

"VIRTUOUS SINS"
A 12th Century Thriller

EXT. ENGLAND COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Torrential rain drenches the land. Gusts of wind whistles and whines. Lightning reveals brief glimpses at distant hills. Thunder rumbles from all directions.

A lone, two-story inn prevails in the storming darkness. Yellow light spills out from its wooden beams.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

EDITH watches the storm. Her sleeveless tunic--covered in sweat, mud, food, and other unknown substances--betrays the grueling work of a barmaid. It's difficult to believe that she's only in her mid 20's.

Rain drips on her from the ceiling. She brushes down her frizzled hair.

WARIN, the innkeeper, rushes in behind Edith. His bloated belly shakes the room. He wheezes and sweats as he bounces around the confined space, reveals his nasally voice.

WARIN

Edith, what ye--? Stop lookin' out
the fuckin' window.

EDITH

Sorry, Warin. Won't happen again.

Warin knocks over a wooden pot which tumbles into a lit candle. The flame spreads to the wall. Warin stomps it out.

WARIN

Blast it! Whole place is gonna to
burn down.

(to Edith)

Here. Take this food with you. Give
it to the farmers.

Edith squeezes past his bulky frame. She looks around the kitchen, a cramped hotbox stuffed to the brim with herbs, preserved meat, and dead insects.

Edith grabs a pewter dish full of a mysterious pottage. She peeks up.

A green herb hanging on the wall catches her eye.

She glances over her shoulder and checks on Warin. He stares into the cauldron over the central fire.

Edith peeks back at the herb. She feels it between her fingers. She glances back.

Warin isn't looking.

Edith takes a deep breath, reaches for the herb--

Warin snatches her arm.

She flinches. Pottage spills. Warin yanks her towards him, brings his mouth inches from her face. Spit and other foulness spews from Warin's tongue and wets her cheek.

WARIN

What'd I say 'bout stealin' food?
Huh?!

EDITH

I--

WARIN

Belt it! Damn wench. You're done
after t'night. Ye hark?!

Warin presses his mouth even closer to her. Edith trembles.

VOICE (O.S.)

Oi! We still need our food.

WARIN

Ye will have it in a moment!

Warin swivels back to Edith, grips her tighter.

WARIN

If me catches ya stealin' again,
the Duke will hang ye.

Warin throws Edith against the wall. She braces herself from collapsing. Her eyes burn red. She snivels.

WARIN

Now fuckin' move. Don't forget the
bread.

Warin storms out.

Edith sets the dish down. She takes a deep breath, refuses to cry. She straightens her tunic and fixes her hair. She picks up the dish, grabs the bread, turns to leave--

She freezes. Edith sticks out her chin, puffs out air, and rips the herb off the wall.

INT. MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Edith looks around the compact, square room: a small bar, a few tables, a set of stairs, and a hearth fill up the space. The hard ground is covered by a layer of hay.

SUPERIMPOSE: ENGLAND, 1132

Edith's eyes fall on PARIS, a man who sits before the flaming hearth. He appears deathly ill. Sweat trickles down his spine. He taps his feet.

They catch eyes.

Edith nods at him before she steps to a small bar. Paris watches her greet the KNIGHT and SQUIRE who sit at it.

She places her hand on the squire's arm. Paris stares at the two men. He spits towards them, disgusted.

Paris observes Edith as she smiles and crosses towards the entrance where a long table is set up next to a window. FIVE FARMERS sit around it.

Paris scowls to himself. He storms up the stairs.

INT. 1ST ROOM - NIGHT

Paris kneels next to a bed. A hint of moonlight crawls into the dark room and shines onto VERONA, who lays in the bed.

Paris pulls the animal-skin blankets up to Verona's neck. Her hair clumps to her forehead. Her eyes wander aimlessly. Sweat bursts from her skin. She breathes in bursts. She coughs.

Paris kisses Verona's hand. He bows and brings the back of her hand to his brow. Paris mumbles a prayer.

The door creaks open. Edith enters.

EDITH
How she doin'?

PARIS
Worse.

EDITH
Let me see.

Edith reveals a leather canteen. She feels Verona's forehead. The woman stirs and mumbles. Paris paces.

PARIS
'Tis my fault. We knew a storm was
comin'.

EDITH
Matters not.

PARIS
The storm brought her death.

EDITH
Paris, you must be calm.

PARIS
Calm. Yes. Stay calm.

Edith brings out the stolen herb from her tunic. She twists the plant in her hands and stuffs it in the canteen.

EDITH
Give this to her. It shall remedy
some pain.

Paris snatches the canteen. He kneels next to Verona, sweeps the hair from her face.

PARIS
Verona? Ye hark? You must drink.

Paris places the canteen to her lips. Verona swallows.

PARIS
That's it.

EDITH
Make her drink often.

PARIS
I will. Thank ye, ma'am.

EDITH
(bows)
Let me know if ye need anythin'
else.

PARIS
Thank ye. Thank ye...

Paris smiles at Verona. He quells his quivering hands.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Edith closes the door behind her.

VOICE (O.S.)
What you doing there?

Edith spins. The knight from the bar, SIR ALGOR, towers over her. His muscular and svelte frame blocks her path.

EDITH
Helpin' a patron.

SIR ALGOR
You've always been so tender, so
nurturing.

Thunder booms. The inn shakes. The wooden walls creak. The moonlight disperses, only their eyes remain visible.

SIR ALGOR
I've missed you Edith, so much. You
working tonight?

EDITH
Not t'day.

SIR ALGOR
Why not?

EDITH
I'm sorry, Sir.

Edith scurries past him. Algor swings his arms around and pins Edith against the wall. The hilt of his sword pinches into her groin.

SIR ALGOR
What happened? You always do.
(beat)
Edith, what's wrong?

EDITH
Not t'night. Please.

SIR ALGOR
You've never refuted me before.

EDITH
T'day I am. Sir Algor, if you'd do
me the generosity.

Algor lifts Edith's chin up. He looks into her eyes, holds. He releases his arms. Edith slides past him.

SIR ALGOR
Is it the innkeeper?

Edith stops. She glances back.

EDITH
He dismissed me, startin' in the
morn.

SIR ALGOR
That corpulent dolt. Do you wish
his mind changed?

The knight grips the hilt of his sword. Edith hesitates, as
if she--

EDITH
No. No.

SIR ALGOR
I've always known he was cruel. How
could one abandon a woman so
beautiful?

Sir Algor comes upon Edith.

EDITH
Sir Algor--

SIR ALGOR
Edith, a woman as comely as
yourself should be thoroughly
indulged. Not strewn aside in the
gutter.

Sir Algor combs her frizzy hair. Edith reaches to deny--

SIR ALGOR
And what of your daughter?
(Edith freezes)
A daughter without a father. It's
unnatural. What's her name again?

EDITH
Emma.

SIR ALGOR
Emma. Poor, poor Emma. How could a
mother raise a begotten child with
no means?

EDITH
I--

SIR ALGOR
But you have means. Don't you? You
have me.

The knight scans her body from head to toe.

SIR ALGOR
 You've professed I'm your favorite.
 Am I not? Privilege me with
 alleviating your sorrows.

The knight brushes his hand down her arm to her hips. Edith snatches his hand, stops him from touching any lower.

SIR ALGOR
 Edith, I'll take care of you. My
 heart never fails to yearn for your
 touch. I'll pay double.

EDITH
 Triple.

SIR ALGOR
 (grins)
 Triple then.

Edith contemplates.

SIR ALGOR
 Madam, don't abandon a knight in
 the cold. Don't leave me yearning
 any longer.

Edith stares him down.

INT. 2ND ROOM - NIGHT

Edith lights a candle on a nightstand. She crosses to an opened window. Rain slams her face. She closes the wooden shutters. The *pit-pat* of rain creates a soothing lullaby.

Sir Algor undresses himself. He places his sword next to the door. He now only dons an over-sized shirt.

EDITH
 Money first.

SIR ALGOR
 In my trousers.

Edith walks to them. Algor stares at her hips as she walks. She takes money from the pockets.

SIR ALGOR
 Happy?

EDITH

Lean back.

Algor shuffles fully onto the bed. Edith undresses into a night gown. She sits next to him. Algor slides off his undergarments.

EDITH

What ye doin'? You think I am magically ready?

SIR ALGOR

Oh, right.

EDITH

At least warm me up first, ye fool.

Algor brings her in for a kiss. Their bodies interlock. She escorts his hands under her gown. He bites her neck. She slaps his head.

EDITH

You're not in charge.

SIR ALGOR

Yes, madam.

Edith guides his hands around her curves. Raindrops from above add to their increasing perspiration.

She straddles him, allows his hands to wander freely. She pushes down on the knight's chest. Their panting echoes with the howling wind. Edith swings Algor on top of her.

EDITH

Start workin', then.

Algor smiles. He lowers his head between her thighs.

Bang, bang, bang.

Thunder crackles. Or is that the door...?

Everything intermixes into indistinguishable noise.

Edith slithers. Her fingers wiggle.

Bang, bang, bang.

VOICE (O.S.)

(hardly noticeable)

Edith?!

Edith and Algor moan. They hear nothing but their passion.

The window shutters explode open. Wind and rain shower in.
The candlelight distinguishes.

Algor rips off his shirt. Edith feels his body. Algor leans
over her.

Bang, bang, bang.

VOICE (O.S.)

Edith! We needs your help!

The lovers ignore the clamor around them.

The storm climaxes. Every sound crescendos into utter chaos:
panting, howling, splatting, banging, whining, thundering,
yelling.

The door bursts open. Thunder and lightning strike.

Paris stumbles into the room.

Edith discerns him. She gasps- pushes Algor off her.

PARIS

Edith, she needs help!

SIR ALGOR

Aye! Get the fuck out!

Paris recognizes the knight. His fists clinch. He unsheathes
Sir Algor's sword.

The knight springs up from the bed, completely nude.

SIR ALGOR

Whoreson! Drop my sword!

PARIS

She's gonna die.

EDITH

Paris, I will be there soon.

PARIS

She's gonna die!

Tears stream from Paris. An absolute mess.

Algor sprints. Paris hesitates. The naked knight tackles
Paris against the wall. The room vibrates.

EDITH

Algor! Stop it!

Sir Algor flings Paris to the ground. The peasant holds to the sword best he can. Blood flies from his nose.

Algor reaches. Paris slices. Blood splatters.

The knight collapses to the ground, his stomach cleaved in two. A waterfall of blood drains from him and soaks the floorboards.

Paris spits on the slain foe.

He glances at the crimson sword he holds. Paris drops it. His hands shake. He looks up at Edith.

PARIS
Verona. She needs help.

EDITH
Y-yes.

PARIS
She's dyin'.

EDITH
Yes.

PARIS
I didn't mean to.

EDITH
Yes.

Edith teeters forward. She covers her mouth, keeps back vomit. She steps over the knight's cadaver. Blood spreads throughout the room. She throws her tunic on.

PARIS
I didn't mean to.

EDITH
Shh.

Edith stuffs the knight's money in her tunic. She leads Paris out the room. Sir Algor hemorrhages alone in the dark.

INT. MAIN ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The five farmers sit around their table.

VINCENT, by far the youngest of the group, sits at the end of the table against the wall. He stares out the window at the storm. He looks lost, or maybe bored, or perhaps he's--