

The Valley

By

Ari Runanin-Telle

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - AFTERNOON

Sleek glass buildings stand beneath a blue sky, a lone cloud blotting the horizon. Beneath the pristine towers, a small figure is at the edge of a derelict concrete rooftop.

EXT. ROOFTOP - AFTERNOON

Closer, we see it is a young woman, FAITH, standing alert in profile, her reflection visible in the row of skyscraper windows behind her.

Her reflection pushes up the sleeve of its worn jacket, checks its watch.

The faded LED display reads 4:59.

Faith looks back up.

A monolithic black building, cameras on its every corner across the street, casts a shadow on the block below. Armed guards clad in dark bulletproof vests and helmets guard the front door.

A deep, static-laden voice, RICHARD, crackles in Faith's ear.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Are you still sure about this?

Faith closes her eyes for a moment, frustrated, her watch still at eye level.

FAITH  
No. But that doesn't matter.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Craig, Celeste, they both --

FAITH  
-- went down the same way, you told me.

The watch's display changes to 5:00.

FAITH  
Guess that settles it.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Guess it does.

Faith slides her sleeve down, hops off the edge.

EXT. LOWER ROOFTOPS - AFTERNOON

She breaks her fall with a roll, hitting the ground with her shoulder as her arm tucks in. She comes out of the roll jogging.

As Faith jogs across the concrete, she looks below to the black building along her right side across the street. She then turns her gaze to a sterile rooftop garden and park a few blocks ahead.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Now, there's going to be a camera  
up ahead. See it?

A camera peers, rotating and scanning the area in front of Faith.

She runs over to the right, jumps down to a fire escape on the side of the building. She hits the railing, gripping the edge with both of her hands. With a grunt, she hoists herself up by her arms and swings her legs over onto the fire escape.

FAITH

I do. Tell me when I'm clear.

Faith jumps up from the fire escape, grabs the edge of the concrete above. She shimmies herself along the edge.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Clear.

Faith pulls herself up again. With a disdainful look back at the camera a few paces behind her, she starts running again. She speaks again, nowhere near out of breath.

Faith jumps over a gap between rooftops. A low fence stands in the way ahead. Without breaking her stride, she swings herself over the fence by her left hand.

The next gap is longer. Eyeing the wall between the buildings, Faith jumps at it, starts running along it. Her feet scabble for support as her hands run along the wall behind her. Just as she's about to lose traction, she jumps off and lands on the other side. She resumes her pace.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Were you just showy? That sounded  
showy.

FAITH  
Shush. I'm almost there.

Faith looks below. There's a security checkpoint into the park -- guarded, but not as heavily as the black structure before. A lone rent-a-cop sits in his booth, flipping through a magazine.

She starts slowly climbing down a drain pipe to street level.

EXT. PARK CHECKPOINT - AFTERNOON

The pipe doesn't go all the way down. Faith lets go, makes noise as she hits the ground. The cop turns his head.

FAITH  
(under her breath)  
Shit.

Faith scurries over to a corner, ducking out of sight.

The cop gets up, starts walking toward her, his hand resting on his baton. He comes to the other side of Faith's corner.

Faith brings her hand to the back of her pants.

He steps forward again.

Faith leaps out, punches the man in the throat. As he gasps for breath, Faith grabs his head and throws it into the wall.

The man crumples. Faith looks down for only a moment, then keeps moving dispassionately.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Did you check for a pulse?

FAITH  
I could have done worse.

She unconsciously tucks her shirt in at her back.

EXT. CORPORATE PARK - EVENING

Faith walks into the clearing, her footsteps echoing through the silent park. The setting sun bathes the white park in orange light. White trees glow an angry amber.

She turns in circles, on edge. She starts speaking frantically.

FAITH  
Richard?

RICHARD (V.O.)  
I know, I know.

FAITH  
There's no one here.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
I'm looking into it.

FAITH  
Why is there no one here?

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Just get across the park.

Faith anxiously paces across the pathways.

FAITH  
It's a trap. It has to be.

Faith looks over her shoulder, scans the rooftops. Empty.

FAITH  
I'm pulling out.

Faith starts running.

EXT. PARK BRIDGE - EVENING

She comes to a long bridge. On either side, water glistens in the sunset, sloping down into endless chasms -- just across one of these chasms is the black monolith, shooting down into the earth.

She runs onto the bridge.

FAITH  
I'm almost there.

Faith gasps, freezes in place.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
What, what is it?

On the other side of the bridge stand a row of men in faceless black masks, uniforms. They start to slowly advance.

Faith desperately wheels around, sees another group of the faceless marching from where she just came.

She's surrounded.

Trembling, she backs up against the bridge's railing.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Faith, what's going on, tell me!

The faceless come closer. One of them pulls out a syringe. Faith shrinks even further, puts her hand down to an object hidden in her back again.

Faith closes her eyes, telling herself to move. She hears the measured footsteps of the faceless -- and the running water behind her.

As the faceless surround her, Faith opens her eyes and jumps over the railing.

She slips down the watery slope, scrabbling for traction. She loses it, starts tumbling.

The last thing she sees is the faceless -- staring down at her as she falls.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN

INT. INDUSTRIAL SEWER - NIGHT

A dim light comes into focus as Faith regains consciousness. She starts to hear Richard, fainter, fighting to be heard over more static.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
...Faith, are you there? Are you  
alive? Faith?

Faith, dripping wet, beaten up from the fall, looks at the water below her. She sees her bruised reflection. It grimaces.

FAITH  
Yeah. I'm still here.

Faith pushes herself up.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
What happened?

Faith stretches her neck, gingerly rubs her elbows.

FAITH  
Men in masks, unmarked uniforms.  
Came at me with damn syringes.

She starts walking, slowly.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Christ. Who do you think--

FAITH  
Do I really need to tell you those  
creeps were Feds? It's just like  
them -- some sedative, no  
witnesses...

Faith shivers.

FAITH  
I'm not freezing up like that  
again, Richard. If I see those f--

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Of course not. But if I'm reading  
your position right... you're near  
the Valley.

Faith pulls herself out of the water onto a slimy concrete  
walkway.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
The largest computer server in the  
entire city of Eden, the chance to  
erase your identity from the System  
forever... how does it feel?

Faith coughs.

FAITH  
Pretty shitty, actually.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Come on, don't be like that. You  
pulled me out of retirement to help  
you with this.

FAITH  
I'll be happy when I'm gone. Let's  
leave it at that.

Faith finds a ladder with several wires in the wall next to  
it. She points to the ladder questioningly.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
Your guess is as good as mine. This  
is uncharted territory.

Faith goes up the ladder.

INT. VALLEY SERVER ROOM - NIGHT

Faith emerges in a dark, dank room, server banks HUMMING and casting a forlorn blue light across a wet floor. The banks stand apart from each other in an expanding circle formation.

The room seemingly has no end.

FAITH  
...I think I'm here.

Faith settles on one of the servers. She pulls out a USB stick and plugs it in.

FAITH  
Is that what you needed?

RICHARD (V.O.)  
(faint, static)  
Yeah, I'm viewing your profile now.  
Just give me a second.

Faith looks around, scared. The shadows in the room are empty.

FAITH  
Richard? We're friends, right? Good ones.

RICHARD (V.O.)  
(keyboard clacking in background)  
Of course, Faith. What kind of a question is that?

Faith closes her eyes, sighs.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A frightened MAN bleeding profusely from a head wound crawls backward from the fiery wreckage of a car.



INT. VALLEY SERVER ROOM - NIGHT

The shadows start to move, in dozens.

FAITH

Just -- remember that. If nothing  
else.

Richard pauses. The faceless emerge from the dark, all  
around Faith.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Wait, this can't be right... Faith,  
did you really--

Faith pulls her earpiece out, throws it on the ground.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A pistol with a scarred black handle aims at the man. We  
hear a GUNSHOT.

INT. VALLEY SERVER ROOM - NIGHT

One of the faceless leap at Faith. She grabs it, knee  
strikes it in the stomach. Another comes behind her and  
tries to hold her. She drives her elbow into its mask. It  
reels. More come. Faith throws another into a nearby server  
bank in a resounding CRASH, jumps and strikes another, takes  
the syringe from one and stabs it into another.

Faith starts being backed into a corner.

She reaches into her back pocket once more. Pulls out a gun  
with a scarred black handle.

The faceless instantly recoil. One of them screams.

FACELESS

She has a gu--!

Faith pulls the trigger. One of the men falls down, a hole  
in his chest, his blood black in the blue light.

From further away in the server room, we only hear the  
GUNSHOTS.

The men in black scramble over each other to flee. Faith  
stands, smoking gun in hand, fierce yet shell-shocked,  
glassy-eyed. She lowers her gun.

A pile of faceless bodies lie in front of her, black flowing  
from them on the damp floor.

Faith looks down. Sees her bloody reflection on the floor, holding a gun.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

RICHARD FOWLER, an aging man in his 50s, stares in the bathroom mirror. We hear the noise of RAIN outside. He washes his hands, rubbing them together. He starts rubbing more vigorously. And more vigorously.

When he hears a noise from the other side of the apartment, turns.

He turns off the water, wipes his hands on a rag, turns off the light, walks out into the rest of his apartment, lit in warm orange hues.

At the clean white kitchen table sits Faith, drenched, wounded, drinking a glass of scotch, gun on the table, unimpressed with the futuristic decor. A laptop sits at the table as well. The patio door sits open, rain and wind blowing inside.

Without a word, Richard goes to the door and slides it shut. His back still to Faith, she speaks.

FAITH  
Did you do it?

RICHARD  
I did.

Richard comes back to the table, sits down.

RICHARD  
I erased you.

Faith sighs.

FAITH  
Still don't feel erased.

Faith lifts the bottle of scotch.

FAITH  
A drink to celebrate?

RICHARD  
Why not.

Faith pours another glass, slides it over to Richard. He politely takes a sip, looks down at the gun.

RICHARD  
Haven't seen a real firearm in  
ages.

Faith shrugs.

FAITH  
Still have their uses.

RICHARD  
They're outlawed, aren't they?

Faith gives a wry smile, taps her scotch glass.

FAITH  
So are these.

Richard takes another sip.

RICHARD  
So you're really leaving?

FAITH  
As soon as we finish this drink,  
I'm afraid so.

Richard puts down his glass.

RICHARD  
I saw your file.

Faith's smile disappears.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A pistol with a scarred black handle aims at a man.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

FAITH  
It was a mistake.

Richard just stares.

FAITH  
I had no choice! After Craig, after  
Celeste -- after all the good  
people left, people who would try  
to make a difference--

RICHARD  
What about me?

FAITH

Oh, sure, you made a difference.  
You went and made peace with the  
enemy, got a cushy job, stood aside  
while all our rights were torn from  
us one by fucking one. Yeah, you're  
a real hero.

RICHARD

The world moved in this direction,  
Faith. And it moved in this  
direction for a reason. It's  
monitored, but it's safe. Except  
when you're around.

Faith, taken aback, starts to protest.

FAITH

Everything I have done,  
\*everything\*, has been necces --

Faith stops herself.

FAITH

Look, that night, I found him,  
okay? I found the architect of "all  
this" --

Faith gestures to the room mockingly.

FAITH

-- of the System, of the new Eden  
surveillance network, of all of it.  
And I did what I had to, even if  
that meant--

RICHARD

When did you realize? Before? Or  
after?

Faith blinks, tearing up.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Faith stands alone, hidden behind a tall billboard, bathed  
in blue light. In the distance, we hear a CAR approaching.  
Faith pulls out her gun, a pistol with a scarred black  
handle, checks the ammo clip. Satisfied, she turns loads the  
clip back in and turns off the safety.

The car's lights can be seen now. With precision and  
fluidity, she climbs down the billboard, landing gracefully  
on the ground. She vaults over a divider onto the main road.

She turns, stands still, aims her gun, squeezes off a few rounds. As the car's lights grow brighter around her, Faith jumps to the side. The car screeches by and crashes in the distance.

Faith pushes herself up, runs after the car. She sees the flames from a distance. As she runs, she empties her pistol, pushes in another clip.

A man, bleeding profusely from a head wound, falls out of the car. He crawls to the passenger door, tries to open it.

Faith runs up to him, grabs him, throws him away from the door. She lifts her gun.

The man crawls backward from Faith and the fiery wreckage. He weakly raises his arm.

MAN  
(hoarsely)  
Please...

Faith cocks her gun.

The man points to his car, in flames.

MAN  
(hoarsely)  
My family...

Faith drops her arms. She stares into the flames, horrified. We see the fire's reflection in her eyes.

Eventually, she shuts her eyelids. She turns back to the man on the ground. She lifts her arms again, and points her gun at him.

FAITH  
I'm sorry.

She pulls the trigger.

All of her strength gone, Faith's entire frame slowly droops. She stumbles over to the edge of the road and crouches. She vomits.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Faith sits, tears streaking down her face, her reflection in the clear patio door behind her sobbing as well, RAIN pounding against the glass.

She takes a long drink of scotch, finishes it off. Her eyes burn.

FAITH  
I made the only decision I could.

Faith's eyes harden as she lies.

FAITH  
I knew. I knew they were in the  
car. And I went ahead with it  
anyway.

Richard puts his head in his hands.

RICHARD  
Jesus Christ.

Faith gets up, her hand shaking just a little.

FAITH  
I'll be out of your hair now. For  
good.

She walks over to the patio, her stoic reflection in the  
door window. She slides it open. A gust of wind and water  
meets her.

RICHARD(O.S.)  
Faith?

She turns.

Richard gives a melancholy smile.

RICHARD  
You can't run from yourself.

Faith doesn't respond. She walks out the door and starts  
climbing a pipe up to the roof, out of sight.

Alone, Richard sits, thinking.

EXT. RICHARD'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Faith slowly climbs up the pipe as she is buffeted by the  
rain.

When she reaches the top, she clambers off the pipe and onto  
the roof. She looks up.

The faceless are all around her.

She tries to run. They grab her, and stick a syringe in her  
arm.

Faith slowly stops struggling and shaking.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

INT. HOLDING CELL - EARLY MORNING

Faith sits alone at the bottom of her square, white holding cell. A dim, sterile fluorescent light incessantly hums.

As she sits, she stares at her reflection in a two-way mirror. It stares back.

Faith stands up, walks to the mirror.

She scrutinizes the woman in the reflection. Her unapologetic face. The sharpness in her eyes.

The fluorescent continues to hum.

She stares at the reflection with loathing.

She curls up her bare fist, starts punching the mirror. Again, and again, her hands bleeding, her reflection pained and cracking.

As her right hand hits the glass again, it bends at an unnatural angle, we hear a cracking sound. Faith cries out, holds it, but starts ramming the mirror with her shoulder.

We hear the sound of an alarm, slightly, outside the cell.

A guard starts to open the door to Faith's cell. Faith turns, leaps at it as he's halfway through, pinning his body between the door and the wall. With a grunt as she picks him up, she lifts him and throws him through the window.

The alarm, coming from the observation room on the other side, now blares. Two guards stand as far from the broken glass as possible, frightened, illuminated by a flashing orange alarm light.

Faith pushes her sleeves up to her hands and vaults over the frame with the broken glass with her good hand, tackles one guard against the wall, punches him in quick succession.

The other pulls out his shock baton. Faith kicks him before he gets too close. The baton drops to the ground with a clatter. Faith grabs it. Shoves it in the man's sternum. He falls down.

Faith runs out the door.

## INT. PRISON COMPLEX - EARLY MORNING

The endless white corridors flash with orange lights as Faith runs with a limp, out of breath. She turns corners, frantically looking for an exit -- until she sees a window at the end of the hallway.

Guards start pouring out of the doors behind Faith. A security grate start to come down from the ceiling to lock Faith in. She slides under it, gets up, quickly but unsteadily.

More guards come in on the other side. They hound Faith, getting closer and closer. As Faith runs up to the window, she sees the street some stories below. She still closes her eyes and throws herself through it.

## EXT. PRISON COMPLEX - EARLY MORNING

Faith slowly falls through the air, glass drifting around her. People on the street look up in shock, gasp, pull each other away.

Faith hits the ground with a resounding CRACK. Or several.

Huddled and stiff on the ground, she breathes with difficulty. She rolls herself over to look at the sky.

Police start running onto the scene.

The sky, an early morning grey-blue.

A crowd of police and passersby form at several paces from Faith. They stand, watching, unsure and afraid of this haggard stranger on the ground.

Faith continues to look at the sky. The sun peeks through the clouds. She notices she's just broken out of the same black monolithic building she stood outside just the day before -- the Valley.

She smiles, closes her eyes as if going to sleep, yellow sunlight on her face.

Men in medical uniforms run up, slow and fading away.

She whispers to herself as her head starts to droop down.

FAITH  
(to herself)  
You can't run away from yourself.

Faith lies, peaceful, as the medics start fussing over her, the crowd staring from a distance.