

RHODES

And we were all getting on so well.

Rhodes and Kasumi study the wall.

EXT. UENO RUINS - NIGHT

A much different part of town than the American-dominated Imperial Hotel and GHQ. Grimy, brash and crowded, where every inch of territory is jealously guarded.

Clots of CITIZENS clamour back and forth. Makeshift bars and eateries illuminate the alleys with a hazy glow.

Lined up along the jagged ruins of a brick wall, sticking close together -- eight JAPANESE TEENAGE GIRLS, dressed up in colourful ragtag outfits and precise, vibrant make-up -- renegade starlets of the streets.

All smoke cigarettes. All look vaguely intimidating.

SUPER: CHAPTER TWO - BALLAD OF THE BLOOD CHERRY GANG

Each of them has a name, but the important two stand in the centre, shoulder to shoulder. They are --

HIFUMI HOSHIMIYA, 19, with an evenly beautiful, porcelain face betrayed by an unruly mouth that snarls when she talks. A pink fur coat hangs around her shoulders, her hair tussled back in a messy ponytail. We might recognise Hifumi as the same timid prostitute from the very first scene.

MOMO MINAMI, 19, graceful and long-limbed. Taller than Hifumi, she wears her long hair straight, with ribbons tied in bows. An over-sized U.S. baseball jacket falls around her frame like a shawl.

A couple of U.S. OFFICERS strut past the girls.

MOMO

Hey, hey. Wanna play?

The officers slow, look the girls up and down.

HIFUMI

We take money, cigarettes, food, make-up or clothes. But only nice clothes. Because we are nice girls.

MOMO

Silk stockings are my favourite.

The officers look at each other, considering -- POLICE SIRENS rise in the distance, getting closer. The officers glance in their direction.

OFFICER
Maybe next time, honey.

HIFUMI
Okay, bye bye.

The girls all wave as the officers walk on. Hifumi flicks her cigarette down.

HIFUMI
Fucking cops. Predictable as my period. Momo. Let's go.

Momo nods. The girl on Hifumi's right pulls her jacket.

GIRL
Hifumi, are you sure? One of us can go in.

HIFUMI
No. There's a couple of things I need to take care of personally. See you in three days.

She pulls her jacket on.

HIFUMI
And if you catch that fucking Ken-chan skulking around while I'm gone, throw a brick in his face until he pays us the full ten thousand. I haven't seen shit from him since the last payment, and he's a week late.

REST OF THE GANG
Understood!

Hifumi nods at them. Her and Momo peel away, saunter in the direction of the sirens.

EXT. UENO STATION - NIGHT

A MELEE ensuing. UNIFORMED POLICE do their best to round up PAN-PAN GIRLS, easily identifiable by their colourful attire and hostile attitude.

They hustle them towards an open-air POLICE TRUCK, standing in the centre of the chaos. Police whistles SLICE through the air.

A group of CITIZENS and SOLDIERS watch on, some amused, some agitated, some judgmental.

Hifumi and Momo approach the scene. A cop with a megaphone spots them, points at them excitedly.

MEGAPHONE COP
Pan-pan! Pan-pan! Stop!

He rushes up to them, still wielding the megaphone.

MEGAPHONE COP
*Unauthorised prostitution will not
be tolerated! You will be detained!*

Hifumi and Momo hold their hands up.

HIFUMI
You got us. We fuck for money.

MOMO
*More money per dick than you earn
in a week.*

Hifumi sniggers. The cop grabs her wrist --

MEGAPHONE COP
Get to the truck, sluts! Now! NOW!

The megaphone SQUEALS. He SHOVES them towards the truck.

They shrug him off, take a seat on the open back of the vehicle -- observe the fracas around them.

The cops bounce around excitedly, bustling women and girls towards the truck. Momo nods at one particular scuffle --

MOMO
She's not even a Pan-pan.

Hifumi follows her gaze -- two cops drag a GIRL out of a doorway. Dressed in a kimono, with very little make-up.

HIFUMI
Fucking idiots.

Hifumi takes out a packet of Camel cigarettes. Gives one to Momo, flicks one in her own mouth -- SNICKTS her U.S. army Zippo, lights it.

Leans over, ignites Momo's cigarette with the tip of her own, their mouths a few inches apart.

They pull apart -- smoke and wait. Bored.

A cop flits past, tries to take the cigarette from Hifumi's mouth. She SWIPES his hand away.

HIFUMI
*Illegal to smoke now too, you
fucking pig?*

The cop SLAPS her face.

EXT. POLICE TRUCK - NIGHT

Thirty-odd Pan-pans crush together on the back of the open-air police truck as it JOLTS over the streets. Hemmed in by ropes, jostling off each other.

Not just Pan-pans though -- a couple of normal-clothed Japanese women in the mix, including the Kimono Girl, who hangs her head and sobs.

Hifumi and Momo pressed together on one side -- a SNEERING GIRL stares at Hifumi on the other. Hifumi notices.

HIFUMI
What're you looking at?

SNEERING GIRL
*You. I've heard all about you,
Hifumi Hoshimiya. You think you're
better than the rest of us.*

HIFUMI
*I'm better than you, that's for
sure. You've got a face like a
badger's vagina. Don't point it at
me.*

SNEERING GIRL
*Fuck you, I make more money in a
day than you do in a week.*

MOMO
*Hey, Hifumi. They've caught
themselves a one-of-a-kind Pan-pan
here. She's such a bad fuck, she
ends up paying the clients out of
shame.*

SNEERING GIRL
I'll wring your neck, bitch!

The girl lunges towards Momo -- Hifumi **BOOTS** her off the edge of the truck. She slips through the ropes, **THUDS** on the ground, **SHRIEKS** in pain.

Hifumi and Momo cackle. The truck **LURCHES** to a stop, cops hop out, blowing **WHISTLES**, **SHOUTING**, generally overexcited.

EXT. YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Yoshiwara hospital, a shabby, monotone building, rises up from the wooden shacks encircling it. A barbed wire fence marks the perimeter. A few **PAN-PAN GIRLS** clutch the wire, leaning lazily against it.

The **SILHOUETTES** of **GIRLS** float across the top floor windows. Some lean out into the night, **CALLING** to each other.

Police herd the new catch of girls off the back of the truck, whistles **SHRIEKING**. They line them up single-file, facing the hospital.

The Kimono Girl ends up behind Hifumi. She taps her timidly on the shoulder --

KIMONO GIRL
Hoshimiya-san, was it?

Hifumi glances back.

HIFUMI
What do you want?

KIMONO GIRL
What's going to happen to us in there?

HIFUMI
Ever been fucked?

KIMONO GIRL
What? No! Of course not!

HIFUMI
Well good for you, they'll let you go. If you have been fucked, they'll keep you for few days and test you.

The girl in the Kimono starts to cry.

HIFUMI
*If I were you, I'd try getting
 fucked. It's a lot of fun.*

The cops SHOUT in unison, motion forward.

HIFUMI
But never do it for free.

The girls walk single-file towards the hospital doors.

A GUARD stands sentry at the entrance, watches the Pan-pans file in.

Hifumi palms a packet of cigarettes from her jacket, slips them into the Guard's top pocket as she passes. He smiles.

GUARD
Welcome home, Miss Hifumi.

HIFUMI
Good to be back, Ryu-kun.

She winks at him, moves into the main building.

INT. YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Hifumi finds Momo waiting just inside the doors.

The inside of Yoshiwara hospital doesn't look anything like a hospital -- it appears more like a social club.

PAN-PAN GIRLS roam freely, sprawling on hospital beds, swigging from beer bottles. JAPANESE MEN and more than a few AMERICAN G.I.s saunter back and forth, laughing with the girls, smoking, chatting, hugging.

DOCTORS and NURSES crisscross, conferring with each other, largely ignoring the copious scenes of courtship occurring on their watch. Everything is gritty, grimy, unsanitised.

Momo rests her arm on Hifumi's shoulder, leans on her.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - DAY

Hifumi slouches in a chair, rocking back and forth. She's alone in the small office.

The door opens -- harried DR. ENDO, 40, enters, clasping a file. He sighs when he sees Hifumi.

DR. ENDO
Hifumi, again?

Hifumi shrugs.

DR. ENDO
*And I suppose next on my list is
Momo Minami, yes?*

HIFUMI
*Take it up with the cops. We didn't
drive ourselves here.*

Dr. Endo pulls out a chair and sits opposite Hifumi.

HIFUMI
*I guess we can skip the first test.
I can do a lot of things, but I
can't grow a hymen back.*

DR. ENDO
*Seventy two hours here and all the
usual exams. You know the score.*

She pulls out her cigarettes, rests one in her mouth. She catches Dr. Endo looking somewhat enviously at them. She offers him one from the box -- he shakes his head.

DR. ENDO
*How much sexual intercourse have
you had since you last came here?*

SNICKT -- Hifumi lights up.

HIFUMI
*I don't count the customers. Just
the money.*

DR. ENDO
Could you estimate?

HIFUMI
A lot.

DR. ENDO
*You're putting yourself at risk.
Every night, many times a night. If
you keep going so recklessly, you
will catch something we cannot
cure.*

HIFUMI

*Well, sometimes a little
self-sacrifice is unavoidable in
service of the Emperor.*

DR. ENDO

*Emperor Hirohito does not concern
himself with prostitution--*

HIFUMI

*Well, maybe he should. Far as I can
tell, with all the money we're
bringing in, us Pan-pans are the
only thing saving this country's
economy from total fucking
collapse. Not to mention we're
keeping those rabid Americans
satiated, protecting the chastity
of all the innocent Japanese
maidens out there who'll never have
to know the brutal caress of a
foreign dick.*

Dr. Endo has no immediate response. Hifumi takes a drag.

HIFUMI

*No thanks necessary, Doc. I'm just
proud to be a patriot.*

She produces two bars of MEIJI CHOCOLATE from her pocket,
slides them across the desk.

HIFUMI

For your son. I'm sure he's hungry.

Dr. Endo looks at the chocolate a moment, hesitating -- then
bows his head in deep thanks.

INT. CORRIDOR/HOSPITAL ROOM - YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - DAY

Hifumi and Momo lean against the wall on either side of a
closed door.

A NURSE exits the room, bustles off down the corridor.
Hifumi and Momo glance at each other -- then both produce
GAS MASKS from behind their back, pull them on.

Momo kicks in the door to the room -- they STORM inside.

JUN JOJIMA, a fawn-like Pan-pan of 18, looks up in shock as
the two masked figures thrust into her room.

Momo pounces on her, YANKS her hair, twists her head back, CLAMPS a palm over her mouth. Hifumi grabs a pair of MEDICAL SCISSORS from a nearby tray, holds them up to Jun's neck.

HIFUMI

*Don't make a sound or I'll bleed
you out quicker than they can fill
you back up.*

Jun nods repeatedly.

HIFUMI

*Stop fucking nodding. You know who
we are, Jun-chan?*

Jun nods once, quickly.

HIFUMI

*You know why we're holding a sharp
object to your throat?*

Jun hesitates -- then shakes her head. Hifumi inches her face closer to Jun, her eyes wide and feral behind the mask.

HIFUMI

*Tokyo's a pretty big city. You can
fuck for free in a lot of places.
But not Ueno. That's Blood Cherry
turf. You get fucked in Ueno,
you're getting paid for it, and
when you get paid for it, you kick
your fair share up to us. Or else
the consequences come and find you.*

JUN

*Please--it was just one guy--I
really like him, we're going to get
married--*

HIFUMI

*Congratulations. Charge him double.
Momo.*

Momo shoves Jun face first onto the bed, holds her down. Hifumi bunches up Jun's hair in a makeshift ponytail.

JUN

*No, please--please don't--I'll pay
you whatever--*

HIFUMI

*Oh you're still going to pay,
bitch, don't worry about that.*

Hifumi primes the scissors and CUTS -- Jun SHRIEKS, slides to the floor. A huge clump of her long dark hair remains in Hifumi's clenched fist.

Momo rifles for Jun's wallet -- finds it, extracts all the notes in it -- tosses it next to its crumpled owner.

HIFUMI

Next time, it'll be your face.

Jun sobs into the stained linoleum.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - DAY

A disused operating room, lit from over head by a single light. Implements and equipment lie discarded -- a yellowed bed in the centre, dividing the room in two.

Hifumi and Momo stand on one side of it. The door opens -- THREE TEENAGE PAN-PANS swagger in. They line up on the other side of the bed -- the girls eye each other up.

The one in the centre is ERIKO EZURA, 19, stern and fierce. She nods slightly at Hifumi -- Hifumi nods back.

ERIKO

Eriko Ezura, representing the Black Crane Gang.

HIFUMI

Hifumi Hoshimiya, representing the Blood Cherry Gang.

All the girls bow their heads simultaneously.

ERIKO

First things first. A Black Crane girl was assaulted in Blood Cherry territory last month.

HIFUMI

Yeah, I only heard about this last week. It wasn't sanctioned by me.

BLACK CRANE #1

She wasn't even working, she was just passing through.

MOMO

Maybe she should've found another way home then.

BLACK CRANE #2
*One of your girls jumped her,
 unprovoked, broke her nose--*

MOMO
*'Unprovoked' is debatable. Our girl
 says it was a personal quarrel. Too
 much sake, some insults were
 thrown, it got out of hand--*

ERIKO
*The fact remains her nose was
 broken. One of my top earners, she
 couldn't work for two weeks. And
 her face is still fucking crooked.*

Hifumi flicks her head at Momo. They turn away from the
 Black Crane girls, huddle together.

HIFUMI
 (to Momo)
Who was that, Chiyoko?

MOMO
*You know what she's like when she
 drinks.*

HIFUMI
*Problem is I don't know what she's
 like when she doesn't drink.*

Momo stifles a snigger.

MOMO
*Dock her. She'll throw a tantrum,
 but she'll get over it.*

HIFUMI
*Well she can answer to me. I'm the
 one who should be throwing her
 through a fucking window. This is
 costing all of us.*
 (pause)
*Fucking Chiyoko and her temper.
 We're lucky it was just a nose.*

Hifumi and Momo turn back around.

HIFUMI
Alright, how much?

ERIKO
Sixty thousand should cover it.

HIFUMI
Well it's not sixty, we all know that. I'm not paying that steeply for a personal feud that could've just as easily happened on your side of town.

Eriko waits.

HIFUMI
Twenty flat, and five percent of Chiyoko's earnings for one month.

ERIKO
Twenty percent.

HIFUMI
Ten, and that's it.

Eriko considers, looks to her fellow gang members.

ERIKO
Okay. But if we see your girl Chiyoko in our territory, we'll cut her up and send her back home piece by piece.

HIFUMI
I'll make sure to tighten her leash. Next thing, we've got this psychopath running around killing Pan-pans.

A subtle tension tightens the room.

ERIKO
Anzu Aki makes it nine so far.

HIFUMI
I've heard rumours that these are some kind of retaliation murders from inside the Pan-pan gangs. But let's get one fucking thing straight, no Pan-pan is going around cutting vaginas and tits off other girls.

ERIKO
Agreed. All of the Black Cranes concur. We're being hunted from the outside.

HIFUMI

We all know the police have a better chance of catching collective syphilis than the actual fucking culprit, so I'm proposing we start sharing information between the gangs. The Black Cranes and the Blood Cherries are the two biggest--we can set a precedent.

ERIKO

No, the Black Cranes are the biggest. The Blood Cherries are the second biggest, by a significant margin.

Hifumi narrows her eyes.

HIFUMI

Don't worry Eriko, I'm not trying to be your friend. I'm offering mutual protection through co-operation, on this matter alone.

ERIKO

I know what you're offering, I'm not stupid.

(considers)

Fine. Any leads, suspects, suspicious clients, we'll share. But the information goes between you and me, and that's it. I don't want a fucking school playground out there.

HIFUMI

Agreed. I still have to reassure one of my girls the Americans aren't going to drop a third bomb on us.

ERIKO

And one other thing. When we catch him--we get to kill him together.

Hifumi smirks. Eriko smirks back.

INT. BATHROOM - YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The whole bathroom is tiled bright pink. Hifumi applies her make-up in a cracked mirror. Momo sits behind in one of the wooden cubicles, pissing with the door open.

MOMO

'Fumi, I've been thinking. We should buy a camera.

HIFUMI

Why, you want to take up modelling?

MOMO

Nah, not for another couple of years. I was thinking--loads of people are having sex when they shouldn't be, right? With people that they probably shouldn't be having it with?

HIFUMI

That's true. I fucked a Brigadier General a few weeks ago. Said he had a wife and two kids in Chicago.

MOMO

Right, so there's an untapped market there for blackmail. We catch clients in the act, blackmail 'em for more money. We could blackmail other Pan-pans too, extort them for a cut of whatever they make.

Hifumi dabs her cheeks with powder, considers.

HIFUMI

I've seen cameras at the Ginza PX. Might be pricey but we could definitely get one.

Momo stands, pulls up her underwear.

MOMO

We could make Niki designated photographer. She won an art award back in school.

HIFUMI

You're pretty smart, Momo.

Momo smiles self-consciously at the compliment.

MOMO

*Nah, I just don't like seeing Eriko
talk down to you like that.*

HIFUMI

*I've got plans for that bitch,
trust me--*

JUN (O.S.)

Hifumi!

Hifumi stops, glances up -- sees Jun Jojima approaching her. She curls her lip, goes back to her make-up.

HIFUMI

Jun-chan.

(pause)

Your hair looks like shit.

Momo clocks the scalpel before Hifumi. She lunges from the cubicle as Jun swings at Hifumi's neck --

-- TACKLES Jun to the floor as the blade SLICES Hifumi's cheek. She SHRIEKS -- blood SLAPS the mirror.

Momo struggles to control the FLAILING, HISSING Jun. The scalpel FLITS back and forth -- Hifumi leaps to help, grabs Jun's wrist, BANG BANG BANGS her hand off the floor.

The scalpel falls. Momo PUNCHES Jun in the face, once, twice -- she YELPS, finally goes limp -- starts sobbing.

JUN

*My hair--he'll never love me
without my hair! You're the devil,
Hifumi, you're the devil--*

Hifumi looks at Momo in silent gratitude. Momo nods like it was nothing. Slivers of blood run down Hifumi's cheek. Momo pulls her sleeve over her palm, wipes it off.

HIFUMI

Hold her head.

Momo grips Jun's head. Hifumi snatches up the scalpel.

JUN

You're the devil--the devil--

She pulls open Jun's jaw, holds the scalpel in it, blade pressing against the soft corner of her mouth. Jun's eyes widen in terror, tears streaking down her face.

HIFUMI
*Good thing about hair is that it
 grows back. This, you're stuck
 with.*

She YANKS the blade. Jun SCREAMS.

INT. CORRIDOR - YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Hifumi and Momo stumble down the hospital corridor, arm-in-arm, giggling with each other. They both clutch bottles of KIRIN BEER. Hifumi hasn't bothered to clean her wound -- dried blood still stains her cheek.

Hifumi notices the Kimono Girl sitting on a hospital bed along the corridor. She points, calls out --

HIFUMI
*Hey, Kimono, what are you still
 doing here? Thought you said you'd
 never been fucked? Liar, liar!*

Momo falls about with laughter. Kimono Girl holds her face in her hands. Hifumi approaches -- straightens, serious now.

HIFUMI
Hey. Look at me.

Kimono Girl lifts her head.

HIFUMI
*There's no shame in it. Don't ever
 let them shame you.*
 (pause)
*If you're sick of being hungry and
 poor and stamped on, and you decide
 you want to make some money, or
 food, or clothes, or whatever, from
 having sex, you come and see me.
 We're the Blood Cherry Gang--we're
 easy to find, just look for the
 girls who are much prettier than
 all the rest. You track us down and
 you ask for me--Hifumi Hoshimiya,
 Queen of Tokyo.*

Kimono Girl nods slowly. Hifumi and Momo grin down at her.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A number of loitering SOLDIERS, PATIENTS and PAN-PANS glance up as Hifumi and Momo careen into the Rec Room.

Everyone's holding bottles of beer, chatting. Smoke hangs thick in the air -- recreation in a very relaxed sense.

Hifumi motions at the mahogany NIPPON GAKKI-made PIANO in the corner -- Momo nods, skips over to it.

She perches on the stool, pulls up her sleeves. Hifumi saunters up with her arms in the air.

MOMO

Georgia?

Hifumi winks at her, grins. Momo nods, takes a moment --

-- then PLAYS the trilling interlude of Billie Holiday's 1941 version of 'GEORGIA ON MY MIND'. She's not winging it -- it's obvious she's had some kind of musical training.

Hifumi leans back on the piano top, tilts her head --

HIFUMI

(singing)

*Georgia, Georgia--the whole day
through--*

Her voice isn't bad -- in fact, it's pretty good.

HIFUMI

(singing)

*Just an old sweet song--keeps
Georgia on my mind--*

Her English isn't bad either. A few of the gathered look up, impressed. A couple of the Pan-pans roll their eyes.

HIFUMI

(singing)

Georgia, Georgia--a song of you--

Hifumi looks at Momo. They share a smile.

HIFUMI

(singing)

*Comes as sweet and clear as
moonlight through the pines--*

A couple of soldiers begin to CLAP in rhythm. More join. Hifumi leans into her performance, enjoying the attention.

HIFUMI
 (singing)
*Other arms reach out to me--other
 eyes smile tenderly--still in
 peaceful dreams I see--the road
 leads back to you--*

Momo watches her bloodstained friend sway to the music.

INT./EXT. YOSHIWARA HOSPITAL - DAY

Hifumi and Momo walk towards the main doors -- the same guard, Ryu-kun, smiles and opens it for them.

RYU-CHAN
Miss Hifumi. Miss Momo.

HIFUMI
Until next time, Ryu-kun.

The girls step out of the hospital, walk a few paces. They squint in the harsh sunlight, a little worse for wear.

They both pull out a pair of sunglasses -- orange circular ones for Momo, green aviators for Hifumi -- put them on.

MOMO
*Well. Let's go and see if Ken-chan
 got that brick to his face after
 all.*

HIFUMI
*I don't think Ken-chan magically
 shat out ten thousand yen. He
 definitely got the brick.*

Hifumi and Momo snort with laughter, saunter off into the Tokyo haze.

INT. PACHINKO PARLOUR - DAY

A metal ball bounces its way down a Pachinko machine. It hits the bottom, disappears into the slot -- then balls ERUPT from the machine, cascading into a bucket below.

Rhodes CLAPS in surprise.

RHODES
 Oh fuck yes!

A PATRON looks over, nods in begrudged congratulations.