

Sins of the Father

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FADE IN:

INT. NYC CHURCH- STAGING AREA- DAY (1929)

KATCHADOUR MARDIROSIAN, a tall, wiry, dapper Armenian man in his early twenties leans over peaking through a crack between the door and its frame. He is wearing a nice suit and he peers into the main hall of a church.

Katchadour sees that the right side of the church is packed full of people. In the crowd, he notices ELSA, an attractive, nineteen-year-old Armenian girl with cropped hair, dressed in a chic flapper-style dress. Elsa is already crying.

He takes a deep breath, and straightens out his suit.

TALBOT (O.S.)

Katchadour, you have lost your mind.

He turns around to face GEORGE TALBOT, twenty-three years-old, tall and fair skinned, with dark brown eyes and perfectly styled brown hair. Talbot, who is also wearing a suit, leans against a nearby wall smoking a cigarette.

TALBOT

You're really going to marry this sheba?

KATCHADOUR

Absolutely.

TALBOT

But you've never even met.

KATCHADOUR

We will soon enough.

Katchadour smiles to himself and turns back through the door crack unconcerned by Talbot's words.

TALBOT (O.S.)

Most people around here would say you're not the marrying type.

Katchadour doesn't look up.

KATCHADOUR

(sarcastically)

You are truly doing a swell job as best man.

(CONTINUED)

TALBOT (O.S.)

What are you peeping at anyways?

Talbot looks through the door crack as well.

TALBOT

I see Elsa is already crying...  
You'd think we're at a funeral.

Katchadour gets up and leans against the wall as Talbot continues to peer out at the crowd. Talbot raises his eyebrows as he sees that only three lonely guests sit amongst a sea of empty pews on the left side of the church.

TALBOT

Where the hell are all her people?

Katchadour takes a drag from Talbot's cigarette and gives it back to him.

KATCHADOUR

She's new in town.

A door on the other side of the room opens and the thin and wizened, 65 year-old MINISTER AVEDIG walks in. Talbot doesn't notice.

TALBOT

More like fresh off the--

AVEDIG

Show time boys.

Startled, Talbot jumps and turns around, cigarette still in his mouth. Katchadour stands up straight and begins flattening his suit again.

Avedig removes the cigarette from Talbot's mouth and drops it in to a water cup on a nearby table.

AVEDIG

Mr. Talbot.

Katchadour snickers.

AVEDIG

Ready Mr. Mardirosian?

Katchadour inhales, revealing his first sign of nervousness. He nods at Avedig.

INT. CHURCH- MAIN HALL- DAY

Katchadour and Talbot walk out with Minister Avedig to the altar of a simple, yet attractive brick church. Talbot stands behind Katchadour on the right side of the church in front of the jam packed pews.

Katchadour looks at the crowd to see many people waving, smiling and occasionally winking at him. The flapper girl continues to cry. Talbot leans in and whispers to Katchadour.

TALBOT (O.S.)  
Last chance to back out.

Katchadour doesn't pay attention to him. He is staring anxiously at the back of the church.

The church ORGAN begins playing the BRIDAL MARCH. Katchadour takes a gulp and straightens himself up.

The crowd stands and Katchadour looks down the long aisle to see two large double doors open at the end.

EUPHEMIA, a 19-year-old Armenian woman appears. She has classically beautiful features and a mature beyond her years countenance. She wears a pristine white, turn-of the century style, gown with a structured waistline.

Katchadour catches his breath. He exhales and all signs of nervousness leave his person.

Entirely captivated, he watches her as she walks calmly and confidently down the aisle.

Talbot sees Euphemia and catches his breath. He stares at her for a moment before turning his glance to the enraptured Katchadour.

She reaches the end of the aisle and stands opposite Katchadour. She looks up at him and gives a slight smile.

AVEDIG  
Welcome. We have gathered here  
today...

INT. CANDY SHOP- NIGHT

Katchadour opens the glass door to his small, old fashioned candy shop and shows in Euphemia, who is now wearing a simple cotton dress. He carries her shabby carpet bag, and she has her wedding dress draped over her arms.

(CONTINUED)

KATCHADOUR

This is the shop. It was really my father's shop. I only inherited it last year.

Euphemia stares at him curiously then turns her gaze to the unlit shop, which is sparse and gloomy in the darkness. She walks behind the counter and sees a large backroom filled with baking supplies.

He watches her as she explores the shop. She returns to his side and looks at him inquisitively.

KATCHADOUR

Come on,  
(gestures towards a side door)  
the apartment is upstairs.

INT. APARTMENT- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Standing at the entryway, Katchadour shows Euphemia into his simple, somewhat messy upstairs apartment. She walks around the decently sized living room, admiring the various pieces of antiquated furniture and lace coverings that surround her.

He notices her grip tighten on the wedding dress she holds in her arms.

KATCHADOUR

Do you like it?

EUPHEMIA

(heavy accent)  
It is better than that boarding house.

Katchadour smiles. He gestures behind her.

KATCHADOUR

There's a small kitchen through there. And then the bedroom is over here.

He opens a door to his side. She looks around curiously and walks into the bedroom. He follows her.

INT. APARTMENT- BEDROOM- NIGHT

The bedroom is small, tidy, and cheerful. Katchadour places her suitcase on the large bed, which takes up a good portion of the room.

Katchadour leans on the wall opposite her. He watches her carefully hang her wedding dress over a chair near the door. She peers down at the dress and strokes the lace lightly.

KATCHADOUR

You know, you didn't need to change out of your dress so quick. We could have stayed longer-- celebrated.

EUPHEMIA

I do not want to dirty Mrs. Avedig's dress. It was kind of her to lend it to me.

KATCHADOUR

Is this all you've brought?

EUPHEMIA

Is all I own.

KATCHADOUR

Where is your accent from?

EUPHEMIA

I learned English in Egypt.

KATCHADOUR

How did you end up in Egypt from Armenia?

Euphemia looks up at him as if noticing him for the first time.

EUPHEMIA

How long have you be here?

KATCHADOUR

Me? I was born in New York City. Just down the street from here actually.

EUPHEMIA

Of course.

(CONTINUED)

KATCHADOUR

What do you think of the city so far?

EUPHEMIA

I think I do not know it very well.

KATCHADOUR

I'm sure that will change.

Katchadour moves the suitcase aside and sits on the bed. Euphemia hesitantly sits next to him. She stares at her hands. He looks at her and smiles.

KATCHADOUR

Euphemia, I'm glad we're married. You know, I liked you from the first moment I saw you.

EUPHEMIA

This morning?

KATCHADOUR

Two weeks ago. At the flower stand. You stood and looked at them for a long time, smelling them in, but didn't buy any...

She looks up at him and smiles shyly. They stare at each other for a moment before Katchadour leans in and kisses her. She quickly breaks away.

KATCHADOUR

I'm sorry. We should takes some time-- some time to get to know each other.

EUPHEMIA

We are married now. I understand.

KATCHADOUR

You sure?

Euphemia nods. Katchadour looks into his new bride's eyes. He catches his breath.

He leans forward and gently, but firmly kisses her. She pulls back and turns off the light.

FADE OUT.

INT. APARTMENT- BEDROOM- EARLY MORNING

Katchadour wakes up in bed smiling. He groggily looks around. He is alone in the room.

He gets up and goes to walk to the door, but checks himself, seeing that he is only wearing boxer shorts.

He goes to the wardrobe and pulls on a pair of trousers and an undershirt. He takes a moment to comb out his hair in the mirror and then leaves the room walking with a cheerful jaunt in his step.

INT. APARTMENT- KITCHEN- EARLY MORNING

Katchadour walks into the doorway of the kitchen to find Euphemia cooking at the stove. He leans his arm against the doorway with a flirtatious grin on his face.

She quickly acknowledges him and shyly returns to her cooking.

He straightens up and gestures at the table, which is set for breakfast.

KATCHADOUR

You didn't need to do that.

EUPHEMIA

I not mind.

He smiles gratefully, and sits down at the table.

KATCHADOUR

I was thinking, since today is Sunday, and I normally keep the shop closed on Sundays, that after church, I could show you around a bit.

She nods, hands him a plate of eggs and comes to eat with him at the table.

KATCHADOUR

We could make it our wedding tour.

She smiles.

EUPHEMIA

I think bridal tours are only for the rich.

(CONTINUED)

KATCHADOUR  
Then today we're rich.

EXT. CHURCH STEPS- DAY

Katchadour and Euphemia walk down the steps of the Presbyterian church which is crowded with people dressed in their Sunday best. PATIL KAPRELIAN, a large, yet comely Armenian woman of fifty, and her formally dressed, middle aged friends, RAMELA and MINA, ambush them suddenly.

KATCHADOUR  
Hello ladies.

PATIL  
Katchadour, you must introduce us to your new wife here?

KATCHADOUR  
Of course. This is--

RAMELA  
So nice to meet you dear. Tell me, Euphemia, when did you move here from Armenia?

EUPHEMIA  
Well--

MINA  
You know you broke many young ladies' hearts by stealing our Katchadour away. It was quite the surprise.

Patil elbows Mina.

EUPHEMIA  
Oh?

Katchadour begins to scratch the back of his head nervously.

RAMELA  
Yes. When Avedig announced he was arranging a marriage for Katchadour here--

KATCHADOUR  
Yes. Well we should be leaving.

Katchadour begins to pull Euphemia away, but Patil hooks her arm.

(CONTINUED)

PATIL

Tell me dear. You do know how to  
make Lahmajoon?

KATCHADOUR

Ladies it was nice seeing you.

He hastily frees Euphemia from the group of ladies who begin  
to gossip together in a huddle.

KATCHADOUR

Don't listen to them. Just a bunch  
of old busy-bodies.

EUPHEMIA

What is "busy-bodies"?

He laughs and points his thumb back at them.

KATCHADOUR

Them.

Katchadour and Euphemia look back to see the three women in  
the middle of a large group of church goers who all appear  
to be watching them.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY- LOWER EAST SIDE- DAY

Katchadour leads her further into the Armenian borough of  
the city. The street is full of church goers returning home,  
many of whom wave at Katchadour as they pass.

He points out some of the shops which are closed for the  
Sabbath and waves to passers-by.

KATCHADOUR

What would you like to see? On our  
wedding tour, the sky is the limit.

EUPHEMIA

Can you show me the Statue of  
Liberty?

Katchadour stops.

KATCHADOUR

Yes, I think I can.

He takes her hand and leads her down a side street to their  
right. He looks up and around.

(CONTINUED)

KATCHADOUR

This way.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY- LOWER EAST SIDE- DAY

Katchadour picks up speed leading her down an empty alleyway. Euphemia excitedly tries to keep up.

He takes her hand and they sprint down a second alleyway to the left. Finally, they take another turn stopping in front of a tall tenement building.

They are both slightly out of breath and still holding hands as Katchadour leads her to the doorway. An old and haggard man, APEL, sits on the doorstep.

KATCHADOUR

Apel, will you let us into the building?

APEL

Hello, Katchadour. You want to go into the tenement?

Katchadour looks at Apel and nods towards Euphemia. Apel moves to unlock the door.

APEL

Go on in.

INT. TENEMENT STAIRWELL- DAY

Katchadour leads Euphemia into the gloomy building. They walk up two flights of stairs, passing a raggedly dressed five-year-old girl sitting in a doorway. Euphemia watches her as they pass by.

They walk up another flight of stairs to a hallway. Euphemia pauses when they pass an open doorway revealing a dirty and minimally furnished room where six scantily clad children are visible playing marbles.

Euphemia runs to catch up with Katchadour who is at the next flight of stairs.

EXT. TENEMENT ROOFTOP- DAY

Katchadour and Euphemia walk out onto the deserted roof, which overlooks the city towards the water. They are both hot and sweating from the warm day and find relief in a light breeze.

Euphemia gazes at him questioningly. He looks to the view momentarily and then points to a small green statue in the distance.

KATCHADOUR

There it is. But didn't you see her when you came in?

EUPHEMIA

I was in the steerage and I come in at night.

She squints out at the distance excitedly.

EUPHEMIA

I cannot see it.

He comes over and stands behind her. He takes her hand into his and points it to the Statue of Liberty. She beams at the sight of the statue.

His head is now very close to her's as he stands behind her. She looks back at him and he kisses her.

The kiss lasts only a moment. He continues to gaze at her contentedly, but she appears nervous under his gaze and shies away.

Embarrassed, he breaks off. He leans over the railing and holds out his thumb, which is large enough to block the statue from view if he closes one eye. He laughs at his trick.

KATCHADOUR

Amazing!

Katchadour realizes that Euphemia is not paying attention to him. Her eyes stare fixedly at the statue.

EUPHEMIA

Yes. Amazing.

He stands back and watches her face as she raptly looks into the distance. A content smile comes over his face.

INT. APARTMENT- KITCHEN- MORNING

Katchadour walks into the kitchen. He is dressed for work, except for his jacket, in trousers and suspenders.

Euphemia is dressed in a simple, clean dress pouring coffee into a mug at the table, which is fully set for breakfast.

Katchadour kisses her on the cheek. She lets him, but then shyly bows her head.

EUPHEMIA

I make breakfast for you.

KATCHADOUR

I see that. Thank you.

He sits down opposite her and they eat in silence. He watches her, but she avoids his gaze.

INT. CANDY SHOP- SAME DAY

The shop is pristine and filled with sunlight. Brightly colored candies in jars line all of the shelves.

Katchadour organizes cash in the register as his teenage assistant RUPEN helps an elderly couple pick out chocolates.

The shop BELL TINKLES and Talbot walks in, wearing normal everyday clothes. Katchadour sees him and smiles. He bounds over to meet him and shakes his hand. Talbot speaks into his ear:

TALBOT

So how'd it go first timer?

KATCHADOUR

You know I never kiss and tell.

TALBOT

Like hell you don't. And I sure hope you got more than a kiss.

They both laugh.

Euphemia opens the door to the store. They sober their laughter.

KATCHADOUR

Let's get a smoke outside.

Katchadour opens the door and leads Talbot out.

EXT. CANDY SHOP- DAY

Katchadour and Talbot stand in front of the candy shop, under the sign that reads "Mardirosian's Candy". The entire store is visible, perfectly framed in the window behind them.

They face the street which is full of cars and people.

A shady looking man stands further down the sidewalk watching them.

TALBOT

The shop seems to be doing well.

Katchadour shrugs his shoulders.

KATCHADOUR

Business as usual...

TALBOT

Seems just the other day we were both too small to peek over the counter.

KATCHADOUR

A lot of things have changed.

TALBOT

I might go listen to some jazz tonight.

At hearing the word "jazz" the shady looking man perks up and begins to inch towards them.

KATCHADOUR

At the usual joint? I'll be there.

TALBOT

I don't know. Might be too much excitement for an old married man such as yourself.

Katchadour punches him in the arm playfully. They laugh. At that moment, the shady looking man approaches them and reveals himself to be a BOOTLEGGER:

BOOTLEGGER

You boys seem like the types who might be looking for a swig of something.

Katchadour looks around nervously.

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TALBOT  
(to bootlegger)  
Scram.

The bootlegger slumps off.

TALBOT  
(to Katchadour)  
That shit they sell- probably more  
turpentine than alcohol.

Katchadour sees a couple of new customers walk in the shop.

KATCHADOUR  
I've got to get back. I'll be there  
tonight.

Talbot waves him off, as Katchadour walks away.

KATCHADOUR (O.S.)  
I'll bring Euphemia, so you can  
meet her.

Talbot's smile drops as Katchadour closes the door behind him. Through the candy store window, Talbot can be seen walking up to talk to the bootlegger who is now on the opposite side of the street. He is barely visible as he looks around and takes a swig from the bootlegger's flask.

INT. CANDY SHOP- NIGHT

The store is closed for the night and Katchadour sweeps up the floor while Euphemia cleans the counter.

They work in silence. Katchadour watches her across the room, but she doesn't notice.

KATCHADOUR  
Do you remember my best man,  
George, from the wedding?

Euphemia looks up at him for a moment.

EUPHEMIA  
Yes, of course. That man who  
frowns.

She wrinkles up her nose as if to mimic Talbot's expression. Katchadour walks over to her, carrying the broom.

(CONTINUED)

KATCHADOUR

He stopped by today. He wants us to go out to with him tonight.

EUPHEMIA

Out where?

She stops cleaning to look at him.

KATCHADOUR

Some jazz joint.

EUPHEMIA

Jazz joint?

KATCHADOUR

You know, dancing, music.

EUPHEMIA

Alcohol?

KATCHADOUR

Well yeah.

She returns to her dishes.

EUPHEMIA

This George Talbot, he is not Armenian.

KATCHADOUR

That's right. I think he's English, maybe Irish? Anyways, he was born here.

EUPHEMIA

How do you know him?

KATCHADOUR

He's more like a brother than anything. My parents took him in off the streets when he was a kid.

She turns around to look at him, seemingly a little surprised.

KATCHADOUR

So are you coming tonight?

EUPHEMIA

I think I stay here.

(CONTINUED)