rolls the glass on his forehead. Then he lifts the glass over his head, creates a sieve with his fingers, and douses himself with ice water.

He shivers, and in the mirror sees Lulay laughing at him.

Cooper hands his glass back to Juma.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Now add the gin.

JUMA
I don't know a crazier white man.

Sam Brown slides onto the next bar stool.

COOPER
I wasn't saving that seat for you.

SAM BROWN
(facetiously)
Oh you weren't? Then where is he?

Instantly Cooper's on his feet lifting Sam Brown by his collar.

COOPER
What exactly are you trying to imply?

The bar falls silent. The jukebox is between songs, and the only sound is the wheezing ice machine.

Cooper glances at Lulay in the mirror. She's frightened.

Juma who shakes his head. *No trouble.*

Cooper leans right into Sam Brown's face, looking ready to bite him. Then he flashes him a madman's smile of betel-red teeth.

He sets Sam Brown back on his stool and a new song starts.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You said you'd buy me a drink.

Sam Brown nods at Juma, who splashes more gin into his glass.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Make that a double.

Juma pours another shot, and Cooper takes a long swallow.

COOPER (CONT'D)
So what's this 'business' you want to talk about?

SAM BROWN
I hear you're a good shot.

COOPER
How would you know?

SAM BROWN
It's my job to know.

COOPER
Yeah? What is your job?

SAM BROWN
I'm a recruiter.

COOPER
For Blackwing?

SAM BROWN
For another outfit.

COOPER
What's it matter? You guys can all go fuck yourselves.

SAM BROWN
You'd be fighting for your country.

COOPER
You almost make it sound patriotic.

SAM BROWN
It's more patriotic than deserting.

COOPER

In Fallujah I was raiding houses side-by-side with some of the same guys who eventually showed up here. If we weren't fighting for our country, who were we fighting for?

SAM BROWN

They were fighting for a paycheck.

COOPER

Yeah, I figured that out was when they took off and left me sweating on the tarmac.

SAM BROWN

You could have left with them.

COOPER

And end up in the brig? No thanks. I've been locked up enough times.

SAM BROWN

What if I could promise no jail time?

COOPER

You can promise me anything you want, it doesn't mean it's not a lie. But I'll tell you what is true: I'm tired of fighting other people's lousy wars. Uncle Sam's lousy wars. Colonel Diamond's lousy wars. I got my own lousy war to fight. I got Cooper's war.

Through the mirror, Cooper sees Lulay's john stumble off to the men's room. He knocks back the rest of his drink, gets up and claps Sam Brown on the back.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Sorry, but you got my name off the wrong mailing list.

Cooper slips into the booth opposite Lulay.

LULAY

I'm busy.

COOPER

I'll leave when he comes back.

LULAY

Juma makes me pay if you scare him away.

COOPER

I'll pay Juma.

He pulls out a fistful of condoms and presses them on Lulay.

LULAY
You crazy, Cooper! Where am I going to
put all those right now?

COOPER
I don't want you running out.

LULAY
I still got some left.

COOPER
You shouldn't.

LULAY
I wash them out.

COOPER
They're not intended to be recycled.
Here, take at least two. If he's
drunk, he'll try to do it twice.

Lulay tucks two condoms into her halter top.

LULAY
He's too drunk to do it twice. Now go
away!

As Cooper stuffs the rest of the condoms back into a pocket, one
slips under the table and he dives for it.

LULAY (CONT'D)
Hurry, Cooper!

Cooper searches for the condom.

LULAY (CONT'D)
He's coming back!

Just as the john arrives, Cooper pops up from under the table.

COOPER
Eureka!

The john looks suspiciously between Lulay and Cooper.

JOHN
(to Lulay; in African dialect
and subtitled)
Who is this asshole?

Cooper stands up behind the john, who swings around ready to
take Cooper on - until he sees how much bigger he is.

Cooper slaps the condom into the man's hand.

COOPER

You make her sick with the skinny-skinny, and I'll find your ugly fucking face and fucking kill-kill you.

EXT. THE MINING PAN - NIGHT

Cooper comes outside. He's smiling, self-satisfied.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - NIGHT

Cooper climbs a hill following a narrow street with houses pressed together. Their lights cast spooky shadows.

Dogs growl at him, sometimes unseen, and an especially menacing one paces in a pool of light as Cooper approaches. It lunges at Cooper, who throws up an arm to protect himself.

The dog snaps at him before a chain yanks it back.

Cooper gives the dog a wide berth.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Leaving the cramped neighborhood, Cooper enters a broad, cleared area at the top of the hill. In its middle is a church with a soaring, brilliantly-lit steeple.

He enters a white picket fence.

In the churchyard, families are camped everywhere, and they move out of Cooper's way as he walks the concrete path to the church's steps.

As he does, he sniffs cooking food, and tries to discreetly offer money to a WOMAN for a piece of grilled chicken. Immediately he's accosted by people tempting him with grilled anything.

The woman exchanges the bills in Cooper's hand with a wing. He indicates that he'd prefer a drumstick, and she points to her children.

He bites down on the wing, smiling at her.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The church is lit by candlelight. There are a few scattered worshipers, some praying noisily.

Cooper stands in the entrance, chewing the wing down to its bones. Seeing no place to discard them, he sets them on a ledge.

He wipes his fingers on his shorts and starts up the center aisle. It's shadowy and he can't always see who is sitting in the pews. He's almost at the altar when:

INNOCENCE (O.S.)
Is that you, American?

COOPER
Damn it, Innocence! Do I smell that bad?

Cooper slips into the pew beside him. INNOCENCE, 15, skinny, wears a *Chicago Cubs* T-shirt. His eyes are opaque - he's blind.

INNOCENCE
I said you smell different, not bad.
You come back quick-quick this time.

COOPER
Market conditions have improved.

INNOCENCE
Then my prices go up.

COOPER
Don't press your luck. Do you have any stones?

INNOCENCE
Janjay has not come home tonight.

Cooper puts a comforting hand on the boy's shoulder.

COOPER
I'm sure she'll be okay.

INNOCENCE
I pray for her.

COOPER
While you're at it, pray she finds more diamonds. I'll come back tomorrow.

Cooper pats the boy's shoulder again and leaves the pew.

At the entrance, he reaches for the bones. They're gone.

Cooper hears a distinct *Crunch!* and a CRIPPLED BOY leaning on a cane steps into the candlelight. He's chewing on them

The crippled boy's brooding gaze follows Cooper out the church.

INT. COOPER'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Cooper, asleep, slaps at a mosquito and wakes himself up. He rolls over and looks at the ceiling fan. It's not moving.

COOPER

Fuck.

The mosquito buzzes him again, he catches it, and opens his palm to reveal a bloody patch. Rolling out of bed, he goes into the

BATHROOM

where he steps into the shower and turns on only cold water.

INT. COOPER'S BATHROOM - LATER

Cooper, enjoying letting the water run over him, hears a pounding on the ceiling downstairs.

LANDLADY'S VOICE (O.S.)
TOO LONG SHOWER, AMERICAN!

COOPER
Yeah, yeah, yeah...

He turns off the water.

COOPER (CONT'D)
As if there's not enough water in this swamp.

Without drying off, he returns to the

MAIN ROOM

and starts to get dressed.

EXT. WHARF - DAY

Cooper wanders past food vendors selling everything from fried bugs to boiled goat heads. He buys an ear of corn, and is gnawing on it when he passes a newspaper stand and notices the headline: "EXPERTS CONFIRM HUGE OIL DISCOVERY".

He tries to read the story until a VENDOR covers the paper with a square of cardboard.

VENDOR
You pay for look-look.

EXT. DIAMOND ARCADE - DAY

Cooper stands where he can observe Al-Basma Diamonds without being seen. Its door is ajar, but he can't see who is inside.

When Mazen comes out to smoke a cigarette, Cooper walks off.

EXT. HAMMAM - DAY

Cooper watches the hammam's entrance from his spot on the busy street.

A VERY OLD MAN comes up. He assesses the street, and indicates to Cooper he'd like his help.

He takes Cooper's arm, who negotiates their way across the street. Once there, the old man keeps hold of him, and steers them through the hammam's stone archway and into a

SMALL COURTYARD

with tiled walls and a fountain.

They go up to a ticket booth. The old man pays and presses a ticket into Cooper's hand, who tries to hand it back.

VERY OLD MAN
You would insult me after helping
me? Please, you come this way.

INT. HAMMAM - DRESSING AREA - DAY

They enter an ancient wooden door, and AHMED, a teenager wearing vanilla-colored shirt and shorts, approaches them.

VERY OLD MAN
Ahmed will help you.

The old man shuffles off, and Ahmed smiles at Cooper.

AHMED
I show you.

He leads Cooper through a warren of dressing cubicles separated by gauzy curtains. In some, men lying on cots watch them go by.

At a vacant cubicle, Ahmed hands Cooper a triangular loincloth with long strings dangling from each point.

AHMED (CONT'D)
You put this on.

Cooper holds it up by a string.

COOPER
What is it?

Ahmed gives him another big smile, and turns to leave.

Cooper notices the metal locker in the cubicle.

COOPER (CONT'D)
There's no lock?

ATTENDANT

No problem, I see everything.

He leaves, and Cooper starts to undress.

INT. HAMMAM - DRESSING AREA - LATER

Cooper emerges from his cubicle still adjusting the knots on his loincloth, which is all botched up. Ahmed fights back a laugh.

He leads Cooper to a door that, when he opens it, emits a steam cloud. Cooper enters the

STEAM BATH

where, when his eyes adjust, he sees men sprawled out on tiled bleachers that climb up the walls. Some rest against each other, others stretch. Around the floor, masseurs rub down their clients. From over his shoulder Cooper hears:

MASSEUR (O.S.)

You take massage, Mistuh?

Cooper turns to the man and shakes his head no. He feels awkward - men are looking at him - and he looks for an exit.

Pushing through a second door, he enters the

GRAND PAVILION

with a large central pool under a dome. Smaller pools are scattered around it. All the pools are sapphire blue.

Cooper explores the pavilion, eventually coming to a pool in a corner. The men lounging around it exchange amused looks.

A YOUNG MAN resembling Sadiq sits on its edge, his legs dangling in the water. Another youth's head bobs between them.

COOPER

(under his breath)

Sadiq?

He can't make out what's happening until the young man leans back. That's when Cooper sees their sexual act.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Sadiq?!

The young man turns to look at Cooper.

It's not Sadiq, but the young man very closely resembles him.

Cooper flees and returns to the

DRESSING CUBICLES

where Ahmed looks at him in surprise.

AHMED
Mister is finished already?

COOPER
Finished and outta here.

AHMED
I show you-

COOPER
I know my way.

Cooper brushes past him, but he's soon lost in the middle of the cubicles.

Ahmed comes to his rescue.

EXT. HAMMAM - DAY

Cooper exits the stone arch and looks lost, troubled, uncertain what to do.

INSERT - COOPER'S IMAGINATION

The young man at the edge of the pool turns his head, and he morphs into Sadiq.

BACK TO SCENE

Cooper makes a decision, and starts to run.

EXT. DIAMOND ARCADE - DAY

Cooper stops running when he reaches the diamond arcade. He walks past Al-Basma Diamonds, trying to see inside but can't because of the sun's glare on the window. He finds a spot where he can observe the shop.

When Mazen steps outside to have a smoke, Cooper is disappointed. He's about to leave when Sadiq comes out and hands his father an ashtray.

Cooper closes his eyes, and sighs thankfully.

COOPER
It wasn't you. You couldn't have
beat me here.

INT. AUNTIE'S JUNK-IT SHOP - DAY

Cooper enters a shop that's a jumble of secondhand junk.

AUNTIE, obese and wearing a headdress shaped like a UFO, sits behind the counter. She holds a fan, and a parrot sitting on her shoulder squawks loudly.

COOPER
Squaaawk! Hello, Auntie.

AUNTIE
Hello, American. You take your time to look-look. Or is it only a postcard you want today?

COOPER
Unless you have books?

AUNTIE
I'm not running a library.

Auntie tugs one of several colored lengths of twine resting on the counter, which opens a drawer she can reach into without getting up. She hands him a half dozen postcards.

WOMAN
There's only one unwritten one.

Cooper finds the 'unwritten' postcard and turns it over. It's a picture of an Arab riding a camel across dunes.

COOPER
Where is this?

Auntie studies it, hands it back.

AUNTIE
Somewhere else.

Cooper leaves money on the counter, and the parrot squawks as he walks out.

INT. THE MINING PAN BAR - DAY

Cooper slides onto a bar stool.

COOPER
Make that a beer, will ya?

Juma hands a joint back to a customer, and popping the top off a bottle, slides it to him. Cooper downs it. As he does, he glances in the mirror and sees two NEW GIRLS huddled in a booth.

He pushes the bottle back across the bar.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Make that two. And let me borrow your pen.

Juma looks aggrieved.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Don't worry, I'll pay for the ink.

Juma gives him a second beer.

JUMA
It was a white man who stole my
last one.

COOPER
We white people have a habit of
doing that with other people's
pens. Maybe that'll stop with text
messaging.

Juma sets aside the pistol that he keeps on top of his cash box.

COOPER (CONT'D)
When was the last time you used that?

JUMA
The last time I had to.

The barman takes a pen from the cashbox, hands it to Cooper.

Two oilmen enter, and Cooper watches them in the mirror. One is
the pockmarked oilman. They spot the two girls.

POCKMARKED OILMAN
Looks like Juma's got himself a couple
of new virgins. Hey Juma, bring us a
bottle of your best rot gut!

They squeeze into the booth with the girls.

Cooper pulls out his postcard and examines the picture of the
Arab on the camel. Juma sees it.

JUMA
You planning a trip there.

COOPER
Not unless it snows.

JUMA
Why is it that you always want to
be cold?

COOPER
It probably has something to do
with being locked up in hot closets
as a kid.

JUMA
Your parents did that?

COOPER
I didn't have parents, only a
father.

JUMA
You had a mother once.

The barman walks off to deliver the bottle of rot gut.

Cooper turns over the postcard, and starts to write.

INSERT - CLOSE-UP OF COOPER WRITING

COOPER (V.O.)
Hey there Kid Sis...

COOPER'S IMAGINATION - HIS SISTER READS HIS POSTCARD

BECKY, 16, sitting cross-legged on her bed and absently twisting her hair, pops bubblegum while reading his card.

COOPER (V.O.)
...I'm still fighting the bad guys
down here, but I've made a friend, an
Arab. Not the man on the camel! I
promise I'll be on the first flight
home after Mission Accomplished.
Coops.

BACK TO SCENE

When Cooper finishes writing, he glances up and sees Lulay popping bubblegum while absently twisting her hair. He's momentarily transfixed by her.

He hears a glass get knocked over and glances at the oilmen.

POCKMARKED OILMAN
What's the matter, honey, haven't you
ever touched a man down there before?

He tries to force one of the girls to touch him.

POCKMARKED OILMAN (CONT'D)
You better get friendlier real
fast!

Instantly Cooper is on his feet, crossing to the booth.

Lulay intercepts him.

LULAY
You stop here, Cooper.

COOPER
He's going to hurt that girl.

LULAY

That's Juma's trouble and he don't
want your trouble too.

Cooper glances between the barman, who's watching him warily,
and the two oilmen pulling the girls out of the booth.

LULAY (CONT'D)

Juma will send you away! How can you
help me then?

The pockmarked oilman, his arm slung over a girl, plunks down
the bottle of rot gut on the bar.

OILMAN

Don't let anyone steal that.

He gives Cooper a look of 'What the fuck do you want?'

Lulay holds onto Cooper's arm so he can't answer with his fist.

The oilmen and girls disappear behind the beaded curtain.

Lulay drags Cooper back to the bar, where Juma slides him
another beer.

COOPER

Looks like Lulay's doubling as your
bouncer.

JUMA

I don't need a bouncer when I don't
allow trouble in the first place.

COOPER

I don't recall passing an admissions
test.

JUMA

The test is if I let you stay.

Cooper looks around, taking in the whole tawdry scene.

COOPER

You can send me anyplace, if it means
leaving this dump.

LULAY

I go anyplace with you, Cooper.

COOPER

I don't have anyplace to go except my
room. Otherwise I promise, I'd take
you with me.

LULAY

Men promise lies.

COOPER
When have I lied to you?

LULAY
You will.

COOPER
I won't, and that's a Cooper promise.

Lulay presses herself against his knees.

LULAY
You buy me from Juma.

COOPER
Buy you? No can do. We had a Civil War
to abolish slavery.

LULAY
You in Africa, Cooper. I am Juma's
now.

COOPER
Hey, Juma, how much you want for
Lulay? Name your price!

The barman scowls at Lulay, who presses herself against Cooper's
knee, and runs her hands seductively up his thigh.

LULAY
I know you want Lulay.

He slaps her hands away.

COOPER
Stop it.

She tries to touch him anywhere, and they grapple.

LULAY
You buy me, Cooper! I give you
Lulay every day!

She anchors a hand in his pocket and he pulls it out. She's
gripping condoms and they scatter on the bar.

COOPER
Quit acting crazy!

LULAY
They making Lulay disappear!

He finally manages to put a a hand on her forehead and holds
her at arms length. Her little arms impotently flail the air.

LULAY (CONT'D)
Save me Cooper!

COOPER
STOP IT!

She doesn't stop, and Cooper, with his free hand, throws a condom at her and then another, shouting 'Stop it!'

Lulay starts to sob, her arms slow down, and he lets her go. She stays in place, arms still moving and crying.

He flees the bar.

EXT. WHARF - NEXT MORNING

Cooper buys samosas from a vendor, and eating them, watches a crane off-load crates from a barge that are marked with GlobOil's logo. Armed oilmen oversee the operation.

EXT. DIAMOND ARCADE - DAY

Cooper walks along the boardwalk. The shops are all closed.

He reaches Al-Basma Diamonds and it's closed too. He looks puzzled, then notices the call to prayer in the distance.

EXT. ARAB QUARTER - DAY

Cooper passes through a tall gate to enter a neighborhood of adobe houses. The streets are empty.

He turns a corner and sees a mosque's minaret. As he approaches it, the call to prayer ends and a mullah's sermon begins.

EXT. MOSQUE - DAY

Cooper enters the dirt yard. Women, sitting under trees, stare at him as he enters. He smiles nervously, and steps up to the mosque's open doors.

Inside, at a cue from the mullah, the men repeatedly touch their foreheads to the ground, roaring:

MEN
Allah akbar! Allah akbar!

An OLD GRANNY comes up, cackling and pointing at Cooper's boots. He tries to make her understand that he's not going inside, but she cackles even louder, pointing to a shoe rack.

COOPER
All right, all right...

He dances on one leg then the other to pull off his boots and gives them to her.

She slaps a paper cap on his head and propels him inside.

INT. MOSQUE - DAY

Cooper faces the backsides of the men uncertain what to do. The old granny shoos him along to join the end of a row of men.

Almost as he soon as he does, prayers are over. The men stand and brush off their knees. Cooper scrambles to his feet and aims for the door. Behind him he hears:

SADIQ (O.S.)

Kupah?

He turns to see Sadiq. Munir is close behind him.

SADIQ (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

COOPER

I, uh,... I heard the call to prayer and I was curious. That sounds crazy, doesn't it?

SADIQ

Why not? Maybe you'll convert.

COOPER

I don't expect that to happen.

MUNIR

Then you shouldn't be here. It's an offense to mock Allah!

SADIQ

(in Arabic)

Please, Munir, not in here.

MUNIR

We should speak English for your American friend.

COOPER

I wasn't trying to mock anyone.

MUNIR

You are wearing a soldier's shirt, aren't you?

COOPER

It was a soldier's shirt. Now it's only half a shirt and it's all mine.

MUNIR

And what is the business of American soldiers? To destroy mosques, isn't it?!

Mazen joins them.

MAZEN

What is this talk about destroying the mosque? I should hope that is something we don't have to worry about here in Lalanga. We may be a poor country, but we are a peaceful one, praise Allah.

SADIQ

We were only talking politics, father.

MAZEN

(to Cooper)

That's all he's talked about since returning home, while ignoring his mother's suggestions for a wife!

SADIQ

Father!

MAZEN

I'm only saying, you are old enough to marry, and if you don't soon, your urges will get the better of you. It's true for all you young men.

MUNIR

A mosque is no place to be speaking of urges!

Mazen regards him coldly.

MAZEN

When you are older, you might remember it as the only place where you could speak of urges without some woman eavesdropping on your man's business.

Munir clenches his jaw, his eyes flash angrily, and he looks at Sadiq for support, which he doesn't get. He limps off.

SADIQ

You didn't have to provoke him.

MAZEN

Your friend has no sense of humor.

SADIQ

He's been injured.

MAZEN

Your friend may use his injury to excuse his many shortcomings, but it is not excusable to tell me what I can say inside my own mosque.

Sadiq, exasperated, looks at Cooper. *Has he ever met a more stubborn man?* Then he sees that Munir is almost at the door.

SADIQ

I should go, he gets lost easily.

He gives Cooper a meaningful look before chasing after Munir, and puts a hand on Munir's shoulder as they walk out.

MAZEN

My son has always been so impressionable.

(beat)

His friend says he's come to Lalanga for a visit. Who comes to Lalanga for a visit?

COOPER

A close friend.

MAZEN

Some friends should not be brought home.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cooper enters the gate and the crippled boy watches him go up the steps.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cooper approaches the altar.

INNOCENCE (O.S.)

You come back fast-fast this time, American.

He peers into the pews, spots the Innocence, slips in beside him.

COOPER

Did Janjay find more diamonds?

INNOCENCE

Did you pray?

COOPER

Does praying for the Hope Diamond count?

INNOCENCE

Everybody prays for hope.

COOPER

I was talking about diamonds bigger than watermelons.

INNOCENCE
Are these big enough?

Innocence shows him two stones.

Cooper admires them, whistling softly.

COOPER
Yeah, those'll do. How much?

The boy spreads his thumb and index finger as wide as he can.

COOPER (CONT'D)
What?!

INNOCENCE
You said market conditions have improved.

COOPER
I said 'improved' not gone crazy!

He compresses the boy's fingers and stuffs a wad of bills between them.

COOPER (CONT'D)
That's my offer.

Innocence pinches the bills, and shakes his head.

INNOCENCE
Those are big stones, American.

Cooper frowns, adds more bills to the wad.

INNOCENCE (CONT'D)
You are a rich man, American.

COOPER
Looks like you've got all the money now.

INNOCENCE
You stay in Lalanga, you get rich.
That's why the white man always comes back.

COOPER
Not this white man. When I get outta here, I'm outta here.

He takes the blind boy's hand and shakes it.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Thanks, Innocence, and thank Janjay.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Innocence stands in the doorway silhouetted in candlelight as Cooper makes his way to the white picket gate.

An enormous fat man - the CHIEF OF POLICE - wearing a starched white uniform and sunglasses, enters. People scramble out of his way.

He's followed by the crippled boy who waves his crutch in the general direction of Cooper and the church.

Cooper glances back. Innocence has disappeared.

The Police Chief tips the crippled boy, who hobbles off.

LITTLE EARS, a second cop as skinny as the Police Chief is fat, steps out from behind his boss. He's pointing a gun at Cooper.

The Police Chief stretches out a hand.

POLICE CHIEF

ID.

Cooper pulls a beat-up passport from his back pocket.

COOPER

Is there a problem?

The Police Chief struggles to read it through his sunglasses.

POLICE CHIEF

You are Mister Cooper?

COOPER

The name's Chance. Cooper Chance.

The policeman pockets his passport.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Hey! That's mine!

POLICE CHIEF

What do you do inside the church?

COOPER

Pray. What do you do inside a church?

POLICE CHIEF

Empty your pockets.

COOPER

I have a right to pray without being hassled. It's in the Geneva Accords.
 (patting himself down)
 Beside, there's nothing in my pockets except holes.

The Police Chief signals Little Ears to search Cooper. As he does, he keeps a gun loosely pointed at Cooper. His ears are not much more than tiny nubs, and he has a mouthful of decapitated teeth stained red from betel nut.

With a staccato laugh, Little Ears announces that he's felt something in Cooper's pockets.

Cooper knocks his gun away and sends him sprawling.

The Police Chief pulls a gun on him.

POLICE CHIEF
Take them out.

Cooper does, displaying a rough stone in each palm.

Little Ears snatches the diamonds and scoots to a safe distance.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)
You are under arrest, Mister Cooper.

COOPER
The name's Chance, and what the fuck for?

POLICE CHIEF
Stealing.

COOPER
Who did I steal from?

POLICE CHIEF
Colonel Diamond.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The Police Chief has to drive slowly because of potholes. Cooper is in the back seat. People peer into the car, pressing their unfriendly faces against the windows.

COOPER
I've got rights under the Geneva Accords.

Little Ears snickers, barely able to contain himself.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You're required to call the American Embassy and tell them where you're taking me.

Little Ears heehaws.

LITTLE EARS
We're taking you to Abu Ghraib!

Suddenly the car lurches over a curb outside a building riddled with bullet holes. A sign identifies it as a police station.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

As they enter, the NIGHT DUTY OFFICER, relaxing at his desk, drops his feet to the floor.

The people in the waiting room look up at the sound. They have the air of people weary of waiting a long time.

The Chief of Police ignores them and enters an

INTERIOR OFFICE

with 'Police Chief' inscribed on the door. He drops his dark glasses on the desk revealing pink eyes and flabby cheeks. He hangs up his coat and looks in a mirror to square his collar.

When he next faces Cooper, he's smiling.

POLICE CHIEF

We shall have supper.

He indicates that they should sit around a small table with a covered pot in its center. Once they are settled, he whisks off its top to reveal rice stewed with tiny birds.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)

Eat! Eat!

He scoops up one of the tiny birds, and noisily sucks the rice off it. Then with an audible

Crunch!

he cracks its skull and sucks on its brains before tossing it at a wastebasket. He misses, and the gluey bird sticks to the side of the wastebasket before dropping to the floor.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)

Eat! Eat!

Little Ears hungrily dives in.

Both policemen busy themselves crunching on the birds and throwing their discarded bodies at the wastebasket.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)

You are not hungry, American?

COOPER

It looks really delicious, but no thanks. I'm allergic to birds.

Crunch! Slurp! Toss!

POLICE CHIEF
Americans are never hungry.

COOPER
Some are.

POLICE CHIEF
Americans don't know hungry like a
rock.

Crunch! Slurp! Toss!

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)
Why are you here, American?

COOPER
I'd always heard that Lalanga was a
nice place to visit.

With a barking laugh, Little Ears spits out a grain of rice that lands on the Police Chief's immaculate white shirt. He looks horrified at what he has done.

The Police Chief pulls a white handkerchief from his pocket, uses it to remove the rice, and holds it out to Little Ears - who plucks off the grain of rice and eats it.

The Police Chief offers Cooper a ball of rice on his open palm.

POLICE CHIEF
You are hungry, why don't you eat?

COOPER
I didn't see you wash your hands
first.

The Police Chief pops the rice ball into his mouth.

POLICE CHIEF
Are your hands so clean, American?

COOPER
It's how I was raised.

POLICE CHIEF
To steal?

COOPER
I didn't steal those diamonds, I
bought them.

POLICE CHIEF
From the children?

COOPER
What children?

The Police Chief uses his handkerchief to clean his hands, paying extra attention to cleaning under his nails.

POLICE CHIEF

You Americans come to Lalanga rich and go home richer.

COOPER

Not me. I come poor, I go home poor. I promise.

POLICE CHIEF

Nobody goes home rich in Lalanga.

COOPER

I knew there was a reason I love this place. I've gone native.

POLICE CHIEF

You think you are funny?

COOPER

No, I don't think anything is funny, and I'm glad you set me straight on this whole diamond thing. If there's one thing I know, you don't fuck with Colonel Diamond. So you guys keep those stones. No more diamonds for this soldier.

Little Ears stops eating.

LITTLE EARS

No more diamonds?

COOPER

Cross my heart.

POLICE CHIEF

You need protection, American.

COOPER

Do I have to paint a picture? I'm out of the business.

POLICE CHIEF

No, American.

COOPER

No, American?

POLICE CHIEF

You have protection now.

COOPER

I'm trying to tell you-

It dawns on Cooper:

COOPER (CONT'D)
Protection from you?

The two policemen break into big smiles.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You want a cut of my business?

LITTLE EARS
We have no pay for three months!

COOPER
I wish I could help, but like I said,
I'm out of the business.

Little Ears shakes his hands in Cooper's face.

LITTLE EARS
I have more children than fingers!
Always they are hungry! How can I feed
them?

POLICE CHIEF
You will help us, American. Do you
understand me?

COOPER
I understand if I break the law, I'm
in trouble, and if I don't, I'm in
trouble. Do you see my dilemma?

POLICE CHIEF
You know why you don't want to
understand me, American? Because I'm
black and you're white, that is why.

COOPER
Catch 22.

POLICE CHIEF
What is Catch 22?

COOPER
I'll always be white.

When the Police Chief realizes that Cooper is mocking him, he
becomes angry and gets to his feet.

Cooper jumps up, too.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I get a phone call!

Little Ears fumbles for his gun.

Cooper kicks it out of his hand. It hits the wall and goes off,
and women in the waiting room scream.

Little Ears dives for Cooper's feet and clings to them long enough for the Police Chief to come around his desk and use his huge body to knock Cooper to the floor.

By then, the night duty officer has run in, and he and Little Ears drag Cooper from the office.

Cooper clings to the door frame, pleading to the waiting people:

COOPER (CONT'D)
Please help me! I'm an American! My
name is Cooper Chance! Please contact
the American Embassy! Please help me!

No one moves to help him.

Cooper continues calling for help until the Police Chief's meaty fist slams into his jaw and knocks him out.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Cooper comes to sprawled on a concrete floor. He puts his fingers to his scalp and sees blood on them. He's facing a wall, and when he turns around, he sees the prison bars.

Instantly he lunges for them, shaking them, trying to pull them apart, feeling for the keyhole - anything to try to get out. Defeated, he sinks to the floor.

FLASHBACK - INSIDE COOPER'S FATHER'S TRAILER

COOPER'S FATHER is locking Cooper up in a large cupboard. It's one of several cupboards with brass latches in a hallway leading to two open bedroom doors.

A GIRL stands in front of the open door on the right.

COOPER AS A CHILD
Can't you leave it open, Daddy?

COOPER'S FATHER
Then you'd see me fixing your
surprise.

COOPER AS A CHILD
Why can she watch?

COOPER'S FATHER
She's my little helper, aren't you,
sweetheart?

The girl is too scared to answer.

His father shuts the door and slips the latch into place, plunging Cooper into darkness.

COOPER AS A CHILD
Please open it up, Daddy!

COOPER'S FATHER (O.S.)
(from outside cupboard)
Count to a thousand, Coops, and I'll
be finished by then.

Crying, Cooper starts to count.

COOPER AS A CHILD
One, two, three, four...

BACK TO PRESENT

COOPER
...five, six, seven, eight...

He hears the sound of a GIRL/AYANA crying, and he counts louder
to block the sound.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Nine, ten, eleven, twelve... STOP IT!

He can still hear her.

COOPER (CONT'D)
THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN - STOP IT! STOP IT!

MAN'S VOICE/GHOST
Mistuh!

COOPER
FIFTEEN, SIXTEEN... STOP IT!

MAN'S VOICE/GHOST
MISTUH!

Cooper realizes someone is talking to him.

COOPER
Wh-a-at?

MAN'S VOICE/GHOST
You scaring the girl, Mistuh,
yelling at her like that.

COOPER
I wasn't yelling at her.

MAN'S VOICE/GHOST
Then you must be yelling at ghosts.

COOPER
Who are you?

MAN'S VOICE/GHOST
I'm no ghost yet.

COOPER
Where are you, Ghost? Put out your
arm.

Ghost does, and Cooper sees his pale palm in the dim light.
He's two cells away. The girl is in the cell between them.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Is there anyone else in here?

GHOST
They finished with the others already.

COOPER
Finished?

GHOST
They take them away.

The girl erupts in sobs.

COOPER
Don't cry... don't cry... I bet your
mother is out in the waiting room
ready to take you home. What's her
name, Ghost?

GHOST
Ayana.

COOPER
What a pretty name, Ayana. I bet
you're a pretty girl. Is she pretty,
Ghost?

GHOST
Like the prettiest flower.

Ayana makes a funny, squeaky sound.

COOPER
I heard that! I heard that smile!

AYANA
(barely audible)
You can't hear a smile.

COOPER
What's that? What did you say?

AYANA
You can't hear a smile!

The door at the end of the hall opens, silhouetting Little Ears
in a shaft of light.

Cooper presses his face to the bars to watch him approach.

The policeman drags a key across the bars of Ghost's cell, and stops at Ayana's, rattling his keys and lewdly pressing himself to her cell's bars.

Ayana wails fearfully, and Little Ears snickers and moves on to Cooper's cell. He opens it, and points his gun at Cooper.

LITTLE EARS

You come with me, American.

COOPER

Where are you taking me?

Little Ear fires a shot over Cooper's shoulder.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Okay. I come with you.

He steps out the cell. Little Ears, keeping his distance, waves him towards the door.

They pass Ayana's cell. She's a perfect picture of fear.

Cooper kisses two fingers and presses them to her cell.

COOPER (CONT'D)

You're going to be okay.

Next he passes Ghost's cell, who is thinner than sticks with long salt-and-pepper hair. He almost could be a ghost.

Then Cooper is at the door, pushing his way through it.

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Sam Brown is driving. Cooper, in the passenger seat, is double-checking his pockets.

COOPER

They took my diamonds, my money, my passport, my knife. I'm really screwed.

SAM BROWN

That was probably coming next.

COOPER

Ha ha. How did you know to come and find me?

SAM BROWN

Even in this shithole of a country, sometimes somebody does a good deed, especially if they think there might be a reward.

COOPER
What the fuck are you talking about?

SAM BROWN
Apparently you put out an SOS and
someone came running to the Embassy.

Sam Brown puts out his hand.

SAM BROWN (CONT'D)
You owe me twenty bucks.

COOPER
Twenty?!

SAM BROWN
I didn't think your ass was worth it
either.

Sam Brown veers to avoid a pothole.

COOPER
There's a girl back there who needs
help.

SAM BROWN
There's a girl back everywhere who
needs help.

COOPER
Yeah? Well, I want to help that
one. Who the fuck are you, anyway?

SAM BROWN
CIA.

COOPER
I figured.

SAM BROWN
It says in your file that you're
pretty smart.

COOPER
What did you do, follow me to Lalanga?

SAM BROWN
We just got lucky when you dropped
into our laps.

COOPER
Why haven't you arrested me?

SAM BROWN
No extradition treaty.

COOPER
So what do you want from me?

SAM BROWN
Me personally? Nothing. But Langley
thinks you can shoot straight.

COOPER
What's Langley want me to shoot?

SAM BROWN
Colonel Diamond.

Cooper takes a moment to consider it.

COOPER
What makes you think I would do it?

SAM BROWN
An honorable discharge.

COOPER
There are a lot of guys who can shoot
straight.

SAM BROWN
You've never missed a target.

COOPER
So I shoot the Colonel and get to
go home? Is that the deal?

SAM BROWN
Pretty much.

COOPER
But not tonight, all right? I'm not
in a shooting mood tonight.

SAM BROWN
It's not every day that deserters
are given a second chance,
Sergeant.

COOPER
Well this Chance didn't ask for one.
Besides which, the last time I heard
we weren't at war with Colonel
Diamond.

SAM BROWN
That doesn't make him any less of a
security risk.

COOPER
Half his soldiers carry machetes
because they've run out of bullets.
What's he threatened to do, cut the
White House lawn?

SAM BROWN

It's not his machetes that we're worried about, but his diamonds - and who he's selling them to. They're the most portable money around. Stick them up your asshole, and you can take them anywhere you want to buy anything you want, and a lot of assholes wearing turbans are doing just that.

COOPER

The Army also taught me the difference between murder and assassination, or is that the kind of law the CIA likes to ignore?

SAM BROWN

Don't forget, Sergeant, that desertion is breaking the law.

COOPER

I didn't enlist to be a set-up as a bull's-eye. If I took a fair hit, okay, but the orders I got weren't fair.

SAM BROWN

They were your orders.

COOPER

My CO put me in every situation he could to get my head blown off because he couldn't handle a personal situation that had come up between us. I don't call those fair orders.

SAM BROWN

They were still your orders.

COOPER

Yeah? And did his orders include giving me gonorrhoea?

SAM BROWN

You could have blamed it on a prostitute.

COOPER

In my throat? What the fuck do you know, anyway? When was the last time you were dodging bullets?

SAM BROWN

You enlisted, Sergeant. Or were you simply running away from your personal problems?

Cooper coldly assesses the CIA man.

COOPER
That's the funny thing about personal
problems. They're kind of personal.

SAM BROWN
Becky didn't want to talk about them
either.

COOPER
You've been talking to Becky?

SAM BROWN
We told her that knowing about
extenuating circumstances might mean
you could come home.

COOPER
You sonofabitch.

SAM BROWN
Your dad added some interesting
details.

COOPER
He was with her?

SAM BROWN
By law, there had to be a guardian
present.

COOPER
My father a guardian? Now there's a
joke.

SAM BROWN
You're not there for her.

COOPER
What the fuck do you know?

SAM BROWN
Isn't that what you promised her?
That you'd protect her?

Cooper tries to open his car door. It's locked.

COOPER
Let me out.

SAM BROWN
You can't keep running, soldier.

COOPER
I WANT OUT! HERE! NOW!

Sam Brown stops the car.

SAM BROWN

Think about it, Sergeant Chance.
Desertion begins to sound a lot like
treason when you have an opportunity
to prove your patriotism and you don't
take it.

COOPER

Unlock my fucking door.

SAM BROWN

You might need this.

Sam Brown tosses Cooper's passport into his lap, and Cooper gets out.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - NIGHT

He walks away from the car without looking back.

The streets are deserted except for some people sleeping. An OLD GRANNY comes around a corner, mumbling and crossing herself.

Cooper ducks into the street that she has just exited.

It takes a moment before he sees the eyes peering at him through a chain-linked fence. CHILDREN step up to it as he passes by. They are all amputees - missing fingers, a hand, a foot.

A little girl shows him her doll with a missing hand.

Cooper, horrified, stumbles into the street.

A pickup truck, running without lights, almost hits him. The soldiers standing in the back laugh as it speeds off.

Cooper picks himself up and starts to run.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

He sprints to the waterline of a long white beach and starts to undress. He's bruised and bloodied from his night in jail.

Naked, Cooper dives into the surf, and with a few easy strokes swims down deep. He resurfaces languorously - and when he does, he sees a GIRL running off with his shorts.

COOPER

Hey! Hey stop! HEY STOP!

The girl stops, and smiling broadly, brandishes his passport.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Ah come on... You'll never get through
passport control!

She runs off, and Cooper swears under his breath as he splashes to shore.

He's not fast enough. Two BOYS dash out from a palm grove, grab his boots and the rest of his clothes, and run off.

Cooper crawls out of the surf and falls onto his elbows. He's halfway between sobbing and laughing. Then he sees the two boys in the trees and stands up.

The boys gather up his stuff, ready to bolt.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey it's okay! NO PROBLEM! You can have my stuff, only I can't walk-walk around like this.

He indicates being naked, and the boys don't appear convinced.

COOPER (CONT'D)
What if your mother sees me?

The boys confer, and one comes halfway back to Cooper to drop his boxers on the sand. Then they run off.

Cooper dashes to retrieve his undershorts and slips them on.

He pauses, considering his predicament, his gaze held by the tangled, sprawling city ahead of him.

EXT. HIGH CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Cooper walks down a street where tall walls topped with broken glass surround upscale homes. SECURITY GUARDS watch him, and one threateningly unshoulders his rifle.

Cooper acts mad and flails his arms to mimic swimming.

COOPER
Swim-swim good here. Good swim-swim here.

The other guards laugh, buying Cooper enough time to get around a corner and start to run.

EXT. BAR DISTRICT - DAY

He's puffing hard when he slows to a walk. Still wearing only boxers, he gets amused looks and catcalls from PROSTITUTES.

PROSTITUTE ONE
Hey, American Cooper, did you dress up special for Little Sister?

PROSTITUTE TWO

You dressed fine enough for me,
American Cooper. Why don't you stop
here?

PROSTITUTE THREE

Little Sister sure going to laugh at
your skinny-skinny legs!

Cooper pushes through The Mining Pan's saloon doors.

INT. THE MINING PAN BAR - DAY

Juma, wiping down the bar, frowns when Cooper enters.

Lulay, at the bar dipping toast into a soft egg, laughs hard.

Cooper slides onto a barstool. No one greets him.

COOPER

Make that a cup of java, black and
steaming hot. And good morning to
you, too.

JUMA

You can't drink wearing no clothes.

COOPER

I've managed to do it before.

Juma peers over the bar to look at Cooper's bare knees.

JUMA

I don't see where you have money.

COOPER

My credit's good.

JUMA

Nobody's credit is good.

COOPER

Then take it out of my tips from last
night.

JUMA

You weren't here last night.

COOPER

Which makes me doubly appreciate being
here this morning. Now how about that
coffee?

Juma pours him a cup, and Cooper takes a couple of sips.

COOPER (CONT'D)
 Isn't anybody going to ask me why I'm
 so well-dressed?

LULAY
 Your friend the policeman was here.

COOPER
 My 'friend the policeman' doesn't
 exist. So who was here?

Lulay screws up her fingers at her ears.

COOPER (CONT'D)
 Little Ears?! What the fuck did he
 want?

JUMA
 I don't want your white man's trouble.

COOPER
 You're always glad enough to take my
 white man's money.

LULAY
 He says his children are hungry.

COOPER
 Yeah? Well, I'm hungry too. They
 didn't exactly offer room service in
 the lock-up.
 (indicating his coffee)
 And this is breakfast, lunch and
 dinner.

LULAY
 Why did he know you and me are
 friends?

COOPER
 I never mentioned you.

Lulay considers that.

LULAY
 He's a lying man.

COOPER
 I'm sure that lying isn't his worst
 sin.

LULAY
 He's too angry at you, Cooper. How
 can you help me when the police are
 too angry at you?

She starts to cry, and it dawns on him:

COOPER
You didn't johnny-johnny with him, did you?

LULAY
He's too angry at you!

COOPER
You didn't have to johnny-johnny with him!

Lulay slips off the barstool and runs behind the beaded curtain.

Cooper starts after her, stopping to splash more coffee into his cup, which Juma eyes unhappily. Then he goes

BEHIND THE BEADED CURTAIN

where a hallway is lined with sagging doors to rooms with mattresses on the floor.

Lulay holds her door against him, and he pushes his way in.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Hey, don't make me spill my coffee!

Lulay plops herself onto her mattress, ignoring him.

Cooper pretends to ignore her, too, and dabs his split lip looking in a mirror. He notices a photo tucked out of sight.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Is this a picture of your mother?

Lulay jumps up and snatches the photograph from him.

LULAY
It's bad luck, you looking at her!

COOPER
I thought I brought you good luck.

LULAY
You brought Little Ears.

COOPER
Little Ears brought himself.

Suddenly Lulay is all over him, clinging to him.

LULAY
Buy me, Cooper! Buy me before Juma sells me! Buy me with your diamonds!

She pulls down his boxers and tries to take him in her mouth.

LULAY (CONT'D)
I give you Lulay every day!

Cooper grips both her wrists in one hand, pulls up his boxers with the other.

Lulay, bouncing like a puppet, realizes that her efforts are useless, and she goes slack. Cooper lets go of her.

COOPER
Why would Juma sell you?

LULAY
Before Little Ears can steal me.

COOPER
Steal you? How can he steal you?

LULAY
Everybody feeds the police.

A pause, and then Cooper realizes:

COOPER
You mean protection money? You're serious about this slave stuff, aren't you?

LULAY
The *maribout* told my mother I must go with Juma.

COOPER
The *maribout*? Isn't that like a witch doctor?

LULAY
He's a smart man.

COOPER
Not if he told your mother to give you to Juma.

LULAY
Juma promised me a job.

COOPER
What job?

LULAY
Not this one!

Cooper looks out the door to see if anyone is eavesdropping.

COOPER
Why don't you just run away and go home?

His suggestion frightens her.

LULAY
The *maribout* has pieces of me!

COOPER
Like your toenail? Or your hair or something?

LULAY
It's bad luck to talk about it!

COOPER
Okay, okay... don't get upset. So how much to buy you back from Juma?

LULAY
Juma doesn't tell me.

COOPER
Sounds like he's got himself a sweet deal.

LULAY
Little Ears will steal me first!

COOPER
I won't let him. And I won't let Juma sell you, not to anybody but me.

Cooper kisses two fingers and presses them to her forehead.

COOPER (CONT'D)
That's a Cooper promise.

Lulay smiles big-time, and in a flash she runs out her door.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Hey, where are you going?

Cooper spends a long moment listening to nearby sounds. Then Lulay returns with a bundle of clothes that she gives to him.

LULAY
You can't help me with no clothes to wear.

Cooper holds a pair of pants up to him. They are far too long.

COOPER
Where'd you get these?

LULAY
From Juma.

COOPER
Oh good, another reason for him to be angry with me.

LULAY
He steals them first.

COOPER
Even better! Second-hand stolen
clothes!

He slips on a safari vest crisscrossed with pockets.

LULAY
He hurt me, Cooper.

COOPER
Who hurt you?

LULAY
Little Ears. In the way you always
say. Maybe he makes me sick with the
skinny-skinny.

COOPER
Did you ask him to use protection?

She nods solemnly.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You asked a cop to use a rubber?

LULAY
It's not okay?

COOPER
It's more than okay, it's great okay!
And I'm going to tell him that he
should have used one - right before I
kill him.

LULAY
You will kill Little Ears?

COOPER
The first chance I get.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - DAY

Barefoot, Cooper gingerly walks down the street. It's littered,
and the hot pavement burns his feet.

He pauses in a shady spot, giving his feet a rest while his
fingers explore the many pockets of his vest. He discovers
something, and pulls out a couple of filthy bank notes.

They give him an idea.

EXT. HAMMAM - DAY

Cooper passes through the stone arch and hands a bank note to the man in the ticket booth.

INT. HAMMAM - DRESSING AREA - DAY

As Cooper enters, the attendant in his vanilla-colored clothes looks curiously at his strange attire.

ATTENDANT/AHMED
You come back again, Mister?

COOPER
I'm here, aren't I?

SERIES OF SHOTS - COOPER GETS READY FOR HAMMAM

-- The attendant leads him to a cubicle.

-- He undresses and ties on the triangular loincloth.

-- He passes through the steam bath and enters the grand pavilion.

INT. HAMMAM - GRAND PAVILION - DAY

Cooper approaches the pool where he saw the youths having sex.

Around it, a group of young Arab men chat amicably. At one youth's joke, another falls off his elbow onto a third youth's ankles, who glances up and sees Cooper.

It's Sadiq.

Sadiq quickly assesses his injuries.

Cooper walks off. Discreetly glancing back, he sees Sadiq rouse the youth who has fallen across his ankles. It's Munir.

Cooper moves away, but not too fast, and stops when he hears:

SADIQ
Kupah?

Cooper turns around.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
Salaam aleikum.

COOPER
Aleikum salaam.

They both touch their hearts.

SADIQ
I see you have learned some Arabic.

COOPER
Not much more than that.

SADIQ
It's enough to praise Allah. So you
have found our hammam.

COOPER
When you told me about the cold pool,
I was curious.

SADIQ
Come join my friends, will you?

They glance around. His friends are waiting for Munir by the
exit door. A fiery scar runs the length of his bad leg.

COOPER
I guess I've kept you from them.

SADIQ
They have work to go to.

COOPER
And you don't?

SADIQ
My father is a patient man.

He touches Cooper's shoulder.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
They hurt you.

COOPER
You know that I was arrested, don't
you?

SADIQ
Yes.

COOPER
What is there, some kind of diamond
grapevine?

Sadiq traces a bruise on Cooper's shoulder and back.

SADIQ
You're very blue here, and cut.

Cooper twists around trying to see his own shoulder.

COOPER
Does it look infected? I goddamn don't
need jungle-itis!

SADIQ
It looks clean. But here, it's very
blue. Did you pass blood?

COOPER
What?!

SADIQ
I'll show you the cold pool. It will
be good for your blueses.

COOPER
My 'blueses'?

SADIQ
It's how I learned to say 'bruises' as
a child. I thought in English you
called them 'blueses' because they are
blue.

Sadiq leads them to the other side of the grand pavilion, and approaches what appears to be a solid stone wall - until he steps into it.

Cooper follows Sadiq through a narrow passage that emerges in a room with a square pool emitting a dazzling laser-like light.

They walk to the pool's edge, and Cooper shivers.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
It's cold, yes?

COOPER
It's cold, yes. And there's only one
way to get into it.

Cooper embraces Sadiq and plunges them into the frigid pool.

They have their eyes open looking at each other as they float to a stop. Both look shocked, burst out laughing, and frantically kick their way to the surface.

SADIQ
Ya Allah!

COOPER
You'll get used to it!

SADIQ
NEVER!

Cooper's loincloth bobs to the surface and they grab for it. Sadiq tosses it away and tries to scramble from the pool, but loses his grip and falls back into the water.

They wrestle a bit before flopping on the pool's edge.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
How are your blueses now?

COOPER
You tell me.

Sadiq scoots around to examine him.

SADIQ
Where do you hurt?

COOPER
I don't. I'm numb.

SADIQ
(poking him)
Not here?

Cooper flinches.

COOPER
Jesus! Yes, there! How many places did
they kick me?

SADIQ
Turn over and let me look.

Cooper does, and watches Sadiq gently run a hand over him while examining his injuries. Moved by his concern, Cooper puts a hand on Sadiq's chest.

Sadiq lets a finger rest on Cooper's nipple.

That simple gesture consummates something between them, and they let the moment linger until:

SADIQ (CONT'D)
My father can also be an impatient
man.

INT. HAMMAM - DRESSING CUBICLES - DAY

Cooper and Sadiq separate in the cubicles.

Cooper pulls on his long pants and safari vest.

Cooper follows Ahmed to the exit, where Sadiq is waiting.

SADIQ
You don't have any shoes?

COOPER
What the police didn't steal, some
kids did.

SADIQ
 (to Ahmed in Arabic)
 Can you find him some sandals?

The attendant runs off.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
 I've asked Ahmed to bring you sandals.

COOPER
 That's not necessary.

SADIQ
 Our streets are not very clean.

Ahmed returns with sandals.

COOPER
 I don't have any money, that was
 stolen too.

AHMED
 No charge. You bring back tomorrow.

EXT. HAMMAM - DAY

Cooper and Sadiq emerge from the stone arch onto the street.

COOPER
 Your father wants us to be friends.

SADIQ
 Then for once, I have satisfied one of
 his wishes. Will you come by the shop
 tomorrow?

COOPER
 That's affirmative.

They shake hands, touch their hearts, and Sadiq walks off.
 Cooper watches him until he disappears on the busy street.

SAM BROWN (O.S.)
 Good morning, Sergeant.

Cooper whirls around to see the CIA man behind him. He
 starts to walk off, but Sam Brown catches his arm.

SAM BROWN (CONT'D)
 I just want to have a little chat.

Cooper lifts Sam Brown's hand off his arm.

COOPER
 You don't want to go *mano a mano* with
 me.

SAM BROWN

I almost forgot, besides being smart, your file says you can squeeze a guy's balls pretty hard.

Cooper throws a punch, connecting squarely with Sam Brown's jaw and knocking him to the ground.

People on the street stop to watch.

Sam Brown stays down, not wanting a scene.

Cooper finally holds out a hand to help him up.

COOPER

Did you follow me here?

SAM BROWN

Your boyfriend is a person-of-interest to us. So are his friends. They talk around the pools more than they should, and I like to listen.

COOPER

When did you learn to speak Arabic?

Sam Brown doesn't reply.

COOPER (CONT'D)

This is just more of your terrorist bullshit, isn't it? Because they're Arabs, they're suspicious, is that it?

SAM BROWN

The threat is bigger than anything you can guess.

COOPER

I'm supposed to trust you, as simple as that?

SAM BROWN

I'm your only ticket home.

COOPER

Why don't you shoot the Colonel yourself?

SAM BROWN

I'm a lousy shot.

COOPER

What's Sadiq have to do with anything?

Sam Brown takes in Cooper's battered condition.

SAM BROWN

Nothing that can't wait. You look hungry and tired, solder. When was the last time you had something to eat?

COOPER

Is that a trick question?

Sam Brown offers him some money.

SAM BROWN

Soldier to soldier, you gotta eat.

COOPER

(ignoring the money)
Soldier to soldier?

SAM BROWN

Twenty-fourth Amphibious Unit out of Camp Lejeune, N C. Our barracks took the direct hit in Beirut in '83. I was shaving when the mirror exploded. I was nineteen. Most of my buddies never saw twenty.

COOPER

Now I get it. You have a legitimate excuse for hating Arabs, not just some general racist thing going on.

SAM BROWN

It's why I learned Arabic, to try to keep it from happening again.

COOPER

I signed up to fight for America, too.

SAM BROWN

You still can. Take this.

He offers the money again.

COOPER

You can't bribe me.

SAM BROWN

I'm not trying to bribe you, I'm trying to feed you.

Sam Brown stuffs the money into one of Cooper's vest pockets.

SAM BROWN (CONT'D)

That should buy you at least four squares. Now go home.

INT. COOPER'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Cooper, at the sink, makes himself a cup of instant coffee. He sips it while considering the ridiculously long pants slung over the back of a chair.

He opens a drawer where there is a stack of postcards - the one with the Arab man on a camel on top - and takes out a pen.

He holds the pants up to him, and marks where he should cut to make shorts. Then he tries to cut them, but everything - scissors, kitchen knife - can't manage the thick denim.

Finally he pokes a hole in one leg large enough to slip a couple of fingers through, and tears the pant leg off.

INT. COOPER'S ROOM - LATER

Cooper puts on his new cut-offs. They are uneven, and he shrugs it off.

He returns the pen to the drawer. The postcard with the Arab catches his eye. He turns it over, and inserts 'good' into:
I've made a ^good^ friend...

EXT. AUNTIE'S JUNK-IT SHOP - DAY

Cooper walks past the shop, does a double-take, looks again at a knife in the window.

INT. AUNTIE'S JUNK-IT SHOP - DAY

When Cooper enters, the parrot *Squaaawks!* Auntie leans over the counter to get a look at his feet. He's wearing sandals.

AUNTIE

I don't have any more books than I did yesterday.

COOPER

I'm looking for a knife.

He takes the knife from the window display.

COOPER (CONT'D)

This is mine.

AUNTIE

It will be when you pay for it.

COOPER

It was stolen from me.

AUNTIE

I don't care how you lost it.

COOPER
I didn't say I lost it.

AUNTIE
And Auntie say she don't care.

Squaaawk!

COOPER
Considering the circumstances, you
better give me a discount.

AUNTIE
You might want these too.

She hauls out his boots from under the counter.

COOPER
What the friggin'!

AUNTIE
Frankly, American, you are no match
for our children.

COOPER
You knew they were my boots, and you
bought them from those little thieves?

AUNTIE
How else would you get them back?

EXT. DIAMOND ARCADE - DAY

Cooper approaches the diamond arcade carrying the sandals and
wearing his boots.

Inside Al-Basma Diamonds, Sadiq and Munir are arguing.
Occasionally Munir brandishes a newspaper to make a point.

Then suddenly they embrace, crying out...

SADIQ AND MUNIR
Ya Allah!

...just as Cooper enters. When they see him, they immediately
part, looking guilty of something.

SADIQ
Kupah?

Cooper holds up the sandals.

COOPER
I thought you might be going to the
hammam.

SADIQ
Of course, I'll return them.

COOPER
We could go together.

SADIQ
I won't be going today, my father is ill. But Munir could take them for you.

COOPER
I'm sure one more day won't matter.

MUNIR
I would not expect an American to like our Turkish baths.

COOPER
I like your Arabic ones. Are there Turkish baths, too?

Sadiq bursts into laughter, and Munir's expression sours.

MUNIR
It is your habit to mock me?

COOPER
It's called having a sense of humor. But I learned, a lot of people in your country don't have one.

MUNIR
You were in my country?

COOPER
Yeah, my job was to sniff out Iraqi ball busters, that or get my own balls blown off.

MUNIR
(puzzled)
Your job was to sniff balls?

COOPER
I did a lot of that, too. It was a great way to pass the time. So what's in the news?

He turns the newspaper to read the headline: U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE ADDS LALANGA TO AFRICA TRIP.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Is she really coming here?

MUNIR
Of course, Lalanga has oil.

COOPER
A hell of a lot of good that did us in
your country.

Munir gives Cooper a hateful look, then speaks to Sadiq.

MUNIR (IN ARABIC; SUBTITLED)
You will come for prayers?

SADIQ (IN ARABIC; SUBTITLED)
I must watch the shop.

MUNIR (IN ARABIC; SUBTITLED)
Your father closes it for prayers.

SADIQ (IN ARABIC; SUBTITLED)
Only on Fridays. You go ahead. You
know the way now.

Munir, dismissed, abruptly leaves.

COOPER
I take it he doesn't like Americans
very much.

SADIQ
It was Americans who wounded him.

COOPER
He was an insurgent?

SADIQ
He was at his brother's wedding.

COOPER
Did you meet him at school?

SADIQ
No, he's a... trader.

COOPER
Not a friend?

SADIQ
He's also a friend. Let me see your
bluses.

Cooper hikes up his vest so Sadiq can examine him.

Sadiq touches his back, and Cooper suddenly turns and presses
his face close to Sadiq's. They seem bound to kiss except a
WOMAN suddenly steps into the shop.

They quickly part, even though the woman goes outside to wait.

COOPER
I'll go, you have business.

SADIQ
She'll wait, she comes often. When
will you bring more diamonds?

COOPER
First I'm going to have to discover my
own mine.

He fishes out a grungy note.

COOPER (CONT'D)
This is the last of my bankroll.

SADIQ
Wait a minute.

Sadiq enters the cage and opens the safe. When he does, Cooper
sees a powerful gun inside it.

COOPER
Why the firepower?

SADIQ
The rebels are gaining ground.

COOPER
The rebels are always gaining
ground.

SADIQ
It's the excuse I gave my father.
He is too trusting.

Sadiq steps out of the cage to hand Cooper a wad of bills.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
Here's an advance.

COOPER
Your father won't mind?

SADIQ
It's the business-business.

The African woman reappears in the doorway.

COOPER
I guess I'm holding up traffic.

He stuffs the money into his pockets. Then they shake hands,
touch their hearts, and Cooper turns to leave.

SADIQ
Kupah.

He turns around.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
 Don't trust the children.

EXT. WHARF - TWILIGHT

Cooper buys a grilled chicken leg from a vendor and wanders along the wharf.

He approaches the *African Lady*. She's tied up with the portholes blacked out, no one on deck, no music from below.

Suddenly he hears a horn, and jumps out of the way as a convoy of white GlobOil jeeps speeds past him. Every man is armed.

In the lead jeep, the pockmarked oilman is smoking a cigar. He tosses it out, and it rolls to Cooper's feet.

INT. THE MINING PAN BAR - NIGHT

Cooper enters. The power is out and dozens of candles are stuck in ashtrays. Juma blows a stream of marijuana smoke at him.

Lulay emerges from the beaded curtain, followed by a john who heads straight for the bar to retrieve a beer.

Juma sets out a glass of ice water for Lulay. On her way to get it, men proposition her, and she ignores them.

She takes a swallow of water and swivels on her heels, legs akimbo, looking straight at Cooper. She puckers her lips as if to send him a big kiss, and instead squeezes out an ice cube that drops into her palm.

The power comes on, and the jukebox plays a song.

Lulay starts to dance, at first girlishly, but soon with a woman's rumble to her hips. She shakes her glass of ice water at Cooper like a voodoo charm.

When the lights flicker off again, Lulay retrieves an ice cube from her glass and rubs it on her face. She looks as if she's crying when she walks over to Cooper and offers him her glass.

LULAY
 Do you want some ice?

He shakes his head no.

COOPER
 Why did you start wearing lipstick?

LULAY
 Juma gave it to me.

COOPER
 Do you have to put it on?

LULAY
You don't think I'm pretty?

COOPER
I think you're prettier without it.

Lulay indicates her last john.

LULAY
I talk-talk him into using protection.
That's why he took so long. It slowed
down his coming.

COOPER
How did you convince him to use it?

LULAY
I told him, it makes men bigger.

COOPER
That's good. I hadn't thought about
using that, but men always want to be
bigger.

LULAY
Men are big enough already.

She glances around, taking in the leering johns.

LULAY (CONT'D)
Next time he'll hurt me. It takes him
too long and he has to pay more. It's
too expensive not to hurt Lulay.

She slips an ice cube into Cooper's vest.

LULAY (CONT'D)
Save me, Cooper.

She goes to the bar, watched by every man in the room, and slams
her glass of water on the counter.

LULAY (CONT'D)
Make it a double!

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - NIGHT

Cooper climbs the narrow lanes leading to the church. The
dogs, usually threatening, are whimpering and afraid.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cooper crosses the open ground over which the steeple, not
lit up, looms ghostly white.

He enters the churchyard. People are huddled together. There are no cookfires, only a sense of extreme anxiety.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cooper enters the church which is filled with frenzied worshipers. Men dance around the altar - ablaze with candles - while women bleat shrilly.

The men start to extinguish the candles, the women cry 'Amen' thunderously, and Cooper reels back and leaves by a side door.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cooper is in a deserted corner of the churchyard. A path disappears into a tall hedge, and he takes it, emerging to discover a long building resembling stables. Its door is wide open, and he hears tormented cries coming from inside.

INT. STABLES - NIGHT

Cooper starts down a center aisle. On both sides are stalls in which bonfires illuminate crazed inhabitants.

He comes to an open space where women are wailing and holding children.

He can't make out what's happening, and goes closer. A woman notices him and lifts up her child for him to see. The child's hand has been amputated. The woman relaxes her grip on the child's wrist, and blood sprays on Cooper.

Cooper stumbles backwards, and trips over Innocence, whom he recognizes from his *Chicago Cubs* T-shirt. The boy is holding JANJAY, his sister, in his lap.

COOPER
Innocence?

INNOCENCE
Is that you, American?

COOPER
Yeah, it's me. You can smell me in here?

INNOCENCE
Even you don't smell so bad. Did you come for more diamonds?

COOPER
Yeah... yeah... I got a special need... I'm trying to help a friend. A girl. All I need is two stones.

INNOCENCE
No more diamonds, American.

He looks closer at the girl in Innocence's lap.

COOPER
She's not much older than your sister.
I've got to help her, then I'm
quitting the business. Just one more
time.

INNOCENCE
No one more time, American.

Innocence lifts Janjay's arm to show that her hand is missing.
Blood has pooled in the boy's lap, and she appears lifeless.

Cooper reels at the horror of the sight.

COOPER
Who did that to her?

INNOCENCE
The police.

COOPER
Oh no... oh God no... I led them here!

He staggers against a wall and retches.

INT. COOPER'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Cooper is in the shower with his clothes underfoot. He's sobbing
as he stomps on them, releasing a thin red stream of water.

His landlady pounds on the downstairs ceiling.

LANDLADY (O.S.)
TOO LONG SHOWER, AMERICAN!

He ignores her, and she pounds on her ceiling again.

LANDLADY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
TOO LONG SHOWER, AMERICAN!

COOPER
TOO LONG SHOWER, AMERICAN!

He gets out of the shower, goes to the refrigerator, pulls out a
beer and pops its top. He's taking a swig from it when there's
a knock on his door.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I TURNED OFF THE FUCKING
(flinging open door)
SHOWER!

It's Sadiq in Western clothes.

Instantly Cooper lowers his beer to cover himself, but the long neck of the bottle mocks his effort.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Uh... uh... what time is it?

SADIQ
It's early. My father thinks I am at the hammam.

COOPER
But you're not... you're... here.

SADIQ
Yes, I'm here. May I come in?

COOPER
Sure! But I don't have any clothes. I mean I do, but I just washed them. I'll get a towel.

Cooper ducks into the bathroom.

COOPER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
How did you find out where I live?

SADIQ
It's easy to find a foreigner in Langatown.

Cooper returns tucking a towel around his waist.

COOPER
That sounds ominous. Do you want a beer?

SADIQ
It's still early.

COOPER
I've been up all night, it feels like no-time to me.

SADIQ
I know that time.

COOPER
Exciting nights in Beirut?

Sadiq smiles guiltily.

COOPER (CONT'D)
So you'll have a beer?

SADIQ
If my father smelled alcohol on my
breath, it would be, I think you say,
'the last straw.' But I will take a
glass of water.

COOPER
With ice?

SADIQ
You have ice?

COOPER
I have a freezer, it's why I rented
this palace.

Cooper goes to the refrigerator, bangs an ice cube tray on the
counter, makes a glass of ice water.

SADIQ
Why do you like the cold so much?

COOPER
I grew up on a desert and I'm still
trying to forget it. It's safe to say
that I sweated most of my childhood.

SADIQ
It's hot here, too.

Cooper hands the ice water to him.

COOPER
I've noticed.

SADIQ
Why do you stay?

COOPER
Every day there seems to be a new
reason.

SADIQ
What's today's reason?

COOPER
I don't know, it's still early.

SADIQ
Maybe I can help you figure it out.

There's an awkward silence following their obvious flirtation.

Cooper drains his beer.

COOPER
Talking about the desert makes me
thirsty.

He goes back to the refrigerator and squats in front of it.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Are you sure I can't get you drunk?

Cooper's towel comes loose, and he stands up with his back to Sadiq to resecure it at his waist.

Sadiq takes an ice cube in each hand, and embracing Cooper from behind, presses them to his nipples.

Cooper rears back in pleasure.

SADIQ

You don't need to get me drunk.

Cooper turns in his arms and they kiss.

He steers them to the bed, and starts undressing Sadiq, who loosens Cooper's towel so that it falls open.

When they are both naked, they pause.

COOPER

Are you sure?

Sadiq pulls Cooper on top of him.

INT. COOPER'S ROOM - LATER

They are in bed, affectionate after sex.

SADIQ

When was the first time you did this?

COOPER

With a guy? My CO in Iraq, and it wasn't exactly like this.

SADIQ

Your CO?

COOPER

Commanding Asshole. And he had some orders for me besides 'Shoot everything that moves.'

FLASHBACK - ARMY BASE IN IRAQ - DAY

Cooper is next in line for the showers. His COMMANDING OFFICER, trim and sandy-haired, steps out. He doesn't bother to wrap his towel around him.

COOPER'S CO

I want to see you in my tent,
Sergeant.

FLASHBACK - CO'S TENT - DAY

Cooper's CO stands where he can see anyone approaching his tent through a crack in the flap.

COOPER'S CO (CONT'D)
Do you know why I wanted to see you,
Sergeant?

COOPER
I think so, Sir.

His CO takes a step closer to him.

COOPER'S CO
Take it out.

Cooper starts to unzip his own pants.

COOPER'S CO (CONT'D)
I meant mine.

BACK TO PRESENT

COOPER
He was afraid he was becoming queer
when he started liking the sex too
much. That's when he took me off the
rooftops and put me in the tunnels,
knowing I'd freak out, and figuring
I'd get myself killed. What about
you? When was your first time?

SADIQ
Today.

COOPER
The way you talk about Beirut, I
figured all you were doing was having
sex there.

SADIQ
It's all a facade. I was supposed to
go and get the wildness out of me
before I get married. Of course, I was
expected to go with women.

COOPER
What about what happens inside the
hammam? Doesn't that count?

SADIQ
What happens inside the hammam stays
inside the hammam. Outside, we must
think about the women.

COOPER
Then let's not go outside.

They kiss, and start to make love again.

INT. COOPER'S ROOM - BATHROOM - LATER

They're drying off. Cooper's soggy clothes are on the floor.

COOPER

I didn't know it was so late. What are you going to tell your father?

SADIQ

He already thinks I'm unreliable. Since I was a kid, he's accused me of daydreaming all the time.

COOPER

Do you?

SADIQ

If thinking about living someplace else is daydreaming.

Sadiq steps into the main room and starts to dress.

COOPER

You should move to Beirut, why not?

Cooper wrings out his boxers and slips them on.

SADIQ

I can't leave my parents. I'm their only son.

COOPER

No only sons ever leave? Is that a rule somewhere?

SADIQ

I'd be an outcast in Beirut if I abandon my parents here. That's how it works for us.

COOPER

You're already an outcast here.

Cooper wrings out his cut-offs and puts them on, while Sadiq slips on his shirt and starts looking for his shoes.

COOPER (CONT'D)

What are you going to do?

SADIQ

Marry here and die here, it's what I was born to do.

Cooper picks up his sodden vest.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
Is that blood?

COOPER
That's blood.

Cooper regards the vest like the roadkill it resembles, and tosses it into the tub.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Who the hell needs a shirt in this heat, anyway?

SADIQ
Here, take mine. I have a closetful at home.

He peels it off and Cooper puts it on. It reveals his muscled chest.

Sadiq pinches his nipples.

SADIQ (CONT'D)
It looks better on you.

He pulls Cooper by his nipples into a kiss. Then he steps back, touches his heart, and hurries out the door.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - LANGATOWN PREPARES FOR SEC. OF STATE'S VISIT

-- Crews hang streamers of small flags, intertwining Lalanga's red-and-black flag with America's red-white-and-blue.

-- Workmen put up posters of Colonel Diamond and the Secretary of State.

-- Cooper fend off vendors wanting to sell him T-shirts that read *Got Oil?* and *Let the Good Times R-oil*.

-- Workmen build a speakers stand at the seaside end of a large square directly opposite the abandoned Parliament Building.

INTO SCENE

Under the speakers stand, children use discarded pieces of wood to hit cans. With a *Smack!* one comes flying directly at Cooper. Pretending to be hit, he takes a couple of wobbly steps, and the children high five each other.

Cooper enters a deserted neighborhood. He comes around a corner just Josef Nimwe's rebel squad executes a man and woman.

Nimwe sees Cooper, snaps an order, and his men start chasing him.

They run down long parallel lanes with cut-throughs, which Cooper uses to dodge between them. The rebels know the lanes, too, and more than once almost trap him. Their leader, a REBEL IN A GREEN CAP, barks out orders in hot pursuit.

Ahead, Cooper can see where the lanes spill into the bar district. He's almost there when the green-capped rebel appears right in front of him.

Cooper trips coming to such a fast stop, and falls down just as the rebel fires his gun. In the next instant, the rebel's chest explodes outward, and he collapses on the ground.

An Army truck roars into view and runs over his body in pursuit of the other rebels.

Cooper gets up and brushes himself off.

INT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

Cooper enters to find a festive crowd. He goes to the bar.

JUMA

The ice machine is still broken.

COOPER

Fortunately I don't like ice in my beer, and I know you've got beer. You haven't stopped pissing have you?

Juma pulls a beer from the cooler, opens it, hands it over.

JUMA

American don't know beer.

COOPER

But we do know piss, and this tastes straight from the tap, only colder.

JUMA

You owe me for a coffee, too.

COOPER

I thought that was on the house.

JUMA

Nothing's free for a white man causing trouble.

COOPER

Run a tab.

JUMA

Can't. You used up all my ink.

Cooper scowls, and digs into his pocket for some money as Juma tries to see how much he has.

COOPER
Has my buddy Little Ears been back?

JUMA
You see him in here?

INT. THE MINING PAN - LATER

Juma exchanges Cooper's empty bottle for a fresh one.

COOPER
Where's Lulay?

JUMA
Where do you think?

COOPER
It never takes this long.

JUMA
It's a busy day.

COOPER
She always comes out for ice water
between johns.

JUMA
Maybe she's not thirsty.

COOPER
You wanna stop with the roundabout
talk and tell me where she is?

JUMA
What do you want with that girl all
the time?

COOPER
I want to buy her.

JUMA
Yesterday you couldn't buy a cup of
coffee.

COOPER
I robbed a bank.

JUMA
It better not be my money.

Cooper puts his wads of bills on the bar.

COOPER
It can be yours again. Now where is
Lulay?

Juma looks longingly at the money, then picks up his pistol.

JUMA

I already sold her. Now go away. I don't want your white man trouble.

COOPER

You already have my white man trouble. So I'm asking again. WHERE IS LULAY? WHO THE FUCK DID YOU SELL HER TO?

A hush sweeps the room. Only the wheezing ice machine is heard.

Everybody is awaiting their next move, when a lipsticked boy splashes his way out the beaded curtain. He catches Cooper's eye and throws him a lewd kiss.

The crowd breaks into laughter, which increases in volume as Cooper, embarrassed, grabs his money and heads for the door.

Glancing back around, Cooper sees Munir follow the lipsticked boy from behind the beaded curtain, looking angry and ashamed by the laughter that he thinks is directed at him.

EXT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

Cooper starts down the street, the young prostitutes calling out to him as usual. They are all young, and he imagines them to be Lulay - he even imagines a couple of them saying 'Save me!'

COOPER

Where the fuck are you?

Then something dawns on him, and he starts to run.

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - DAY

Cooper stops running when he sees the American flag atop the Embassy. Surrounding it are barriers and anti-aircraft guns.

Cooper goes up to a plexiglass window adjacent to the Embassy's door and speaks into an intercom microphone to a MARINE GUARD.

COOPER

I'm here to see Sam Brown.

MARINE/PRIVATE PORTER

Are you an American citizen?

Cooper snaps a crisp salute.

COOPER

Sergeant Cooper Chance, 20th Infantry Division, first-class Sharpshooter First Class.

The Marine returns his salute with a grin as big as Texas.

MARINE/PRIVATE PORTER

Yes, sir!

COOPER

I was taking out insurgents in Fallujah before being transferred here.

MARINE/PRIVATE PORTER

Sounds like you drew two short sticks, sir.

COOPER

Special Ops. We go where we're told.

MARINE/PRIVATE PORTER

Is Mr. Brown expecting you?

COOPER

He's always expecting me. We have that kind of relationship.

MARINE/PRIVATE PORTER

We're on Code Red status-

COOPER

-until the Secretary of State is whisked safely away. I've been briefed, and if I have to wait until she's gone, the word 'safely' might not be the operative word. Do you read me, Private?

MARINE/PRIVATE PORTER

I still need to see your passport.

COOPER

Like I said, I'm Special Ops. We don't carry ID in case we're compromised. What's your name, soldier?

MARINE/PRIVATE PORTER

Porter.

COOPER

Private Porter, I'll make this easy for you. You get Sam Brown on your telephone and you say exactly this to him: 'Sergeant Cooper Chance wants your fucking black ass out here so he can step foot on American soil one more time before he dies.'

Private Porter, skeptical, doesn't move.

COOPER (CONT'D)

That's an order, soldier.

Private Porter reluctantly picks up a telephone, has a short conversation on it, and says to Cooper through the intercom:

PRIVATE PORTER
You can come in now.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - DAY

Cooper pulls open the Embassy's heavy metal door and steps into a 'holding tank' about ten feet long, at the far end of which is a second steel door. On his left is a solid wall; on his right, another plexiglass window with Private Porter behind it.

He tries to open the second door. It doesn't budge.

PRIVATE PORTER
Mr. Brown will be here in a minute.

The private throws a switch that turns the plexiglass opaque.

Cooper suddenly realizes he's trapped in a box. He tries to appear calm but his nervous discomfort gives him away.

COOPER
It's been more than a minute.

No response.

He grows more agitated and paces.

COOPER (CONT'D)
So where the fuck is Mr. Brown?

No response.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Fuck it. I'm going to wait outside.

Just as he's ready to retreat through the first door, the second one opens to reveal Sam Brown.

SAM BROWN
I hear you want to fuck my black ass.

Cooper lunges at him, but Sam Brown steps aside, and he bounds into the lobby where guards already have weapons drawn on him.

COOPER
Is this your idea of a welcoming party?

SAM BROWN
He has a knife, right boot.

One of the Marines takes it.

COOPER

So what am I, under arrest?

Sam Brown motions the Marines to lower their weapons.

COOPER (CONT'D)

So what was that stunt all about?

SAM BROWN

You've got to get smart, soldier, or you're going to end up in a cell a lot smaller than that, and for a lot longer.

COOPER

Unless I do what you want?

SAM BROWN

Otherwise what happens to you is out of my control.

Beat.

COOPER

Lulay's disappeared.

SAM BROWN

Lulay? You mean the girl from the bar.

COOPER

Yeah, I mean the girl from the bar, and she needs help. She's kind of special to me.

SAM BROWN

There's a girl-

COOPER

-everywhere who needs help. I heard you the first time.

SAM BROWN

But this is the one you really want to help.

COOPER

She reminds me of my kid sister.

SAM BROWN

That's funny. You don't have a kid sister.

COOPER

I have Becky.

SAM BROWN

She's a stepsister.

COOPER
I'm still a brother to her. Can you
help me find Lulay?

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

Cooper staggers around the corner of a building. He's carrying a liquor bottle and has a cloth draped over his shoulders. Every inch of his skin has been blackened by ashes.

Nearby, the *African Lady* rolls in the wind, her ropes creaking.

He zigzags closer to the yacht and feigns tripping over nets. He falls onto them and pulls the cloth over his boots. On deck, Crewman #2 barely takes notice of him.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE YACHT'S COMINGS AND GOINGS

-- The door to the cabin opens emitting light and throbbing music. Man #1 emerges on deck, checks his zipper, mumbles something to Crewman #2 and walks off.

-- Man #2 appears, pays Crewman #2, goes below-decks.

-- Man #2 reappears, checks his zipper and departs.

-- Crewman #2 goes below-decks.

-- Crewman #1 emerges with two beers and starts up the ladder to the bridge. He almost loses his grip and shouts for help. The Captain emerges from the bridge, helps him, and soon they disappear.

BACK INTO SCENE

Cooper slips out his knife ready to rush the yacht when a car appears. Its headlights bounce over him.

Cooper settles back on the nets.

The Chief of Police and Little Ears get out of the car.

Crewman #1 and the Captain climb down from the bridge to greet the policemen, then Crewman #1 goes below-decks. He emerges a minute later with Crewman #2 and they pass out beers.

Little Ears shakes his bottle, holds it at his crotch, spews foam onto the deck. The others laugh, but none as hard as Little Ears himself, who keeps heehawing.

POLICE CHIEF
Shut up!

Little Ears shuts up and tries to slip below-decks, but the Police Chief stops him. Instead, straightening his coat, he squeezes himself down the steps and through the cabin door.

Crewmen #1 and the Captain toss their bottles into the water, light up cigarettes, saunter off.

Little Ears finishes his beer and chugs the Police Chief's bottle as well. He never stops talking in an African dialect, frequently bursting into annoying laughter.

Crewman #2 ignores him while playing Russian roulette with a seagull clinging to the rigging. He spins the chamber of his gun, aims at the bird, pulls the trigger.

Plunk.

He spins the chamber again and aims at the seagull.

Plunk.

And again.

Plunk.

He spins it again and whirls around to aim at Little ears.

That shuts Little Ears up.

COOPER
(under his breath)
Do it...

The crewman swings back around, aims at the bird, pulls the trigger.

BANG!

The bird falls to the deck as feathers float down on them.

Little Ears harangues the crewman until they hear the Police Chief throw open the cabin door. He's muttering angrily while fastening his pants, and catches a pocket on the handrail.

There is a distinct LOUD TEARING SOUND, and Little Ears looks horrified at the crewman.

The Police Chief kicks the dead bird which lands at Little Ears's feet.

POLICE CHIEF
Get down there and do it fast!

Little Ears scurries below-decks.

The Police Chief scowls at the crewman.

CREWMAN #2
I'll check on things.

He follows Little Ears below-decks.

The Police Chief unsteadily works his way to the bow where he grapples below his enormous belly to undo his zipper.

In one stride, Cooper is across the gangplank. He sneaks up on the Police Chief as he begins to pee.

The wind blows piss back on the Police Chief's pants, and he spins around.

Now he's peeing on Cooper, and his eyes widen in astonishment.

Cooper plunges his knife into his soft belly.

The policeman presses his hands to his wound, staring in disbelief at the oozing blood.

Cooper plucks off the Police Chief's sunglasses.

COOPER

Is that how it feels to be hungry like
a rock?

In a single stroke, Cooper slits his throat.

Blood spurts over Cooper as he staggers under the fat man's weight, lowering him noiselessly to the deck.

He wipes his knife on the Police Chief's starched whites before scurrying to the cabin door. He listens at the door, hears loud music, slips inside.

INT. YACHT - NIGHT

He's in a room illuminated only by cartoons flickering on a flat TV screen. Crewman #2 watches them while reclining in a chair, smoking a joint and drinking beer. The room pulsates with music.

The crewman notices Cooper and mutes the music.

CREWMAN #2

Take the one on the left.

He waves Cooper up a hallway and un-mutes the music.

Cooper starts for the hallway, until he reaches the crewman's blind spot. He slips up behind him and taps his shoulder.

The crewman turns around, startled. He frowns - he should recognize Cooper but can't place him with his blackened face.

Cooper points to his boots.

The crewman looks down, recognizes his boots, looks up scared.

Cooper cuts his throat.

He turns off the music and crosses to the hallway. It's lined with cupboards with brass latches, and at its end are two doors: the left one is open, the right closed.

INSERT - COOPER'S IMAGINATION

The hallway morphs into the hallway in his father's trailer. An open cupboard with brass latches seems to lure him into its dark maw. Past it are two doors: the left is open, the right closed.

BACK INTO SCENE

Cooper hears a girl crying and starts down the hall.

FLASHBACK - COOPER IN THE TRAILER

Cooper hears a girl crying and starts down the hall.

BACK TO PRESENT

Cooper pokes his head into the open door.

Lulay on a narrow bed, biting frantically at something on her wrist. She sees him, yelps from fear, makes herself as tiny as possible.

COOPER
(whispering)
It's me, Lulay. It's Cooper.

She doesn't look up.

He sees that one arm is tied by a cord to the bed and cuts it.

COOPER (CONT'D)
It's me, it's Cooper.

She peeks at him, whimpers, hides her face again.

Cooper tries to wipe the black ashes off his face.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Look at me, Lulay, it's only charcoal!

Lulay peeks again, and recognizing him, clings to him.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You stay here.

She squeals and clings harder, but he gestures for her to stay on the bed and be quiet. He kisses his fingers and presses them to her forehead.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You're going to be okay.

He listens at the second door and hears muffled cries.

FLASHBACK - COOPER IN HIS FATHER'S TRAILER

Cooper, his ear to the closed door, hears a girl's muffled cries. He bursts through the door.

BACK TO PRESENT

Cooper bursts through the door.

FLASHBACK - COOPER DISCOVERS FATHER RAPING BECKY

Cooper sees his father atop Becky.

BACK TO PRESENT

Little Ears, atop a girl, looks around at the noise.

With a roar, Cooper tosses his knife aside and tackles him. He pins Little Ears's head down with one hand, and with the other grabs his balls from behind. He squeezes them as hard as he can.

Little Ears flails about, trying to get out of Cooper's grasp.

FLASHBACK - COOPER HOLDS DOWN HIS FATHER

Little Ears morphs into his father as Cooper holds him down. He gives his father's balls one last squeeze, who howls in pain...

BACK INTO SCENE

...and morphs back into Little Ears, who screams and passes out. Cooper rolls his body onto the floor.

Cooper looks at the girl. It's Ayana - the girl from jail - and she's looking scared at something over Cooper's shoulder.

He whirls around to see Sam Brown holding a gun.

The CIA lowers it and pulls Lulay into sight by the cord dangling from her wrist.

SAM BROWN

I caught this one running out.

Ayana jumps up and walks across Little Ears to hug Lulay. Both girls only wear scruffy little blouses.

Sam Brown kicks apart Little Ears's legs to inspect Cooper's damage.

SAM BROWN (CONT'D)

You ever think of working on a pig farm? I hear they need people with your special skill.

The boat suddenly tilts and there is a loud splash.

COOPER
Who's up there?

SAM BROWN
Patriots.
(indicating Little Ears)
Let's go before his friends come back.

LULAY
You take us with you!

COOPER
Of course I take you with me! Hurry
and get dressed!

Lulay runs off, and Ayana jumps back on top of Little Ears, digging in her heels hard while pulling on her dress. The unconscious policeman moans and dribbles betel slobber.

Lulay is back in a flash.

Sam Brown leads them down the short hall and past the dead crewman with cartoons flickering across his bare chest.

LULAY
I told you Juma was going to sell me.

COOPER
I promised I'd find you, didn't I?

LULAY
You almost come too late!

Sam Brown peers out the door and motions for them to follow him.

EXT. ON DECK - NIGHT

Sam Brown gives a signal and headlights flash down the wharf. A moment later a white jeep drives towards for them.

LULAY
Cut me out of this, Cooper.

She holds out her wrist with the cord dangling from it.

The rolling boat makes it hard for Cooper to slip his knife under cord.

Ayana has never let go of Lulay's arm.

COOPER
Did you know her already? Before
coming to this boat?

Lulay shakes her head.

LULAY

But she's my Little Sister now.

The cord falls to the deck. They stare at it - it looks like a shackle - before Cooper throws it as far as he can down the wharf. It's caught by the wind and bounces out of sight.

The jeep pulls up driven by the pockmarked oilman. Two other OILMEN with rifles get out to stand at the end of the gangplank.

SAM BROWN

The girls are coming with me.

LULAY

No! Don't let him take us!

SAM BROWN

They're my insurance.

COOPER

You already have my promise.

SAM BROWN

That's the problem with deserters, you learn not to trust them.

Sam Brown herds the girls onto the gangplank. The oilmen grab them, and one slips handcuffs onto Ayana.

Lulay breaks free and runs down the wharf.

Instantly two other sets of headlights go on, blocking her escape in every direction except the bay. Realizing that she's trapped, she takes a step toward the water.

COOPER

NO! LULAY, NO!

The oilmen stop him from running to her.

Lulay hangs her toes over the wharf's edge.

COOPER (CONT'D)

STOP, LULAY! YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY!
THAT'S A COOPER PROMISE!

She spreads her arms and leans out. Only the wind holds her up.

LULAY

YOU'RE TOO LATE! THE MEN ALREADY HURT
ME!

In a wind pocket, she tumbles into the water.

Cooper pushes past the oilmen and runs to the spot where she fell in. There's no sign of her.

He jumps in.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Cooper thrashes around, finding debris but no Lulay. Suddenly he's caught by a rip current, which drags against the seawall.

Bracing his feet, he propels himself up, running into Lulay's limp body. He can't regain momentum before the rip current grabs them both, drags them down, slams them into the wall.

Again bracing his feet, Cooper propels them to the surface.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

Cooper gasps for breath while trying to keep Lulay's head above the rough water.

An oilman plucks her from his arms.

A moment later, Cooper is pulled out.

The oilman who saved Lulay is thumping her back as she heaves up water.

The pockmarked oilman pulls up in a jeep. Sam Brown is in front, Ayana in the back handcuffed to the roll bar.

SAM BROWN

Get her in the jeep.

Lulay doesn't have the strength to protest. But when she recognizes the pockmarked man, she whimpers and gives Cooper a pleading look.

Cooper looks directly at him.

COOPER

If anyone touches her, Colonel Diamond won't be the last man I kill. That's a Cooper promise.

An oilman handcuffs Lulay to the rollbar.

SAM BROWN

Get rid of that shirt, Sergeant, and get your ass out of here - now.

The three jeeps drive off in a convoy.

Cooper watches their receding taillights. Angrily he pulls off Sadiq's shirt, balls it up and throws it after them.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - NIGHT

Cooper walks down a street filled with restless sleepers.

EXT. COOPER'S ROOM - BACK YARD - NIGHT

He comes into the yard, starts up his stairs, sees someone hiding beneath them. He pulls out his knife, ready to fight.

SADIQ

Kupah?

Sadiq steps out from under the stairs.

COOPER

Sadiq?

SADIQ

Did I frighten you?

COOPER

Not much doesn't anymore.

SADIQ

I'm frightened, too.

COOPER

Has something happened?

Sadiq shakes his head, but something is clearly amiss.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Is your father angry that you gave me money?

SADIQ

It's not my father.

COOPER

Then what's wrong?

(silence)

Tell me.

SADIQ

I can't.

COOPER

How can I help you if I don't know?

SADIQ

It's everything! Coming back to Langatown... meeting you... you can't know... You can't know! Can you imagine what my life is going to be? That's why... that's why I decided...

COOPER

You decided what?

SADIQ

Meeting you changed everything!

COOPER
What did you decide, Sadiq?

SADIQ
That I didn't want to live! He made me
feel so dirty! That's why I did it!

Cooper puts a hand on Sadiq's shoulder, who knocks it away.

COOPER
Who made you do what?

SADIQ
It's too late! I'm already a dead man!

COOPER
That's crazy!

SADIQ
I've sworn by Allah!

COOPER
Then unswear by Him!

SADIQ
I can't! I can't!

He pushes past Cooper and runs from the yard.

COOPER
SADIQ!

Cooper starts to chase after him, but stops and watches him disappear down the street. His creamy robe billows as he zigzags through the many sleepers.

EXT. STREETS OF LANGATOWN - NEXT DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

The street is mobbed with people, and almost everybody wears something that has some red, white or blue. Many wave small American flags and shout "American! American!" as Cooper pushes his way through them.

He's not wearing a shirt, and from a vendor buys a T-shirt with an American flag on the chest.

From another vendor, he buys two hot dogs and a beer, and hungrily eats them on the spot.

EXT. PARLIAMENT SQUARE - SUNSET

Still holding a beer bottle, Cooper arrives at the speakers stand. Nervous soldiers surround it. Opposite, the setting sun reflects off the windows of the Parliament Building.

Cooper ditches his bottle and pushes into the crowd.

He's halfway to the Parliament Building when floodlights illuminate it. The crowd cheers and sets off firecrackers. A chant starts, which musicians beat out on drums, and soon almost everyone is dancing.

Cooper breaks away from the crowd when he reaches the Parliament Building.

EXT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - TWILIGHT

He walks to its rear. GlobOil jeeps block the street at both ends of the block, so it's deserted.

Sam Brown is waiting for him.

SAM BROWN (O.S.)
You're late, Sergeant Chance.

COOPER
I hadn't planned on the crowds.

Sam Brown sniffs Cooper's breath.

SAM BROWN
Apparently you had enough time to stop for a beer.

COOPER
That was before the crowds got too thick. And make that two beers.

SAM BROWN
You only get one shot, Sergeant.

They turn the building's corner and approach a rear entrance flanked by two oilmen. A jeep sits across the street. A cigar glows in the dark, revealing the pockmarked oilman.

COOPER
What the hell is he doing here?

SAM BROWN
Protecting your ass.

Cooper spins the CIA man around by his elbow.

COOPER
These guys aren't oilmen, are they?
They're working for you.

SAM BROWN
I said I'm a recruiter.

COOPER
You said you worked for the CIA.

SAM BROWN
Do you think the President could send
in troops without CNN reporting it?

COOPER
Why send anyone in?

SAM BROWN
You're asking too many questions,
soldier.

Sam Brown turns away.

When Cooper grabs his elbow again, Sam Brown swings around and punches him, knocking him to the ground.

SAM BROWN (CONT'D)
That's the answer to the rest of your
questions. Now get off your ass.
You've got a job to do.

Cooper, rubbing his jaw, follows Sam Brown into the building.

INT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

They come to the top floor of a main staircase. Everything is littered with papers and debris.

Sam Brown leads them down a hall and into an office.

SAM BROWN
Welcome to the Presidential suite.

It's a large room with three broken windows. Cooper steps up to the middle one. He has a clear view of the speakers stand, though he puts a hand up to block the floodlights.

COOPER
I didn't know they had that much
power in the whole country.

SAM BROWN
The Embassy lent them a generator
for the occasion.

COOPER
Can you tell someone to unplug it?

Sam Brown picks up a high-powered rifle leaning in a corner.

SAM BROWN
Try this on for size.

He tosses it to Cooper, who expertly catches it and checks it out. He aims it at the speakers stand. A bullet-proof shield has been mounted on the podium.

He swings around and aims the rifle at Sam Brown.

COOPER
It fits.

He lowers the rifle.

Sam Brown tosses him a pair of night vision goggles.

COOPER (CONT'D)
NVGs? You should've brought
sunglasses.

SAM BROWN
Even Uncle Sam can't guarantee that
they won't blow out the national fuse.

Cooper slips on the goggles. There's an instant FLASH OF
GREEN LIGHT.

COOPER
Oh fuck, I'm blind! All I'm seeing
is green!

SAM BROWN
The Secretary of State's arriving.

A motorcade pulls up to the speakers stand.

COOPER
I think my optic nerves are fried!

SAM BROWN
Just blink. It'll go away.

COOPER
I AM FUCKING BLINKING! Oh Jesus!
Point me in the right direction!

SAM BROWN
Are you shitting me?

COOPER
FUCKING POINT ME!

Sam Brown does, and Cooper clumsily sights through the rifle.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Are those cars?

SAM BROWN
Blink! Keep blinking!

Pause.

COOPER

Is the Secretary the one in the white suit, getting out of the third car back, a tear in her stocking?

SAM BROWN

You owe me more than twenty bucks.

COOPER

What's the program?

SAM BROWN

The Secretary will be introduced by their Minister of Foreign Affairs. Then Colonel Diamond will join her. That might be your best shot, when he's moving to the podium. You can't miss the Colonel - he sparkles a lot.

Cooper sees COLONEL DIAMOND get out of a car shielded by tall bodyguards. He can only catch glimpses of the Colonel, who sparkles from the many diamonds sewn into his clothes.

The SECRETARY OF STATE glances around unhappily. Her security is spotty. The crowd goes wild as she mounts the steps to sit with the other dignitaries on the stage.

The MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS walks directly to the podium.

EXT. PARLIAMENT SQUARE - LATER

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is at the podium.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

So let us welcome my counterpart from our good and generous friend, the United States of America.

EXT. PARLIAMENT SQUARE - LATER

The Secretary is speaking to the crowd.

SECRETARY OF STATE

With your oil resources, everyone's life will improve. But let me reassure you, it's only because of your commitment to democracy that I am here today. I can report to you now, after my meetings with Colonel Diamond, that he has promised elections as soon as the people are ready.

(rhetorical pause)

Are you ready?

The crowd's enthusiasm reaches a new fevered pitch. The Secretary, looking at the Colonel, throws her hands up.

SECRETARY OF STATE (CONT'D)
I THINK THEY'RE READY!

Colonel Diamond stands, applauding tepidly.

Moved by the people's outpouring, the Foreign Minister jumps up, grabs the Secretary's hand, then the Colonel's hand, and drags them to center stage.

Through his rifle scope, Cooper stalks the Colonel, but his bodyguards shield him as he's paraded around.

SAM BROWN (O.S.)
Now's your chance!

No shot is right. Someone or something is always in the way.

SAM BROWN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You've got the shot!

The Foreign Minister, still holding up the Colonel's and Secretary's hands, maneuvers them so close to the front of the stage that their bodyguards have to dive to the side to stop from being knocked off.

Sam Brown puts his gun to Cooper's head.

SAM BROWN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Shoot him now, Sergeant Chance, or you won't get another one.

Cooper squeezes the trigger.

BANG!

The top of the Colonel's head explodes, splattering the Foreign Minister and Secretary, who barely has time to react before she takes a bullet in the chest and collapses.

The Foreign Minister is left with his empty hands in the air and bodies on each side of him.

COOPER
What the fuck...?

The crowd rushes the platform and overpowers the soldiers. Dignitaries and bodyguards are jumping off it when the crowd topples it into the bay. The floodlights explode, and all the power goes out.

Near the speakers platform, there are screams and gunshots. Cooper puts on the night goggles.

INSERT - WHAT COOPER SEES THROUGH NIGHT VISION GOGGLES

Little flickering green figures flee in an ever-widening circle from two figures. One of the figures holds an arm outstretched, apparently holding a gun, and turns in a slow circle.

Then the two figures begin to run. The one holding the gun has a pronounced limp.

BACK INTO SCENE

Cooper rips off his goggles, knocks Sam Brown down with the rifle which he throws aside, and races out.

EXT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Cooper bounds out the back door. All the oilmen are gone.

He pushes against the wave of panicked people fleeing the square. He skirts the square, where he glimpses a pitched battle between government soldiers and oilmen.

Once he's out of the crowd, he starts to run.

EXT. DIAMOND ARCADE - NIGHT

Cooper slows down when the diamond arcade comes into view. A candle burns inside Al-Basma Diamonds. Its door is open.

Sadiq and Munir are inside the cage. Munir grabs whatever he can from the safe while Sadiq tries to push him away.

Munir turns on Sadiq and pistol-whips him.

Sadiq falls back, but as soon as he can he lunges at Munir again - who hits him again.

INT. AL-BASMA DIAMONDS SHOP - NIGHT

Cooper steps into the shop.

COOPER
Stop hitting him.

Munir spins around, aiming his gun at Cooper.

SADIQ
Kupah, no! He has a gun!

COOPER
What's happening, Sadiq? Why did you do it?

MUNIR
Is she dead?

COOPER

Yes.

MUNIR

Humdilillah.

COOPER

Why did you help him?

SADIQ

I wanted him to love me.

MUNIR

Silence!

SADIQ

I swore jihad to Allah! I wanted us to die together!

MUNIR

SILENCE! It is filth that you are talking!

Munir swings the gun between them.

COOPER

He goes with the lipsticked boys. I've seen him. Or did he tell you that he was buying condoms for women?

Sadiq is stunned.

SADIQ

Munir, why? Do you hate me so much?

Munir fires a shot at Cooper, but the cage deflects it.

COOPER

Run, Sadiq! Get out of there!

Munir fires a second shot, again deflected by the cage. He starts for the cage's door.

Sadiq throws himself on him. They struggle and the gun goes off.

Sadiq sinks to the floor.

Munir steps over his body and comes out of the cage. He smiles at Cooper, savoring the moment.

MUNIR

You're not the first American soldier that I've killed.

BANG!

A clean circular hole appears on Munir's forehead. Blood trickles out and he falls over.

Cooper turns around.

Sam Brown is in the doorway holding a gun.

Cooper runs into the cage and kneels beside Sadiq. He tests for a pulse - there is none. Tears run down his cheeks as he embraces the dead youth.

EXT. MOSQUE - CEMETERY - DAY

A group of mourners are gathered at an open grave. Cooper watches them from a distance.

Mazen, with his wife clinging to his arm, tosses a handful of dirt on top of Sadiq's coffin. It lands with a hollow thump.

Other men throw dirt, then the mourners walk off.

Cooper goes up to the grave, picks up dirt, tosses it. He's brushing his hands when Mazen comes up and embraces him.

MAZEN

You tried to save my son. Thank you.

COOPER

I wish I could have.

MAZEN

They say the other one was a terrorist.

COOPER

He shot the Secretary of State. I suppose that makes him one.

MAZEN

Did Sadiq ever say anything, or hint...?

COOPER

He wasn't involved.

MAZEN

I don't know why he had to bring that other one home.

COOPER

He followed Sadiq home.

MAZEN

He was always so impressionable.

Cooper puts a hand on Mazen's shoulder, then walks away.

INT./EXT. - EMBASSY CAR - DAY

Cooper walks to the waiting car. An American flag is mounted on the right fender, Lalanga's flag on the left.

He gets in. Lulay and Ayana are holding hands in the back seat. Sam Brown starts the motor.

They negotiate the clogged streets of the Arab quarter, and pass along the wharf to Parliament Square. A huge banner with Josef Nimwe's portrait hangs down the front of the Parliament Building. Blazoned across it: 'I AM LALANGA'S FUTURE!'

COOPER

I think the people wanted something better.

SAM BROWN

People usually get what they deserve.

COOPER

What if they don't have a choice?

SAM BROWN

They create those circumstances, too.

COOPER

You're lucky the Foreign Minister pulled the Colonel out front, otherwise I wouldn't have had a shot.

SAM BROWN

We weren't sure he could pull it off.

COOPER

You mean it was planned? What's he get out of it?

SAM BROWN

A green card and a job at the UN.

COOPER

So let me get this straight. Nimwe takes control of the country with help from the Americans, so presumably he'll let the Americans take control of the oil. It's never been about diamonds, has it?

SAM BROWN

It's been about America's national interests. Do you have a problem with that?

COOPER
The Secretary of State might. Are
you running the country now?

SAM BROWN
Me? No.

COOPER
I meant 'you' Langley.

SAM BROWN
We're advisors.

COOPER
I bet you are.

Sam Brown turns into the neighborhoods.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Sadiq didn't deserve what he got.

SAM BROWN
He came home to launder money for
terrorists by using his diamonds.

COOPER
He had changed his mind.

Sam Brown turns into the bar district.

COOPER (CONT'D)
(to Lulay)
Are you sure you want to do this?

Lulay nods, scared but defiant as they pull up to The Mining
Pan and all get out.

EXT. - THE MINING PAN - DAY

Ayana clings to Lulay, who is holding a small cardboard box.

COOPER
I'm not letting you go in there alone.

LULAY
Juma don't want me now. I'm too full
of ideas!

Lulay shoves the cardboard box into his hands.

LULAY (CONT'D)
You take care of this!

She pushes through the saloon doors.

INT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

The bar grows quiet.

Juma looks up from the bar, catches Cooper's eye looking over the top of the doors from outside.

Lulay goes behind the beaded curtain and Juma goes back to wiping down the bar.

EXT. - THE MINING PAN - DAY

Cooper holds up the box for Sam Brown to see. On its side is written, 'Makes men bigger'. He pulls out a handful of condoms.

COOPER
She's really something, isn't she?

SAM BROWN
How is she going to get more?

COOPER
She'll find a way.

Juma makes a lot of noise filling a glass with ice.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Why don't you arrest him if you know he's trafficking in kids?

SAM BROWN
It's not my job.

COOPER
How about talking to your buddies in the new government?

Sam Brown indicates some men who are having a good time with the young prostitutes.

SAM BROWN
That's some of Nimwe's top guys over there. You think they're going to deny themselves the spoils of war? For most of them, this is the only thing they've been fighting for.

COOPER
Not Lalanga's future?

INT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

Lulay splashes out the beaded curtain, heading straight for the saloon doors. Again the room quiets down for her.

Juma holds out a glass of ice water. When she ignores him, he shakes it, making the ice tinkle. He laughs derisively.

EXT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

Cooper shoves the cardboard box into Sam Brown's arms.

COOPER
Watch this!

He grabs Sam Brown's gun from his shoulder holster.

INT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

Seeing Cooper enter with a gun, Juma goes for his pistol.

COOPER
Don't even think about it.
(to Lulay)
Get outside!

She runs out, and Cooper keeps his gun raised, covering everybody in the bar. A record on the jukebox ends, and in the silence the ice machine wheezes noisily.

Cooper whirls on it, pumps several rounds into it. It rattles and dies.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I think the ice machine is broken.

A new song starts, and Cooper walks out backwards.

EXT. THE MINING PAN - DAY

Cooper hands Sam Brown his gun, and asks Lulay:

COOPER
Are you ready to go home-home?

Lulay replies with a broad smile.

COOPER (CONT'D)
(to Ayana)
I bet you can hear that smile.

That makes Ayana smile, too.

AYANA
You can't hear a smile.

LULAY
Don't you forget me, Cooper.

COOPER

That's not even remotely possible.

She presses her mother's picture into his hand.

LULAY

I'm planning to look like my mother,
so when you look at her, you will be
looking at me, too.

AYANA

Are you going to come visit Lulay,
Mister Cooper?

COOPER

I hope some day.

LULAY

Is that a Cooper promise?

COOPER

I hope so.

She kisses two fingers, and presses them to his forehead.

LULAY

You're going to be okay, too.

She takes the box in one hand, Ayana's hand in the other.

LULAY (CONT'D)

Come on, Little Sister, we're going
home-home.

SAM BROWN

(half-heartedly)

It's crazy not to let me drive you at
least to the edge of town.

LULAY

I'm taking back every step they stole
from me, and when I get home, I'm
taking back everything the *maribout*
stole from me, too! That way, nobody
has any part of me but me!

SAM BROWN

It's too dangerous.

COOPER

There's no point arguing with her.

Hand-in-hand, Lulay and Ayana walk off.

SAM BROWN

She's tough.

COOPER
She better be.

The girls come to a corner where they'll soon be out of sight.
Lulay turns around one last time.

LULAY
THAT WAS A COOPER PROMISE!

Then they're gone, and a man follows them around the corner.

COOPER
You sure you've got someone following
them all the way?

SAM BROWN
For the next three days, there aren't
two safer girls in Africa.

Beat.

SAM BROWN (CONT'D)
How about you, Sergeant Chance, are
you ready to go home-home?

COOPER
No brig time?

SAM BROWN
No brig time.

COOPER
Yeah, I'm ready to go home-home.

FADE OUT...