



# ECHO LAKE

## ENTERTAINMENT

# THE BOY HOUDINI

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*In 1888, 15-year-old Erik Weisz ran away from home to seek fame and fortune on the streets of New York City.*

*Ten years later, he emerged on to the world's stage as the master of illusion and escape known as Harry Houdini.*

*What happened in between is a mystery known only to...*

**THE BOY HOUDINI**

OPEN ON --

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - 1889 - DAY

A VAST METROPOLIS of IRON AND STEEL, reaching closer and closer to the smog-filled heavens by the day.

We DRIFT through a jungle of skeletal half-built SKYSCRAPERS, CONSTRUCTION WORKERS scuttling across steel-framed latticework like insects.

Down towards the STREETS --

A cacophony of SOUND. The CLATTER of carriage wheels on cobblestone. The CRIES of NEWSBOYS and STREET VENDORS. The CLANG of hammers on steel --

ON A STREET CORNER --

A CROWD OF ONLOOKERS has gathered. Looking on in rapt attention at a figure at their center --

A TEENAGE BOY. Small and slight, standing atop an overturned apple-crate.

ERIK "HARRY" WEISZ (16). His shabby, street-worn appearance completely overshadowed by his SHOWMAN'S BRAVADO --

HARRY

The key to any great magic  
trick...is *transformation*.

The crowd hangs on his every word --

HARRY (CONT'D)

The transformation of *nothing* into  
*something*. Of something *ordinary*  
into something *extraordinary*. Take,  
for instance, this child's toy --

With a deft flourish, a WOODEN YO-YO appears from thin air, dangling from Harry's outstretched hand.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Simple. Plain. Forgettable. And  
yet, in the blink of an eye...

Another flourish, and suddenly the yo-yo has become an ORNATE SILVER POCKET-WATCH, gleaming in the sun.

HARRY (CONT'D)

...It becomes something *incredible*.

The audience reacts in collective AWE and WONDER.

In the front row, a WEALTHY BANKER pats his breast pocket, now suddenly empty --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
I hope you don't mind that I've  
borrowed your watch, Sir! I promise  
I'll return it in good time --

The Banker lets out a good-natured CHUCKLE --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
For as discerning patron can tell,  
magic is nothing but mere illusion.  
And with a mere wave of my hand --

The pocket-watch suddenly VANISHES --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Everything is right back where we  
most expect it...

The Banker pats his breast pocket, eyes widening in delight as he once more feels the FAMILIAR SHAPE of his pocket-watch.

He pulls it out, proudly displaying it to the audience --

Who collectively GASP. That's not his watch...

IT'S THE WOODEN YO-YO.

The Banker stammers in confusion. Turns back to Harry --

But Harry has VANISHED. The Banker spins wildly, looking for the wayward magician. He's nowhere to be found --

One AUDIENCE MEMBER pipes up from the back --

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
*There he goes!*

Sure enough, Harry is BARRELING AWAY down the cobblestone street at TOP SPEED, pocket-watch DANGLING from his hand. He's no magician -- he's a PICKPOCKET!

The Banker turns PLUM-RED, sputtering in anger --

BANKER  
*Police! That -- that urchin has --  
has stolen my pocket-watch!*

Two POLICE OFFICERS lounging near a street-lamp SNAP TO ATTENTION -- scrambling to straighten their helmets and don their nightsticks as they TAKE OFF after Harry.

Harry nimbly ducks and weaves between pedestrians, carriages, and street vendors, an ENORMOUS GRIN spread across his face.

The grin only widens when he glances over his shoulder to see the two Officers in HOT PURSUIT.

OFFICER 1

*You there! Stop!*

Harry LEAPS onto the back of a horse-drawn ICE WAGON, transporting a glistening, two-ton BLOCK OF ICE.

As the distance between them grows, he offers them a cheeky farewell SALUTE. But just as he's about to make his escape --

KA-CHUNK! An icepick SLAMS in the ice, INCHES from his head.

The beefy ICE VENDOR on the other end of the pick GROWLS menacingly at Harry --

ICE VENDOR

Ride's over, kid.

HARRY

(gulping)

Completely understandable --

Harry tucks the pocket-watch into his breeches and VAULTS UPWARD, grabbing onto an overhanging FIRE ESCAPE LADDER.

With a RUSTY GROAN, the ladder SWINGS DOWN. Harry manages to HANG ON, scrambling up the rungs onto the landing --

The Officers reach the fire escape, panting and out-of-breath -- but pausing only for a moment before beginning the climb.

Harry continues upward through the labyrinth of ironwork. He looks down -- the Officers are gaining on him fast.

He hops up to the next platform, spying one of the many CLOTH-LINES that span the width of the street below. An idea forming in his mind --

As the Officers draw near, Harry plucks a sopping-wet PETTICOAT off the line. Wrings out the water with a twist --

He LOOPS the petticoat over the cloth-line. Holds on tight with both hands. Tests his weight --

The Officers closing in. Ten feet below. Seven. FIVE --

Harry takes a deep breath. Closes his eyes. And --

LEAPS off the fire escape, using the petticoat to SLIDE ACROSS the cloth-line like a 19th-century ZIP-WIRE --

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! Every few feet he's SLAPPED in the face by a soaking-wet piece of clothing. Shirts. Coats. Dresses. Underwear --

He sails to the OTHER SIDE, letting go of the petticoat and ROLLING onto the opposite fire escape.

Separated from Harry by the width of the street, the Officers look on in baffled amazement. Officer 2 smiles begrudgingly --

OFFICER 2

Kid should join the damn circus...

But Officer 1 only SNARLS, tearing two SHIRTS off the cloth-line and tossing one to Officer 2.

Officer 1 loops the shirt over the cloth-line and JUMPS off the fire escape, SAILING after Harry.

Officer 2 peers over the railing, the cobblestone street several dizzying stories below. He sighs. Crosses himself. Loops his own shirt over the line, and --

JUMPS after his partner. SCREAMING as he goes --

On the opposite fire escape, Harry locks eyes with Officer 1. WINKS. And then --

YANKS the knot attaching the cloth-line to the railing. The Officers' eyes GO WIDE as the line suddenly SLACKENS --

Officer 2 PLUMMETS downward through the air, arms and legs FLAILING wildly, landing with a resounding --

SPLAT! In a heaping CART full of ROTTEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. He GROANS as a RAT skitters across his chest...

Officer 1 has managed to get to the other side in the nick of time, HANGING ON to the fire escape by his FINGERTIPS --

With a grunt of effort, he manages to PULL HIMSELF up and over the railing, COLLAPSING onto the platform.

He looks up to see Harry, several stories above, slip through the WINDOW of a TENEMENT BUILDING --

**INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

Harry CAREENS through the dingy, dimly-lit tenement halls.

Cramped and crowded with IMMIGRANTS. A dozen languages fill the air -- German, Polish, Hungarian, Italian.

He JUMPS over a passed-out DRUNK. DUCKS under a burly RUSSIAN WOMAN carrying a crate of potatoes. Almost COLLIDES with a young MOTHER and her wailing infant child.

BEHIND HIM, Officer 1 clambers awkwardly through the window. He catches a glimpse of Harry as he --

DISAPPEARS into the maze of HANGING SHEETS that "divide" the tenement rooms.

Harry scurries through the sheets, past an elderly ITALIAN GRANDMOTHER stirring a POT OF SAUCE on a make-shift burner.

He dips a finger into the sauce, licking it discerningly --

HARRY  
Needs more...oregano?

The Grandmother frowns. Shrugs. He has a point.

Officer 1 PLUNGES into the maze of billowing sheets after Harry. Immediately confused, disoriented.

He sees a SHADOW move on the other side of a sheet. A smile spreads across his lips. *Gotcha*. He rears back, and --

LUNGES through the sheet, GRABBING HARRY --

But it's not Harry. It's a HULKING GERMAN MAN.

The German Man GLOWERS down at him. Cracks his knuckles. Officer 1 offers an apologetic WINCE --

**EXT. TENEMENT ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER**

Harry BURSTS through the door onto the sagging roof, sending a flock of pigeons FLYING out of their coop.

He SPRINTS towards the edge of the roof, but --

SKIDS to a sudden stop. The jump to the next rooftop is TOO WIDE. There's no way he could make it.

Officer 1 emerges onto the roof behind him. Uniform torn, missing his helmet, and with a bruise on his cheek -- courtesy of the German Man, no doubt.



He limps forward towards the cornered Harry --

OFFICER 1  
Give it up! Nowhere left to run!

Officer 1 pulls his handcuffs from his belt --

Harry's eyes dart left. Right. Pulse POUNDING in his ears.  
Only one thing left to do.

He hops on the edge of the roof. Gives a theatrical BOW --

HARRY  
Thank you kindly. You've been a  
wonderful audience --

And LEAPS off the rooftop.

The Officer races to the edge of the roof, watching as Harry  
PLUMMETS towards the ground --

The unforgiving cobblestone RUSHES up to meet him, but --

Harry LANDS on the awning of a FRUIT STALL, bouncing off it  
like a TRAMPOLINE, sailing through the air in a HIGH ARC --

It looks like he'll stick a perfect landing. But at the last  
moment, he LOSES CONTROL, FLAILING as he flies towards a  
PARKED CARRIAGE. He lets out a strangled YELP as --

SMASH! He CRASHES through the ROOF of the --

#### **INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Landing in its backseat with a resounding THUD.

Harry groans. As he gets his bearings, he finds himself  
sitting beside --

A MAN IN SHACKLES. Staring at Harry in surprise. Across the  
carriage sits another POLICE OFFICER, equally stunned.

Harry blinks. Noticing the carriage windows are crossed with  
IRON BARS.

Beyond the bars, Harry can see the imposing facade of the  
local POLICE PRECINCT.

This isn't a carriage. It's a PADDY WAGON.

Harry collapses back in his seat. DEFEATED.

**PRE-LAP:** The CLANG of a jail cell SLAMMING SHUT --

**INT. JAIL CELL - DAY**

A DRUNK PRISONER sleeps off a bender on a burlap mattress, WOOL CAP pulled down over his eyes as he SNORES loudly.

Harry stands at the IRON-BARRED WINDOW overlooking the street below. Inspecting each bolt and welding seam for weak spots. He gives the bars an appraising SHAKE -- they won't budge.

Harry SIGHS, sliding down the damp stone wall to the floor. Looks like he's stuck here...

But then his eyes come to rest on his DRUNK CELLMATE. He bites his lip, an idea forming in his mind --

**MOMENTS LATER --**

Harry crouches over the Drunk, gingerly attempting to remove the man's wool cap without waking him. He lifts the cap from the Drunk's head. The Drunk SNORTS, MUTTERS, AND --

Goes back to sleep. Harry lets out a breath of relief.

Harry TEARS OPEN THE SEAM with his teeth. Threads the metal WIRE out of the brim.

With a few deft twists and turns, Harry fashions it into a rudimentary LOCKPICK.

Harry scampers to the CELL DOOR, reaching through the bars and inserting the lock-pick into the KEYHOLE.

Eyes closed in concentration as he works, listening to the nearly imperceptible CLICKS of the lock-pins. And...

KA-CHUNK. The cell door UNLOCKS, slowly CREAKING OPEN.

Harry's so enthralled by his own victory that he doesn't notice the HULKING SHADOW now looming over him --

THE POLICE SERGEANT. Harry looks up. Offers a weak grin --

HARRY

Oh, uh -- hello, Sergeant. Just -- checking to see if the locks work. Seems to be all in order...

SERGEANT

Weisz. You got a visitor.

**INT. POLICE PRECINCT - BACK ROOM - DAY**

Harry sits at a small wooden table. Across from him sits --

REBBE EIDELMANN (70s). Hunched and ancient, face hidden by a bushy white beard and broad-brimmed black hat. Taking wheezing breathes as he peers over his glasses at the squirming Harry.

The Sergeant stands at the window, frowning suspiciously as he flips through a PAPER PAMPHLET, which reads --

SERGEANT

*Eidelmann's School for Wayward  
Youths?* Never heard of it.

Rebbe Eidelmann gives a rattling cough, dabbing at his mouth with a handkerchief. He speaks with a THICK ACCENT --

REBBE EIDELMANN

No? I am surprised, *Serzhant*. It is only the best correctional institute for misguided street urchins in the five boroughs.

Harry stares at the pamphlet in TREPIDATION. The Rebbe's bushy mustache curls into a devious smile --

REBBE EIDELMANN (CONT'D)

Ah -- so you know of Eidelmann's then, *boychik*? You've heard the tales?

Harry nods, eyes going wide. But the Sergeant isn't convinced.

SERGEANT

I don't know how they do things in the *shtetl* -- but in America? You commit a crime, you go to *jail*. Not school. *Jail*.

Harry hastily pipes up --

HARRY

Sergeant, I completely agree with you. I should be locked up in a cell! Not running free at some, er, *boarding school* --

REBBE EIDELMANN

Free? *Schmegegge!* Do not let this boy deceive you. Unless, that is, you call sixteen hours of back-breaking labor a day *free* --

SERGEANT

...Sixteen hours, you say?

REBBE EIDELMANN  
 Yes, yes. And *that's* when I'm  
 feeling generous.

The Sergeant surveys Harry, who does his best to silently  
 PLEAD with him --

SERGEANT  
 I don't know...

REBBE EIDELMANN  
 You are wise man, no? What good  
 will it be to throw this *mamzer* in  
 prison? He will learn to be *more* of  
 a thieving crook -- if not worse!

Eidelmann taps the pamphlet with vigorous emphasis --

REBBE EIDELMANN (CONT'D)  
 But at Eidelmann's? He will learn  
 to be a good, upstanding member of  
 society. And if he does not learn?  
 We will *beat* it into him --

SERGEANT  
 ...Beatings?

REBBE EIDELMANN  
 Regular! And vigorous.

SERGEANT  
 Vigorous? Well...a few well-placed  
 lashes never failed to knock some  
 sense into a boy. But the Tammany  
 Hall set seem to think corporal  
 punishment is no longer "becoming"  
 of a "man of the law"...

REBBE EIDELMANN  
 Well then, *Serzhant*. It is a good  
 thing that *I* am not a man of the  
 law, no?

The Sergeant looks at Harry. Looks at the Rabbi. Teetering on  
 the edge of a decision...

#### **EXT. STREET - DAY**

The Sergeant stands on the precinct steps, watching with a  
 satisfied smile as Rebbe Eidelmann hobbles down the bustling  
 street, DRAGGING Harry away by the scruff of the shirt.

Harry appears terrified, cowering under the Rabbi's grip. But as soon as they turn the street corner --

His face breaks out in a DELIGHTED GRIN.

HARRY

...He bought it! He actually bought it! *Mamzer* was a nice touch, that might have been your best performance yet.

Eidelmann stands up straight, his frail limp fading into a steady, even gait. His voice becoming a rich, Irish BROGUE --

REBBE EIDELMANN

Glad you enjoyed it, lad. Cause you can now consider me officially *retired* from the stage.

Eidelmann TEARS OFF his bushy beard and black hat, tossing them away to reveal a shock of RED HAIR and a SQUARE, RUDDY-CHEEKED FACE. This is no elderly Rabbi. This is --

HUGO CRANE (40s). Master locksmith, and Harry's mentor.

CRANE

Next time you find you find yerself locked up in a jail cell? You can find yer own damn way out.

HARRY

Ah, come on. I was just having a little fun! It's not like that rich old windbag woulda missed his pocket-watch anyway --

Crane HARRUMPHS, marching down the street at a brisk pace. Harry trots after him --

HARRY (CONT'D)

Besides, you're one to talk! You cracked every jewelry safe in Europe --

Crane CLAMPS a square hand over Harry's mouth --

CRANE

Jesus, boy! Not so loud. You'll get us *both* thrown back in a cell.

Crane's gaze flits suspiciously around the other pedestrians, making sure no one overheard --

CRANE (CONT'D)  
That was a long time ago. I'm a  
reformed man now. A good, Christian  
man. And you better be damned happy  
I am, too --

He gives Harry a stern GLARE --

CRANE (CONT'D)  
-- Or you'd be halfway to Sing Sing  
by now.

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - DAY**

A hole-in-the-wall shop on a noisy, Lower East Side street.

A WOODEN SIGN shaped like a SKELETON KEY hangs above the  
entryway, proclaiming:

*HUGO CRANE - FINE LOCKSMITH*

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - DAY**

Cluttered with every manner of LOCK AND KEY imaginable.  
Spring clips, strike plates, and latches on every surface.

Crane stalks in, Harry trudging behind him.

HARRY  
It's just -- I came to New York  
looking for *fortune and adventure*,  
you know? Not, well...

He gestures around the small, cramped shop --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
*...This.*

Crane shrugs off his black Rabbi's coat and dons a LEATHER  
WORK APRON.

CRANE  
Fortune and adventure, eh? Like  
when I found you half-starved and  
riddled with scurvy in a Bowery  
gutter?

Harry follows Crane up rickety stairs to a LOFTED WORK AREA  
that overlooks the shop.

HARRY

I told you -- that was just a temporary living situation. Til I strike it big!

Crane raises an eyebrow. Harry slumps --

HARRY (CONT'D)

Yeah, yeah. I know. Thanks...

Harry plops down at a work-bench, letting out a deflated and despondent sigh. But suddenly brightens --

HARRY (CONT'D)

I used that Hoffman sleight you taught me. With the pocket watch?

CRANE

(feigning disinterest)

And?

HARRY

Worked like a charm! They never saw it coming. Been practicing all week --

Crane looks over at him, unable to keep a glint of paternal tenderness from his eye.

CRANE

See, lad? You've just got to have a bit of *patience* is all. Your day will come, soon enough.

HARRY

You think so?

CRANE

I promise it. And in the meantime...

Crane crosses the loft, picking up a HEAVY WOODEN BOX from a shelf --

CRANE (CONT'D)

I think I've got just the thing to pass the time.

Harry's eyes light up with CURIOSITY as Crane approaches with the box. Crane tips out its contents --

And dozens of GREASY, CLOGGED IRON PADLOCKS clatter to the table before Harry. His face falls --

CRANE (CONT'D)  
Now. How's that for adventure?

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - LATER**

Harry toils at the workbench, face streaked with grease as he attempts to extract a broken key-neck from a padlock with a pair of tweezers.

The tweezers SLIP -- Harry YELPS as he slices his thumb on the key's jagged edge.

He tosses the lock aside, sucking his bleeding thumb.

Harry's gaze rests on a smattering of HANDBILLS and NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS plastered on the wall before him, advertising the greatest ILLUSIONISTS, ESCAPISTS, and CONJURORS of the day --

HOFFMAN. HOFZINSER. THE DAVENPORTS. And above them all --

JEAN-EUGENE ROBERT-HOUDIN. The father of modern magic. Holding a flourish of cards, surrounded by a swirl of illustrated ghosts, spirits, and devils.

Harry's so lost in his pictures that he doesn't even notice the *DING* of the overhead bell as the shop door opens.

Crane's voice drifts from the shop floor --

CRANE (O.S.)  
Bless me old man's pasty white arse  
-- is that who I think it is?

A MAN'S VOICE answers, clipped and British --

BRITISH MAN (O.S.)  
Hugo Crane! I see you haven't lost  
your illustrative way with words --

Harry cocks his head. Slips off his workbench, quietly peering over the loft at the shop floor below --

Crane stands with a rotund, round-faced man with a crisp white shirtfront and an impressive pair of muttonchops.

SIR NEVILLE BALLANTINE (50s). His DAPPER SUIT in clear contrast to the dingy shop -- not exactly Crane's usual clientele.

But Ballantine wraps Crane in a hearty embrace --



BALLANTINE  
It's been too long, old friend.  
What -- ten years?

Crane grins, prodding Ballantine in his sizable midsection --

CRANE  
And twice as many pounds, eh?

BALLANTINE  
Well -- *some of us* can afford to  
subsist on more than soda bread and  
cheap whiskey.

CRANE  
And some of us are trying to make  
an *honest* living for once, eh?

Ballantine laughs, heartily slapping Crane on the back.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
So -- what brings you back to Hugo  
Crane after all these years?

Ballantine coughs, the joviality slowly fading from his face.  
He leans in close, almost conspiratorial.

BALLANTINE  
I've recently come across  
something, old boy. In my travels  
through Algiers. Something I think  
you might take a great interest in.

Ballantine PULLS SOMETHING from beneath his coat. Crane  
stares at it, comprehension dawning --

His face goes suddenly pale.

CRANE  
...Is that what I think it is?

Harry LEANS further over the loft ledge to get better look at  
it, but only captures a brief FLASH OF SILVER --

He accidentally bumps a loose WRENCH, which TEETERS on the  
edge of the loft --

BALLANTINE  
If you can believe it.

CRANE  
Impossible. I thought it had been  
lost. Years ago.

BALLANTINE

As did I. But as it turns out, all  
lost things can found, for the  
right price.

A look of increasing wonder spreads across Crane's face.

Harry scoots forward, trying to get a better look. The wrench  
TILTS forward another inch...

CRANE

Have you...?

BALLANTINE

Got it open? Believe me, I've  
tried. That's why I'm here. There's  
no one else I'd trust, Crane. In  
terms of skill -- and discretion.

Ballantine holds the object out. Harry cranes his neck out  
further, finally getting a good look --

It appears to be some sort of PUZZLE BOX.

Long and CYLINDRICAL, its gleaming surface intricately laced  
with hundreds of inter-locking silver pieces.

As Crane reaches out to take it, Harry inches even closer--  
the wrench TIPS over the edge of the loft, landing with an  
echoing --

*CLANG!*

Crane WHIPS AROUND, catching Harry spying on them.

Harry tries to scamper away, but Crane crosses the shop in a  
few brief strides, GRABBING Harry by the scruff of the neck  
and DRAGGING him down out of the loft.

Harry SQUIRMS under his grip, but it's no use --

CRANE

You'll have to excuse my young  
apprentice here, Ballantine. He's  
got a penchant for stickin' his  
nose where it don't belong --

BALLANTINE

Ah, to be young again...

Crane THROWS OPEN the front door, and TOSSES Harry outside.  
He lands with a SPLASH in a MUD PUDDLE on the --

**EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS**

Crane growls down at Harry --

CRANE

You better *stay* out here if you  
know what's good for you, lad.

The door SLAMS shut.

Harry winces, slowly staggering up out of the puddle, sopping wet. He leans on the side of a sleek black carriage --

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

I haven't any money for you either.  
So don't even *consider* asking --

Harry looks up through the carriage window to see --

SOPHIA BALLANTINE (17). Sir Neville's NIECE. Staring imperiously down at Harry over the collar of an ornately ruffled shirtwaist.

For once, Harry seems to be at a complete loss for words.

SOPHIA

Run along now. Before I have my  
driver turn his riding crop on you.

Harry sputters, confused. He looks down at his filthy, mud-stained breeches and work-shirt --

HARRY

Oh -- you think I'm...I'm not a  
beggar, if that's what you --

Harry hastily stands up straight, attempting to make himself at least half-way presentable. He offers a gallant bow --

HARRY (CONT'D)

Erik Weisz, Master Locksmith. At  
your service. But -- you can just  
call me Harry.

Sophia's not impressed.

SOPHIA

Master locksmith, are you?

HARRY

Mm-hm. This is my shop, right here.

SOPHIA  
I see. And you've been thrown out  
of your own shop?

HARRY  
Well, um -- it's not my shop *per*  
*se*. I'm really more of a partner --

Sophia raises an eyebrow. Not buying it --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
*Junior partner. For now.*

Harry leans in conspiratorially towards the carriage window --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Between you and me though, my  
associate can get a little  
*aggressive* when he, you know --

Harry mimes glugging from a whiskey bottle.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
-- So I'm sorry you had to see that  
shocking display of violence.

Sophia's cold gaze doesn't break. Harry coughs. Scratches his  
neck --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
But, uh -- that's beside the point.  
(*a beat*)  
Do you by any chance wanna see a  
magic trick?

Sophia's eyes narrow --

SOPHIA  
What did you say your name was?

HARRY  
Harry. Harry Weisz.

SOPHIA  
Listen, *Harry Weisz*. Do you know  
the one thing I find even more  
keenly insufferable than cocky East  
Side street urchins?

HARRY  
Well...not really, but if I had to  
guess, I'd say --

SOPHIA  
*Magicians.*

Sophia SHUTS the carriage curtains in Harry's face. He blinks, surprised.

The door to Crane's shop swings open once more. Ballantine exits, calling back to Crane --

BALLANTINE  
We're summering at our Briarcliff estate, old boy! Do stop by when you can get away!

He saunters towards the carriage, addressing Sophia --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)  
Apologies for the delay, dear niece. Bit of personal business that needed attending to.

He brushes past Harry, climbing into the carriage.

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)  
Now -- what do you say we pick up that gown of yours. Your mother would have my head if you looked anything less than the Queen herself at tonight's ball...

Ballantine finally glances down at Harry --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)  
You really ought to clean yourself up, young man. Bad for business.

Ballantine signals the DRIVER. The carriage takes off down the cobblestone street, leaving a wet, disgruntled Harry in tis wake...

**EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY**

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW of Harry as he watches Ballantine's carriage drive away. Magnified through a SPY GLASS...

Someone's WATCHING THEM. From the opposite rooftop.

A WOMAN. Short and squat, with beady eyes and the bull-dog face of a much-feared school marm.

She tracks the carriage as it rounds a street corner.

She watches Harry as he lopes miserably back into the shop --

Then retracts her spyglass, returning it to her handbag and disappearing back into the shadows of the roof.

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - EVENING**

The workday draws to a close.

Harry does a less-than-thorough job of sweeping the shop floor. Crane putters about in the loft, cleaning up the detritus of loose bolts and springs.

Harry peppers him with questions --

HARRY

Who was he?

CRANE

Who, Ballantine? An old friend.  
From my intercontinental days.

HARRY

What'd he give you?

CRANE

Nothing of interest to a lowly  
locksmith's apprentice.

HARRY

It was some sort of puzzle-box,  
wasn't it?

CRANE

Perhaps.

HARRY

What was inside it?

CRANE

What's inside any puzzle-box?  
Something you don't want to be  
found.

HARRY

Something valuable?

Crane huffs, lumbering down the stairs and GLARING at Harry.

CRANE

Are you just badgering me so I'll  
let you off early?

Harry grins.

Crane sighs. Rolls his eyes. Holds out his hand --  
 Harry tosses him his broom, and scampers away into the loft.  
 Crane watches him go, shaking his head as he hides a smile.

**EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - EVENING - ESTABLISHING**

The sun hangs low on the horizon. Soot-stained brick buildings cast long shadows down the street.

**EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - LATER**

Above it all, Harry sits on the iron stairs of the FIRE ESCAPE, peering over the railing at the dirty street below.

SHOPKEEPERS close up for the evening -- picking up signs, shuttering windows, pulling oil-clothes over carts.

His gaze drifts to the distant skyline --

Impossibly tall buildings, marked by LIGHTS glittering like stars in the encroaching dusk.

*That's where the action is. Not here, on the grimy, run-down Lower East Side.*

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - EVENING**

Crane finishes up Harry's sweeping -- humming an old Irish drinking song as he swings the broom.

*DING!* The bell rings as shop door swings open behind him.

CRANE  
 Sorry, shop's closed! Come back  
 tomorr --

*CRASH!*

A powerful, meaty hand GRABS Crane, SMASHING HIM into the countertop, HOLDING him there as he squirms --

CRANE (CONT'D)  
 Ay! Gerroff me, you bloody --

A BUCK KNIFE appears at Crane's throat, razor-sharp and glittering in the light. Held by --

THE WOMAN from the rooftop. Subduing Crane without even a hint of effort.

She presses the knife closer to his throat. A DROP OF BLOOD blooms from his Adam's apple --

He's saved by a HIGH, SILKY VOICE from behind him.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
 ....Cordiality, Mrs. Vulch.  
*Cordiality.*

The woman -- MRS. VULCH -- begrudgingly releases Crane. He stumbles to his feet, gasping for air. He turns to see --

ALEISTER CROWLEY (20s). Imperiously handsome, with pale gray eyes and long, dark hair. Dressed in a strange outfit that is part aristocratic gentlemen, part Pagan priest.

Crowley gives Crane a warm, patrician smile.

CRANE  
 You must excuse my secretary, Mrs. Vulch. She can be a touch *overzealous* in her secretarial duties.

Mrs. Vulch sheathes the knife, beady eyes not leaving Crane.

Crane rubs his throat, shooting Crowley a furious glare.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
 What's this, then? A Robbery? Hate to tell ya, but robbin' an East Side locksmith tain't exactly a good return on investment.

Crowley prowls the shop, picking up various locks and tools, lazily inspecting them --

CROWLEY  
*Robbery* seems a bit primitive, doesn't it? It's not money I'm interested in...

CRANE  
 You'd be the first.

Crowley returns a lock-bolt to its place on the workbench.

CROWLEY  
 You've recently come into possession of an object I'm keen to acquire.

He turns to Crane --



CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
An object of great personal and  
professional import to me.

Light glints off the strange GOLDEN TRIANGLE PENDANT hanging  
from Crowley's neck. Some kind of OCCULT SYMBOL.

Crane registers the pendant --

CRANE  
...Sorry. Not the slightest idea  
what yer talkin' about.

CROWLEY  
Oh, I think you do. And a man with  
a sharp instinct with self-  
preservation, I think you'll want  
to tell me where it is.

A wolfish smile spreads across Mrs. Vulch's thin lips. She  
draws her blade once more --

CRANE  
Well. Maybe yer a poor judge a'  
character. Cause I've never really  
been much for self-preservation.

A brief flash of ANGER flits across Crowley's face.

CROWLEY  
You could not possible comprehend  
the power that little box holds.

Crowley approaches Crane, placing TWO FINGERS against the  
side of Crane's neck, as if checking for a pulse --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
You'll soon learn, there's more to  
magic than cheap conjuror's tricks.

Crowley TAPS a spot on Crane's neck with the two fingers --

Crane suddenly CHOKES -- trying to draw in air. But none  
comes. His eyes wide and desperate as he realizes --

HE CAN'T BREATHE. As if being CHOKED by an invisible force.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
You *will* show me where the box is.

Crane sputters and chokes. His lips move, as if he's about to  
form words. Crowley leans in close --

And Crane defiantly SPITS in his face.

Crowley closes his eyes. His lip twitches. Trying to maintain composure. He wipes spit from his cheek.

CRANE

Mrs. Vulch -- our friend remains uncooperative. Procure the box.

Mrs. Vulch nods, turning on her heel and beginning to TEAR THE SHOP APART.

She has the ferocity of a hurricane. Throwing open cabinets, tearing down shelves, dumping crates on the floor. In a few moments, the shop is completely DEMOLISHED --

Mrs. Vulch looks at Crowley, shakes her head -- *no box*.

Crane claws at his throat, turning increasingly PURPLE.

CROWLEY

Mr. Crane, there is something you should know about me. I am man who used to getting what I want.

Crowley's own face grows red, his calm, collected veneer slowly beginning to crack. A vein pulses in his forehead --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

You *will* tell me where you've hidden the box.

The suffocating Crane only GRINS back at Crowley. Shrugs.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

*TELL ME!*

In a fit of rage, Crowley GRABS the knife from Mrs. Vulch, snarling furiously as he --

PLUNGES IT INTO CRANE'S STOMACH.

The spell is BROKEN. Crane takes a DEEP GASP OF AIR --

But then looks down to see the handle of the buck-knife protruding from his torso.

Crane's stumbles backward a step. Then another. His knees give out, and he FALLS BACK on to an enormous KEY RACK --

As he sinks to the floor, he's pelted by a rain of SKELETON KEYS, falling from above him in a CLATTERING DIN --

**EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - EVENING**

The commotion ECHOES from the shop below.

Harry, who's nearly dozed off, suddenly JUMPS TO HIS FEET.

Sensing something's wrong, he scurries in through the window and back down towards the shop --

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - EVENING**

He takes a deep, calming breath, regaining composure. He pulls a snow-white handkerchief from his breast pocket, wiping blood from the blade and handing it back to Vulch.

CROWLEY

I apologize that display, Mrs.  
Vulch. A gentlemen should never  
lose his temper in front of a lady.

**IN THE LOFT --**

Harry climbs back through the window into the loft area, about to call out --

But seeing Crowley and Mrs. Vulch below, he suddenly FREEZES. His eyes drift towards Crane's prone, blood-stained body lying on the floor. The color DRAINS from his face.

Crowley and Mrs. Vulch haven't noticed Harry, watching them from above --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

And I'm afraid my outburst was much  
to the detriment at the task at  
hand. I've impaled our only lead.

Mrs. Vulch GRUNTS, in a thick Eastern European accent --

MRS. VULCH

A boy.

CROWLEY

...A boy?

Mrs. Vulch nods brusquely.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Here? Earlier?

Another nod. A sly smile spreads across Crowley's lips.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
Eagle-eyed as always. Alert the  
rest of the Order. Have them find  
the boy. He can't have gotten far.

As Crowley and Vulch peer around the shop, Harry hastily  
DUCKS behind the workbench, heart beating fast in his chest.

Mrs. Vulch nods dutifully, pulling her own TRIANGLE PENDANT  
from under the neck of her shirtwaist.

MRS. VULCH  
*By the light of the Golden Dawn.*

Crowley places a hand over his own pendant --

CROWLEY  
*By the light of the Golden Dawn.*  
Now go, Mrs. Vulch.

Mrs. Vulch exits the shop. Crowley takes one last glance  
around -- eyes resting for a moment on the loft -- and then  
turns and follows after her.

As soon as the door creaks shut, Harry SPRINGS from his  
hiding place and rushes down to Crane's side.

HARRY  
Crane -- Crane, wake up. Please --

Crane doesn't look good. His apron is stained by blossom of  
dark-red blood, his face pale and glistening with sweat.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Come on, Crane. If you don't wake  
up, you're...you're gonna have to  
give me the shop --

Crane remains limp and unresponsive. Harry continues his  
attempt to appear brave --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
A-and -- I'm gonna run it in to the  
ground. You know I will. In two  
weeks. Probably even less --

Still no response.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
I'll, I'll change the name. Harry  
Weisz - Fine Locksmith. That's got  
a nice ring to it, don't you think?  
Much better than "Crane" --

Crane's eyes flicker open -- cloudy and distant --

CRANE  
...Harry?

Harry grins weakly --

HARRY  
See, I knew that would work. Come  
on, we gotta get you to a hospital.

CRANE  
Harry, c'mere --

Crane reaches up with a weak hand, grabbing Harry's shirt and pulling him closer. His voice a barely audible whisper --

CRANE (CONT'D)  
Listen, lad -- for once in yer  
life. Just...listen.

Crane draws a breath, trying to gather strength --

CRANE (CONT'D)  
*Ballantine. Bring -- the box to  
Ballantine. He'll -- he'll know  
what to do...*

HARRY  
But -- I don't even know where the  
box *is* --

CRANE  
Sometimes...the thing we're lookin'  
for...

He COUGHS, a blood trickling from the corner of his mouth --

CRANE (CONT'D)  
...was right...where we most  
expected it...all along...

Crane lets out a long breath. The light drains from his eyes.

HARRY  
...Crane? C-crane?

No answer.

Harry holds the body of his mentor in his arms, surrounded by a circle of scattered skeleton keys...

**EXT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - LATER**

Harry stands on the stoop, watching in numb shock as two MORGUE WORKERS carry out Crane's body on a wooden stretcher.

They load him into a BLACK WAGON, shutting the doors behind them. A shadow falls over Harry --

UNDERTAKER (O.S.)  
Got a place to go, son?

Harry looks up to see the UNDERTAKER, peering kindly down at him, hat in his hands.

HARRY  
...I -- yeah. Yeah, I got a place.

The Undertaker smiles sadly, patting Harry on the shoulder before donning his hat and climbing into the wagon.

Harry stands under the WOODEN KEY, watching the wagon go...

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - LATER**

IN RUINS. Boxes and cabinets over-turned, shelves smashed, floor littered with locks and keys. Almost nothing left upright or unbroken.

Harry stands in the entryway for a long moment, not quite sure what to do --

Then slowly crosses to a fallen cabinet. He lifts it back in to an upright position. His movements are jerky, robotic -- almost as if he's in a trance.

He picks up a wooden CRATE. Begins to scoop up the detritus of locks and keys on the floor.

As he works, his movements become smoother, steadier.

**EXT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING**

Night has fallen.

The streets are dark, other than a glow of a gas lantern that drifts from the shop's window.

**INT. LOCKSMITH SHOP - NIGHT**

Harry hangs the last key back on the key rack. He wipes his hands on his breeches, turning to survey his work --

The entire shop is almost AS GOOD AS NEW.

Sure, there are a few cracks and dents, a few cabinet doors hanging crooked from their hinges -- but otherwise, it's even *tidier* than it was before the arrival of Crowley and Vulch.

But Harry deflates -- without Crane, the shop feels too large, too dark, too empty.

Harry blows out the gas lantern, trudging up the steps to the loft, passing his workbench, still cluttered with the pile of clogged padlocks --

And STOPS. Furrows his brow, remembering Crane's words --

HARRY

*Right where we most expected it all  
along...*

He turns back to the workbench. Something GLINTS beneath the pile of greasy locks --

Harry SHOVES them aside. They CLATTER to the floor, revealing --

THE PUZZLE BOX.

Its bright silver sheen dulled by a coat of grease and grime.

*Of course. Where would Crane hide a lock? Right next to all  
the other locks...*

Excitement growing, Harry picks up the puzzle-box, rubbing it clean with his shirt. Holds it to the light, inspecting it --

The box is made up of dozens of INTERLOCKING PIECES, that need to be arranged in just the right order to open the box.

Harry examines the box closer. Moves some of the pieces. Attempts to pry the cylinder open --

But it's no use. The box is SEALED TIGHT.

Harry's pale, shell-shocked expression slowly fades away, transforming into a look of intense DETERMINATION...

#### **EXT. BRIARCLIFF MANOR - NIGHT**

About as far away from the dark, grimy streets of the Lower East Side as you can get.

STATELY MANSIONS overlook a scenic, winding road, surrounded by majestic oaks and lush greenery.

The HUDSON RIVER cuts a gently curving path through the idyllic landscape.

At the far end of the street sits --

THE BALLANTINE ESTATE.

Even more lavish and impressive than its neighbors, and currently the spot for the social event of the summer --

The sounds of MUSIC, LAUGHTER, and TINKLING CHINA drift from the open bay windows.

**AT THE END OF THE STREET --**

Harry stands at the bottom of the hill, looking up at the estate.

He still appears shell-shocked and traumatized by Crane's death --

Yet as he begins to walk towards the estate, he takes a deep breath -- hiding his grief behind a SHOWMAN'S BRAVADO.

**EXT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - FRONT GATE - NIGHT**

A line of CARRIAGES await at the front gate, pulled by immaculately-groomed horses. Inside, their well-dressed PASSENGERS sit behind velvet curtains.

A DOORMAN sits in a guardhouse by the wrought-iron gate, checking the GUEST LIST and ushering the carriages up the winding drive one by one.

He waves a carriage by with a gloved hand --

DOORMAN

Enjoy the evening, Mr. and Mrs.  
Rutherford.

As the Rutherford carriage pulls away towards the estate, the Doorman spies a head of frizzy brown hair that barely clears the lip of booth. The Doorman frowns, peering over at --

HARRY. Grinning up at the Doorman hopefully.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)

...Can I help you?

HARRY

Hello, my, er -- good man. I'm here  
to see Sir Neville Ballantine.



The Doorman raises a suspicious eyebrow --

DOORMAN  
Are you now.

HARRY  
Carriage unfortunately snapped an axle, but nice night for a walk, if I do say so myself --

DOORMAN  
Name?

HARRY  
Uh...Cornelius. Cornelius Vanderbilt. Um...Junior.

The Doorman smirks, surveying Harry's shabby outfit --

DOORMAN  
Vanderbilt, eh? Railroad business must have fallen on hard times.

HARRY  
You know me -- man of the people, they always said --

A haughty, well-mannered face pokes out of the ostentatious carriage waiting behind Harry -- ALEXANDER DELACROIX (20).

DELACROIX  
Doorman! What's going on up there, I haven't got all night.

The Doorman gives Delacroix a warm smile --

DOORMAN  
My apologies for the delay, Mr. Delacroix.

He turns to Harry, the smile turning into a furious sneer --

DOORMAN (CONT'D)  
Now get the hell off this street, Mr. Vanderbilt, before I call the police!

**EXT. BALLANTINE ESTATE GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER**

Efforts rebuffed, Harry hides in the shadows of the bushes, watching as the steady stream of carriages move up the drive.

At the top of the hill, the Ballantine Estate seems so far out of reach. But then --

The sound of VOICES from behind him --

WORKER 1 (O.S.)  
Ice sculptures! Rich folks and  
their damn ice sculptures...

WORKER 2 (O.S.)  
Only a guy like Ballantine is gonna  
spend three thousand bucks on a  
glorified puddle.

Harry turns to see two WORKERS pushing a CART carrying an intricate ICE SCULPTURE of a SWAN towards the Estate.

WORKER 1  
Come on, let's take this thing  
around back through the kitchen --

Harry's gaze lands on the WHITE CLOTH that hangs over the base of the cart. An idea forming in his mind...

#### **INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

The two Workers push the ice sculpture into the low-ceilinged stone KITCHEN.

The white curtain SWISHES as Harry slips from his hiding place under the cart, unseen by the Workers.

Crawling on his hands and knees, Harry navigates through the labyrinth of bustling WAITERS, CHEFS, and SCULLERY MAIDS trying to avoid getting stomped on, stepped on, or kicked.

The kitchen is TOTAL CHAOS --

*FWOOSH!* A BAKER opens an iron oven, which BELCHES FLAME.

*THUNK!* A chef uses a BUTCHER KNIFE to decapitate a TROUT.

*SPLAT!* The trout's bloody head LANDS right next to Harry, who wrinkles his nose in disgust.

Harry desperately tries to find a way out. He spies a group of Waiters carrying a PLATTER containing a full ROAST HOG towards a set of double-doors.

Harry scurries after, hiding behind them as they enter the --

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Harry can't help but stop in his tracks, slack-jawed --

This is the FANCIEST PLACE Harry has ever seen in his life.

A high-vaulted ceiling TOWERS over him, adorned with a gilded map of the heavens.

Arched windows are framed by burgundy curtains laced with gold. The lights of chandelier reflect off the glittering marble floor.

The ballroom is packed with the WEALTHY SCIONS OF NEW YORK -- dressed in their finest evening suits and gowns, dancing, laughing, drinking champagne from crystal flutes.

A FULL ORCHESTRA plays on a stage in the corner.

Harry's in TOTAL AWE -- but he's broken out of his trance when he notices the odd looks he's getting from the partygoers around him.

Remembering his shabby work clothes, Harry scurries off into the crowd.

He swipes a BLACK TUXEDO JACKET hanging over the back of a chair, quickly shrugging it on and buttoning it --

He trips and bumps into a MAN IN A BOWTIE --

HARRY

Oops, sorry!

BOWTIE MAN

Perfectly fine, my friend --

The man frowns, patting at his neck -- his bowtie has DISAPPEARED!

Up ahead, Harry fits the bowtie snugly around his OWN NECK.

Harry approaches an ELDERLY MAN dressed in WHITE KID GLOVES --

HARRY

Aloysius? Aloysius Van Steinenberg?  
Is that you?

ELDERLY MAN

I'm -- I'm sorry, I don't --

Harry CLASPS both of the man's hand firmly in his own, a hearty handshake --

HARRY

It is you, old chap! Good to see  
you, we really must catch up --

Harry releases the old man's hands, vanishing into the crowd.

The Man looks down at his hands -- his gloves are GONE...

**MOMENTS LATER --**

Harry looks at himself in a grand mirror -- in his "borrowed" tuxedo jacket, bowtie, and kid gloves, he looks half-way presentable, even though the jacket is much too large.

Harry discreetly dips his fingers into a champagne glass, using the liquid to slick back his unruly hair.

He strikes a few poses -- but is interrupted by --

ORCHESTRA LEADER (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen! May I have  
your attention!

The crowd settles down, and Harry turns to see the ORCHESTRA LEADER, standing at the bandstand --

ORCHESTRA LEADER (CONT'D)

It is now my pleasure and privilege  
to present to you...the lady of the  
evening -- *Ms. Sophia Ballantine.*

As the orchestra starts up a waltz, all eyes turn towards --

SOPHIA. Standing demurely at the top of the GRAND STAIRCASE.

Harry's eyes go wide. This is not the prim girl in a buttoned-up shirtwaist he met earlier that day --

Sophia has transformed into an stunningly elegant DEBUTANTE, draped in a shimmering silk ballgown, hair done up in stylish curls, sapphire necklace glistening at her neck.

As Sophia descends the staircase, gown trailing elegantly behind her, the ELIGIBLE BACHELORS in attendance make a MAD RUSH towards her --

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - BALLROOM - LATER**

The orchestra continues their waltz. The floor is filled with couples, elegantly dancing and twirling to the music.

At the center of the ballroom, Sophia waltzes with Alexander Delacroix, the young man from the carriage. As they dance, Delacroix drones on --

DELACROIX

Father's sold his interests in steel. He believes now that the railroads have reached the Western frontier, there won't be as much of a demand for it.

Sophia smiles, forcing herself to seem interested and attentive to what Delacroix's saying --

SOPHIA

Really! How *fascinating*...

DELACROIX

He says *rubber's* the name of the game now. We've just purchased a rubber plantation in Sri Lanka.

SOPHIA

Sri Lanka? So exotic. Is that in...

Sophia bats her eyelids, feigning dumb --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

...Africa?

DELACROIX

Southeast Asia, actually. And I should know. One day soon, it will all be mine. Of course...

He gives Sophia a matinee idol stare --

DELACROIX (CONT'D)

...it wouldn't mean anything without a wife by my side, tending to the home.

The two lock eyes -- a pregnant moment, interrupted by --

HARRY (O.S.)

Sorry, pal -- mind if I cut in?

Harry elbows a baffled Delacroix out of the way, taking Sophia in his arms and continues the waltz with her --

Harry leads Sophia as they circle the floor, leaving Delacroix in their dust.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Sophia. Listen. We need to talk --

SOPHIA  
I'm sorry, Sir, I don't quite...

As she gets a good glimpse of Harry, her gaze fills with recognition -- and then COLD FURY. She snarls --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
*You!* That grubby little *urchin* from  
the lock shop --

HARRY  
Not an urchin, thought we already  
went over that --

Sophia tries to PUSH HARRY AWAY -- but gets judgmental glances from the waltzers around them.

In the interest of propriety, Sophia begrudgingly falls into waltz-step with Harry.

Harry sees a dejected Delacroix, stalking off into the crowd.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Sorry if I interrupted your *date*.

SOPHIA  
My *date*, I'll have you have know,  
is the eldest son of one of the  
most important industrial barons  
this side of the Atlantic.

Harry bats his eyelashes, mocking Sophia --

HARRY  
*Fascinating...*

Sophia "accidentally" steps on Harry's foot. He YELPS --

SOPHIA  
Out with it then -- what are you  
doing here?

HARRY  
I need to talk to your Uncle.  
Something's -- something's  
happened. Uh -- locksmith business.

The waltz changes -- something slower, more sultry. Sophia grimaces as Harry holds her closer.

SOPHIA

Good luck with that. Uncle Nev's  
locked himself away with his  
*donors* --

HARRY

*Donors?*

SOPHIA

For the Olympia Theater. His  
precious little pet project. He'll  
be in there for hours.

Sophia narrows her eyes, none too happy with her wayward  
uncle.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Uncle Nev's always cavorting with  
his business partners. Either that,  
or he's stuck up in that library of  
his --

HARRY

His library...

SOPHIA

Yes, but he's not there *now* --

HARRY

Of course! His library --

Harry drops Sophia, hurrying away --

SOPHIA

Wait, where are you --

Harry spins around, grabbing Sophia's hand and kissing it  
with faux gallantry --

HARRY

Almost forgot -- thank you for the  
dance, Ms. Ballantine.

And then he's gone.

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Harry hurries down a long, cavernous hallway, lined by MARBLE  
BUSTS and OAK DOORS on both sides. The sounds of the ball  
echo from behind him.

He scans each door as he passes --

HARRY  
*Library...library...library...*

SOPHIA (O.S.)  
*Excuse me!*

Sophia rounds the corner after him, infuriated, walking as fast as her heels will allow her to.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
What do you think you're doing?!  
You can't come back here --

Harry smirks --

HARRY  
I thought you didn't want anything  
to do with me?

SOPHIA  
Oh, believe me, I don't --

HARRY  
Then why'd you follow me?

SOPHIA  
Listen to me, you imp --

Harry opens his mouth to say something --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
*Listen. To. Me.*

Harry shuts up.

Sophia takes a deep breath, trying to maintain composure. She brushes a fallen curl of hair back from her forehead.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Tonight is the most *important* night  
of my life. It is the night that I  
shall meet a distinguished,  
eligible gentlemen, who shall then  
court me, who shall then propose  
marriage, who shall then become my  
husband -- and I, his wife.

She continues to glare coldly at Harry --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
And I will *not*, under any  
circumstances, have tonight ruined  
by a worthless, two-bit gutter  
tramp --



HARRY  
*Worthless* is a bit strong of a --

SOPHIA  
So if you do anything -- *anything* --  
that puts tonight in jeopardy? It  
won't be my uncle you'll have to  
worry about. It won't be the  
police. It will be *ME*. Do you  
understand? *ME*.

Harry GULPS, nodding hastily.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Now *leave*. Get out of here, and go  
back to that little hovel you call  
a home.

Sophia turns on her heel, and storms back down the hall.  
She's almost gone, when --

HARRY  
...I can't.

Sophia falters -- stops.

SOPHIA  
...What?

Harry swallows. Looks down at the floor, trying to hide his  
eyes from Sophia.

HARRY  
I can't...go home. Not anymore.

SOPHIA  
What are you talking about?

Harry deflates. Suddenly looking very small, almost fragile,  
in his over-sized tuxedo jacket.

HARRY  
...They -- they killed him. They  
killed Crane. A man and a woman.  
They came into the shop. Crane had  
something they wanted, and --

He slips something from beneath his coat --

THE PUZZLE-BOX. Glimmering in the gas light of the hall.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
...He had this.

SOPHIA  
Uncle Neville's puzzle-box! But --

HARRY  
This isn't just some ordinary  
puzzle-box. Whatever secret's  
inside -- Crane was willing to die  
for it. I have to find out what's  
in there --

He looks up at Sophia, pleading --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
I have to make things right...for  
Crane.

A long beat. Sophia deliberates.

SOPHIA  
Five minutes. I'll give you five  
minutes.

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - LIBRARY - NIGHT**

A ROTUNDA, packed with towering shelves of LEATHER-BOUND BOOKS, accessible by ROLLING LIBRARY LADDERS.

Sophia leads Harry through the great oaken doors, closing them delicately behind her.

Harry lets at an impressed whistle at the stately room.

SOPHIA  
If Uncle Neville ever found out I  
let anyone in here -- especially  
you -- he'd have a conniption. So  
if you break *anything* --

Harry surreptitiously places the delicate gilded SEXTANT he'd been examining back on its pedestal.

HARRY  
Don't break anything. Got it.

Harry descends the staircase into the library's central floor, where a fire crackles merrily behind a grated hearth.

SOPHIA  
Five minutes!

On the far side of the library, Harry spies a semi-circle of finely-carved oak LECTERNS, each contained a thick, dusty tome lying OPEN.

Harry scans the crumbled, yellowed pages -- all depict trick mirrors, trap doors, sleight-of-hand -- MAGIC TRICKS.

HARRY

...Your Uncle's a magician too?

At the top of the stairs, Sophia rolls her eyes, sighing.

SOPHIA

The most obnoxious of his many obsessions.

Harry walks along the row of lecterns, fingers reverently brushing against the detailed illustrations of magic's most WELL-KEPT SECRETS...

HARRY

Whoa...this guy has everything! *The Secret History of Illusion, Mediumship and Spirit Cabinets, The Conjuror's Compendium...*

Something catches Harry's eye -- an extraordinarily thick, lavishly-bound text -- *THE CONJUROR'S COMPENDIUM*.

Open to a page depicting an illustration of a CYLINDRICAL TUBE, made up of multiple interlocking pieces --

A perfect illustration of THE PUZZLE BOX.

Realization slowly dawns across Harry's face...

HARRY (CONT'D)

Of course...

# **EXT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - FRONT GATE - NIGHT**

With the rush of guests over, the Doorman sits with his feet up, perusing a magazine called *LA VIE PARISIENNE* -- a scantily-clad MERMAID on its cover.

He turns the magazine sideways, giving an appraising glance at the centerfold --

DOORMAN

Hello there, you saucy tart...

A LARGE SILHOUETTE appears at the gate. The Doorman notices, annoyed to be interrupted from such enriching reading --

DOORMAN (CONT'D)

Yes? Can I help you?

He flips the magazine down, to see --

The toad-like face of MRS. VULCH staring right back at him.  
Flanked by five particularly nasty-looking MEN...

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - LIBRARY - NIGHT**

Curiosity getting the better of her, Sophia approaches Harry,  
peering over his shoulder at the *Conjuror's Compendium* --

SOPHIA

What is it?

Harry stares in awe at the illustration of the puzzle-box --

HARRY

I should have known -- the puzzle-  
box of Robert-Houdin...

SOPHIA

Robert-*Who*?

HARRY

Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin? Only the  
greatest magician who ever lived...

Harry flips to the next page -- a stern portrait of a white-  
maned MAN with a mysterious glint in his eye -- the same  
portrait hanging above Harry's workbench in Crane's shop.

Harry continues in a hushed, reverent tone --

HARRY (CONT'D)

In 1856, he was dispatched by  
Emperor Napoleon III to French  
Algiers, to quell the Algerian  
revolution...

On the next page -- Robert-Houdin stands across from an  
ALGERIAN HOLY MAN in ceremonial garb -- LIGHTNING BOLTS burst  
from both men's fingers, locked in a MAGICAL DUEL.

HARRY (CONT'D)

He used his illusions to combat the  
Algerian Marabouts --

SOPHIA

Marabouts?

HARRY

Holy Men. Sorcerers. The Marabouts had tricks of their own, but Robert-Houdin's magic was so powerful, so convincing, they never stood a chance...

The next page -- Robert-Houdin stands on a cliff-side, hands raised high, like Moses parting the Red Sea. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING burst forth from behind him.

HARRY (CONT'D)

The legends say it was if he was able to harness the power of lightning itself -- with a wave of his hand, he could raze a village, fell a whole platoon. The Algerian soldiers dropped their weapons and surrendered where they stood....

Hordes of ALGERIAN SOLDIERS flee in panic and terror from the imposing figure of Robert-Houdin.

Sophia scoffs, unimpressed --

SOPHIA

So -- what? The French Emperor sends a magician to trick some poor Algerians into subjugation with flashy parlor tricks? Pretty awful thing to do, in my opinion --

HARRY

That's what Robert-Houdin thought too. Once he saw the devastation he caused, he locked the secret to his illusion away in a puzzle-box. A puzzle-box that was thought to be lost forever...

CROWLEY (O.S.)

...Until your Uncle was kind enough to *re-acquire* it for me.

Harry and Sophia whip around to see --

CROWLEY. Standing on the balcony at the top of the stairs, looking down at them with an urbane smile.

Harry face goes RED WITH RAGE --

HARRY

You...

He RUSHES at Crowley, but MRS. VULCH emerges behind him, accompanied by five ACOLYTES -- men in black garb, marked with the same OCCULT SYMBOL worn by Crowley.

Two of the Acolytes GRAB Harry roughly, holding him back from Crowley. The others guard Sophia.

Crowley leisurely walks down the steps, looking Harry up and down as he struggles against the iron grip of the Acolytes.

CROWLEY

Now, we mustn't dispense with  
pleasantries. You must be this  
locksmith's apprentice I've heard  
so much about.

Harry only glares at him silently, fury brewing in his eyes. Crowley gives him a mock bow.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Aleister Crowley, Grand Prophet of  
the Hermetic Order of the Golden  
Dawn. At your service.

Recognition dawns on Sophia's face --

SOPHIA

Crowley...of the Warwickshire  
Crowleys....

CROWLEY

Ms. Ballantine, I presume?  
Certainly up to date on your high  
society happenings, aren't you?

One of the Acolytes tightens his grip on the fabric of Sophia's gown. She TUGS it away --

SOPHIA

That's *Italian* silk --

CROWLEY

I was indeed a Warwickshire Crowley  
-- though due to my somewhat  
*unseemly* interests, Father thought  
it prudent to disown me.

Crowley inspects an ivory GLOBE, spinning it on its axis --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Fine by me -- I have no interest in  
aristocracy. I traveled the world,  
seeking out the secrets and  
mysteries long forgotten by man.

(MORE)

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

The *Kabbalah* in Palestine. The *Book of the Dead* in Egypt. The *Tantric Veda* in Nepal...

(smirking)

That one was fun...

As Crowley talks, Harry gaze rests on a stack of LOGS by fireplace, held by a brass ANDIRON. An idea forming...

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

In my travels, I gleaned a vision of a new order for the world. A *Golden Dawn* -- built not on aristocracy, or bloodlines, or wealth, but on *power*. *Real power*, drawn from the cosmos itself...

Crowley stands by the fire, staring into the flames.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

The power contained in the puzzle-box you now hold. You see, Robert-Houdin was more than a conjuror of cheap parlor tricks...

He turns towards Harry --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

He was a *sorcerer*. A *god*...

Harry again eyes the andiron of fire wood. Calculating...

HARRY

You want the puzzle-box?

He slips it from under his jacket, holding it out to Crowley.

CROWLEY

Finally! Someone with an iota of cooperation. Give it here, boy --

HARRY

Go get it!

In a flash, Harry HURLS the puzzle-box at Crowley's head.

Caught by surprise, Crowley DODGES -- the box goes sailing by him, CRASHING into the andiron, which --

TIPS OVER, sending dozens of logs -- all the EXACT SAME SHAPE AND SIZE as the cylindrical puzzle-box -- rolling across the floor.

Harry takes the moment of chaos to SLIP OUT of the two Acolytes' grasp. They scramble after him, but TRIP over the cascade of rolling logs.

Harry spies a silver GLINT in the logs. Makes a dive for it --

**SOPHIA --**

Struggles against the Acolyte guarding her, to no avail. She rears back and --

KICKS the Acolyte in the groin. The Acolyte YELPS, dropping her. Sophia springs free, but comes face-to-face with --

MRS. VULCH. Her thin, pale lips spreading into a grin.

**HARRY --**

Grabs at the puzzle-box. An Acolyte lunges for it too --

The Acolyte gets there first, GRABBING the puzzle-box victoriously. But when he looks down in his hands --

He's holding a LOG. A bait and switch! The Acolyte looks up to see Harry, running away with PUZZLE-BOX in hand.

The Acolyte GROWLS, lunging at Harry -- but his fingers only brush Harry's coattails as the boy LEAPS UP, grabbing onto a ROLLING LIBRARY LADDER, rolling away at top speed --

**SOPHIA --**

Is slowly backed into a corner by Mrs. Vulch. a lion stalking a gazelle. Sophia's fingers scramble for something -- anything -- to defend herself with. Closing around the --

IRON FIRE POKER. In one swift motion, she swings it in a high arc, bringing it down HARD on Mrs. Vulch's head --

CLLLAAANNNNNNGGGG!

Sophia winces as the vibrations reverberate up her arm --

Vulch is COMPLETELY UNHARMED -- as if her head is made out of STEEL. Grin spreading wider as she continues towards Sophia.

Sophia attempts to put on her most aristocratic smile --

SOPHIA

...We can work this out, can't we?  
Lady to Lady?

**HARRY --**



FLIES around the rotunda on the rolling ladder, until --

WHAM! He's CLOTHESLINED off the ladder by another Acolyte. Scrambles up as the Acolyte BEARS DOWN ON HIM with a KNIFE --

The Acolyte swings his blade -- Harry grabs a THICK BOOK off the shelf, using it as a shield --

THUNK! The blade slices into the book's cover. Harry tosses it aside, scrambling to pull out another, smaller book.

The Acolyte attacks again --THUNK!

Harry grabs a smaller book, almost a paperback -- THUNK!

Now a TINY book -- basically a paper pamphlet --

SNK! The Acolyte SLASHES the tiny book ENTIRELY IN HALF -- pages fluttering to the ground. Harry GULPS, now completely defenseless --

**SOPHIA --**

Continues backing away from Mrs. Vulch. Readies the fire poker for another swing --

CLANG! Sophia swings with all her might, but it has NO EFFECT on the invincible Mrs. Vulch.

Panicking, she begins SWINGING WILDLY, but --

Mrs. Vulch CATCHES the fire poker in her bare hands, PULLING IT away from Sophia.

Staring down Sophia with beady eyes, Mrs. Vulch BENDS the rigid iron poker into a KNOT. Not even breaking a sweat...

**HARRY --**

LEAPS UP as the Acolyte swings his knife-blade, barely avoiding getting gutted --

Harry GRABS the ladder, PUSHING it straight at the Acolyte --

CONK! The ladder SMACKS the Acolyte in the head, sending him stumbling backwards, where he trips over a log and CRASHES into a massive china vase.

**SOPHIA --**

Continues to slowly back away in terror from Mrs. Vulch, who tosses away the knotted fire poker with disdain.

Mrs. Vulch LUNGES at Sophia, attempting to GRAB HER --

But getting a HANDFUL of Sophia's exceedingly PUFFY silk gown. Sophia tries to pull away, but Vulch's grip is iron.

Sophia grimaces, knowing what she must do --

*RIIIPPPP!* She YANKS the hem of her gown away, leaving Vulch with nothing but four hundred dollars worth of Italian silk.

Sophia stumbles back, bumping into --

HARRY. The two are now back-to-back, up against an enormous BAY WINDOW overlooking the Estate grounds.

They're surrounded. Mrs. Vulch prowls towards them. The Acolytes get to their feet, dusting themselves off and picking up their knives.

Crowley, who has been watching the scene unfold before him, claps politely --

CROWLEY

*Bravo! Quite a performance from the both of you. Far better than expected. But we can't carry like this all night, I'm afraid --*

Mrs. Vulch and the Acolytes draw closer, weapons drawn. There's nowhere to run...

Harry turns towards Sophia, grabbing her hands --

HARRY

*Do you trust me?*

SOPHIA

*Trust you? Not in the slightest --*

HARRY

*Well -- first time for everything!*

Harry wraps his arms around Sophia, and --

*CRASH!*

JUMPS STRAIGHT THROUGH THE BAY WINDOW.

They PLUMMET downward, landing on the roof of the --

#### **HORSE STABLE**

Harry scrambles to his feet, helping Sophia up beside him. He spies a SKY LIGHT, tugging Sophia towards it, glass crunching beneath their feet --

HARRY (CONT'D)

In here!

He opens the skylight, DROPPING to the hay-covered ground. After a moment of hesitation, Sophia drops down after him.

**IN THE LIBRARY --**

The Acolyte gather around the shattered window, peering down at the stable in awe of Harry's feat --

Crowley snarls, increasingly unhinged --

CROWLEY

What are you waiting for? *Get them!*

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - STABLE - NIGHT**

Dark and murky. Crowded with HORSES, many still attached to their carriages, chewing on hay or licking salt.

Harry spies a particularly SLEEK, METALLIC CARRIAGE, jumping into the driver's seat. Sophia clambers in beside him.

Harry reaches for the reins -- but there are no reins. Only a STEERING WHEEL. He looks up -- there are NO HORSES attached to the carriage.

HARRY

What the hell is this thing?!

SOPHIA

Uncle Neville's electric carriage!

HARRY

Electric *what?*!

SOPHIA

Electric carriage! They're all the rage in Europe --

HARRY

Jesus, you rich people are insane --

**THUD! THUD! THUD!** The Acolytes JUMP onto the stable roof above them. Their footsteps echoing closer and closer --

HARRY (CONT'D)

How does it work?!

SOPHIA

Well, you turn that key there --

Harry grabs the ornate key, TURNING IT hard to the left --

**ACROSS THE STABLE --**

The Acolytes drop through the skylight to the floor, when --

*FWOOSH!* Blinding headlights BURST TO LIFE, catching the Acolytes in their beams. They look up, eyes wide as --

An engine ROARS TO LIFE. The carriage EXPLODES forward, Acolytes DIVING OUT OF THE WAY as it SPEEDS past --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

*Watch out!*

The stable wall RUSHES TOWARDS THEM. They SCREAM as --

*CRASH!* Harry drives the carriage STRAIGHT through the wall, wildly careening out on to the --

**EXT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS**

SAILING across the rolling green lawn at TOP SPEED, weaving a crazy path --

HARRY

*Where are the brakes?!*

SOPHIA

I don't know! I've never driven it before!

**IN THE STABLE --**

The Acolytes jump to their feet, using their knives to CUT the reins from the horses, FREEING THEM from their carriages.

The MOUNT the horses, KICKING them hard. The horses WHINNY, rearing back and TAKING OFF after the carriage.

**IN THE CARRIAGE --**

Harry looks back to see the Acolytes emerge on horseback from the hole in the stable wall, hot their tails --

HARRY

This thing's faster than a horse, right?

SOPHIA

*Harry, look out!*

They're now speeding RIGHT TOWARDS the front doors of the ESTATE HOUSE --

Harry attempts to YANK the steering wheel HARD to the right, but its TOO LATE --

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP --

The carriage RATTLES up the steps. Two BUTLERS jump out of the way as the carriage ROCKETS through the oaken front doors of the estate, straight into the --

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - BALL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Party-goers SCREAM IN TERROR as the carriage skids across the slick marble floor, its back-end KNOCKING into the massive ICE SCULPTURE, which --

SHATTERS on the ground. Sophia looks down at it in shock --

The Acolytes GALLOP through the ballroom doors, making a beeline towards Harry and Sophia --

Harry SLAMS DOWN on the gas -- the carriage careens across the ball-room...straight towards the ORCHESTRA.

Harry banks to the left, speeding towards the KITCHEN DOORS --

But his path is blocked by --

DELACROIX. Standing frozen in fear, like a deer in the headlights races towards him. Completely baffled --

DELACROIX  
...Ms. Ballantine?!

HOOOOOOONNNKK!

Harry SQUEEZES the horn -- breaking out of his trance, Delacroix JUMPS OUT of the way, falling to the floor --

As the carriage speeds away, Sophia looks back at Delacroix, ABSOLUTELY MORTIFIED --

SOPHIA  
I'm so so sorry, Alexander! I  
really enjoyed our waltz, please do  
call again soon --

Delacroix raises his head with a weak smile, when --

A horse VAULTS OVER HIM, almost kicking him in the head. Delacroix SCREAMS, burying his head under his hands.

**EXT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - GROUNDS - NIGHT**

A moment of stillness. Silence. Until --

The kitchen doors BURST OPEN and the carriage ROARS out into the night. Harry laughs gleefully --

HARRY

We made it! We actually made it!

SOPHIA

*...No we didn't!*

The carriage SPEEDS up a ridge, revealing --

THE HUDSON RIVER. Stretching out before them, winding, scenic -- and GETTING CLOSER --

Harry and Sophia SCREAM as the carriage SAILS off the ridge. For a long moment, they're --

AIRBORNE. Hanging high above the river, until --

*SPLASH!* The carriage LANDS HARD in the Hudson, sending up a GEYSER OF WATER.

The carriage slowly SINKS to the river bottom, leaving Harry and Sophia dog-paddling, CARRIED AWAY by the current...

**ON THE SHORE --**

The Acolytes gallop up to the edge of the ridge, pulling up back on their reins before they too plummet into the river.

Watching Harry and Sophia as they drift further and further away -- along with the puzzle-box...

**EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - NIGHT**

*HOOOOOOOOOONNK! HOOOOOOOOOONNK!*

A foghorn WAILS in the night as a large FERRY BOAT pulls off the Hudson and docks at the harbor.

Harry and Sophia cling to a ledge off the stern, SOPPING WET and out of sight from the passengers on deck.

As the ferry slowly grinds to a stop, Harry hops on to the dock, more energized and invigorated than ever --

HARRY

Wow! Y'know, I wasn't sure about  
that whole *electric carriage* thing,  
but it really grew on me! Shame we  
sunk it though --

As Harry talks, Sophia STORMS away, filthy, tattered gown  
dragging behind her, ringing water from her ruined hair --

HARRY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

SOPHIA

*Home.* I'm going *home* --

HARRY

All the way back to Briarcliff? You  
can't go back there --

SOPHIA

*Watch me.*

Harry rushes to catch up with Sophia --

HARRY

I'm serious -- that place'll still  
be crawling with Crowley's goons.  
And they're looking for you --

SOPHIA

Oh, really? Because it seemed to me  
like they were looking for *you* --

HARRY

And what? You think that scary  
Russian lady's above cutting off a  
few of *your* fingers to get to me?

Sophia HUFFS, changing direction --

SOPHIA

Fine. I'll go somewhere *else* then --

HARRY

Where?

SOPHIA

Anywhere where you're *not*.

HARRY

Sophia, please, just -- calm down --

Sophia TURNS ON HIM --

SOPHIA

Calm down? *Calm down?* Have you been listening to *anything* I've said? You've ruined the most important night of my life! Do you see the way those people looked at us? Now I'll be lucky if I can bag a bloated old geezer who can barely keep his teeth in --

HARRY

...Come on -- you didn't *really* want to marry that guy, did you?

SOPHIA

Who -- Alexander? So what if I did?

HARRY

But -- rubber plantations? Railroads? I mean, he's so *boring*. And you're so...

He fumbles, trying to find the words --

HARRY (CONT'D)

...not...boring.

Sophia pauses. The rage somewhat fading from her face.

SOPHIA

...Maybe boring isn't all that bad.

She gestures around them at the filthy, decrepit docks --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

It certainly has to be better than whatever *this* is.

She turns away once more, leaving the dock --

HARRY

One night. Just one night. Then we can sort all this out in the morning. I promise.

SOPHIA

Where are we going to go? If we can't go to Briarcliff, then we certainly can't go back to Crane's.

HARRY

I might know a place...



**EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING**

The twin towers of the Brooklyn Bridge loom high above the East River, framed against the starry night sky.

**EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - OUTCROPPING - NIGHT**

Hundreds of feet above the ground, at the peak of the north tower, a small door leads out to a tiny OUTCROPPING, sheltered from the howling wind.

The door knob RATTLES -- CLICKS -- then OPENS. Harry steps out onto the outcropping, slipping his LOCK-PICKING TOOLS back into his pocket. Sophia follows after him.

HARRY

Before Crane took me in, I used to  
have little spots like this all  
over the city --

Harry pulls up a dirty TARP with a magician's flourish --

Beneath it lies a bedroll, spare shirts and breeches, and a handful of dog-eared magic catalogues and penny dreadfuls.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Stay outta the cold, keep me away  
from coppers and Bowery gangs --

Harry glances around at PIGEONS roosting in the crannies, the stone floor covered in their droppings and downy feathers.

He coughs, suddenly embarrassed by his shabby, hard-scrabble hide-out. Tries to sweep away some feathers with his foot --

HARRY (CONT'D)

It's not exactly the Knickerbocker  
or anything...

But Sophia's not even paying attention. She stands at the railing, looking out at the enchanting sight before them --

THE CITY SKYLINE. Twinkling in the distance, the lights REFLECTING brilliantly off the dark waters of the river.

SOPHIA

It's -- *beautiful...*

Harry raises his eyebrows -- not what he was expecting.

HARRY

...You think so?

SOPHIA

I've...never seen the city from this high up before. The way the lights shine off the water -- it's like there's a whole other night sky down there...

Harry follows Sophia's gaze over the water --

HARRY

Huh -- never thought about it like that before.

As Sophia's distracted by the view before them, Harry sneaks a glance at her -- her tangled hair, long since fallen from its complex pinning, blows behind her in the night wind.

Sophia turns, catching Harry looking at her. She keeps his gaze for a long moment. Close in the moonlight --

Until she tears her gaze away, primly clearing her throat and straightening her damp dress.

SOPHIA

I should be getting to sleep.

Harry blinks. The spell broken.

HARRY

Huh? I, um -- yeah. Sleep...

Sophia crosses the platform, unrolling Harry's bedroll and climbing inside, turning away from him without another word.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Uh -- why don't you take the bedroll tonight. That's fine...

**EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - OUTCROPPING - LATER**

A pigeon COOS serenely in its roost, fragile chicks curled against its feathery breast.

On the stone floor, Sophia tosses and turns, unable to find comfort as the cold seeps through her threadbare coverings.

Harry sits against the railing, puzzle-box in hand. He clicks and moves the many interlocking pieces, trying every combination as he can think of -- but making no progress.

Some pieces line up correctly, forming a strange PATTERN of lines and shapes -- but the box remains sealed shut.

He frowns, biting his lip -- unused to being so thoroughly stumped. He doesn't notice the SHADOW fall over him --

SOPHIA (O.S.)

What do you think is in there?

Harry looks up to see Sophia standing over him -- bedroll wrapped around her shoulders like a cloak.

HARRY

Honestly? I...have no idea.

Sophia slides down next to Harry --

SOPHIA

You think it's *real* magic? Like Crowley said?

HARRY

Real magic? No such thing.

SOPHIA

You seem awfully sure about that.

HARRY

And you're not?

SOPHIA

I don't know...

She draws the bedroll around herself, looking over the city.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

...I always liked to think there are things in the world beyond iron and stone and steel. Things that we don't understand -- that we *can't* understand, even...

Harry holds the puzzle-box up to his ear, shaking it -- but it doesn't give away a thing.

HARRY

Well -- there's not. Everything's got a gimmick to it. A secret hatch. False bottom. Hidden mirror. Sometimes it's hard to find, but...

He holds the puzzle-box in his hands. It seems to GLOW in the soft moon-light...

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Crane always said it's usually  
staring you right in the face.  
Right where you most expected it...

**EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - OUTCROPPING - MORNING**

THUD!

Sophia blearily opens her eyes to see a OIL-CLOTH POUCH plop to the ground in front of her face.

Harry stands over her, grinning victoriously --

HARRY  
Breakfast!

Sophia sits up gingerly, wincing at the stiff pain of sleeping on a hard stone floor all night.

She opens the pouch, delighted to find a cornucopia of fine bread, cheeses, and fresh fruit. She grabs a hunk of bread, tearing into it ravenously --

SOPHIA  
(mouth full)  
Where'd you get all this?!

HARRY  
Just down at the market --

SOPHIA  
You can afford *all this* on the  
wages of a locksmith's apprentice?

Harry looks away, scratching his neck.

HARRY  
Um...yeah. You could say that...

Harry crouches down, polishing a crisp red apple and taking a bite from it.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Look. I've been thinking, and --  
you're right. I shouldn't have  
gotten you mixed up in any of this.

Sophia pauses, giving him a sardonic glare --

SOPHIA  
Oh, really? So glad you've finally  
come around.

HARRY

I'm sorry, okay? And I'm sorry I ruined your dumb ball. I'll drop you off at whatever fancy hotel you want. You'll never see me again --

SOPHIA

Don't be absurd. I'm coming with you.

HARRY

...I'm sorry, what?

SOPHIA

I decided last night. I'm coming with you. To solve the puzzle-box.

HARRY

But, you --

SOPHIA

You said it yourself. Crowley's seen us together, and he won't hesitate about using me or Uncle Neville to get to you.

She polishes off the bread, dabbing her mouth daintily with a lace handkerchief.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

So rather than spend my summer pursued by a demented occultist madman, I'd rather nip it in the bud early, and get back to my life as soon as possible.

Harry stares at her, dumbstruck --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

...If it's all the same to you.

HARRY

It's dangerous --

SOPHIA

Yesterday we drove a carriage off a cliff into the Hudson. I think I can handle a spot of danger.

A long beat -- then Harry shrugs, impressed.

HARRY

Well...if you say so. But if you're coming with me -- you'll need a change of clothes.

Sophia follows his gaze towards the pile of grimy work-shirts and breeches. Expression going from defiance to horror --

SOPHIA

Oh -- oh no. I'll do a lot of things, but if you think I'm going to wear your *trousers*, you're mad.

Harry surveys Sophia's ornate, colorful ball gown --

HARRY

Believe me -- where we're going? You don't want to draw attention to yourself...

**PRE-LAP: KA-CHUNK!**

A rusty CLEAVER decapitates a PIG on a wooden chopping block.

A BUTCHER tosses the severed head on to a pile of fly-infested PIG PARTS, leaking blood and slime into the filthy cobblestone streets of --

**EXT. THE BOWERY - DAY**

Like something out of the ninth circle of Hell.

PIMPS, PUSHERS, and PICK-POCKETS prowl the smog-choked streets, passing gutters populated by DRUNKEN SAILORS and sallow-faced ORPHANS begging for money.

Faded signs advertise OPIUM DENS, BROTHELS, BURLESQUE SHOWS, and every other hedonistic pleasure imaginable, laying in wait behind moth-eaten curtains and shadowy doorways.

And in the middle of it all --

HARRY AND SOPHIA. Both dressed in work-shirts and breeches -- Sophia's long hair hidden beneath a pageboy cap, which she keeps uncomfortably adjusting.

Sophia draws closer to Harry as they're passed by a scar-faced LEGLESS MAN, dragging himself in a crudely-made wagon.

He sneers up at them with a black-toothed grin, causing Sophia to step back --

And put her foot down in the bloated carcass of a WORKHORSE, left in the street to rot. Harry laughs as she YELPS --

HARRY

Long way from Briarcliff, huh?

Sophia gags, wiping fetid horse guts from the sole of her shoe onto the cobblestone --

SOPHIA

I *still* don't see why we can't go to one of Uncle Neville's friends --

HARRY

Sometimes it's not enough to have friends in high places. Sometimes, you need friends in *low* places...

Harry gestures up at a BUILDING --

A sagging monstrosity, its once-regal New Orleans style facade mildewed and peeling. Raucous laughter, clinking glasses, and rag-time piano drift from within.

A sign hangs above the door depicting the golden silhouette of a woman's figure, above the words --

*THE GILDED LADY.*

#### **INT. THE GILDED LADY - DAY**

Red-glass lamps cast a sultry glow over an interior designed as a cheap imitation of a French salon.

Shapely young COURTESANS in lounge in shadowy booths, flirting with their CLIENTELE -- most of whom are wealthy POLITICIANS or LAWYERS who wouldn't be caught dead here.

Harry and Sophia make their way through the smoky crowd, Sophia mortified by the pure debauchery surrounding them --

SOPHIA

I thought you said this was a *social* club.

HARRY

It is...

Through a half-closed door, they catch a glimpse of a Courtesan viciously WHIPPING a MIDDLE-AGED BANKER dressed in nothing but a baby's bonnet --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
...A very social club.

Sophia rolls her eyes as Harry flashes a grin towards a gaggle of Courtesans at a booth. They wave coquettishly back.

They continue towards a winding staircase, leading to the second floor --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Crane was the best safe-cracker in the five boroughs. But Mademoiselle Emmeline? She's the *second* best. If anyone can open the box, it's her.

They make their way up the stairs, past a HALF-DRESSED COUPLE entangled passionately on the landing --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
The only thing is, she can be a little...*touchy* sometimes. So -- just be polite. Oh yeah, and whatever you do --

He stops, looking straight at Sophia --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Don't mention her nose.

SOPHIA  
What do you mean, her *nose*?

**SMASH-CUT TO:**

A SOLID GOLD NOSE. Being polished by a silk handkerchief. On the face of --

MADEMOISELLE EMMELINE (40s). A handsome, Rubenesque woman dressed in a gaudy Marie Antoinette get-up, complete with a highly-stacked powdered wig.

She sits by a mirror, hanging on the wall of --

**INT. THE GILDED LADY - EMMELINE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Overlooking the Bowery Street. Like the rest of the club, a shabby imitation of continental grandeur.

A faded OIL PORTRAIT hangs over the mantel, depicting a regal Emmeline holding a tiny, scraggly BICHON FRISE DOG.

A sharp RAP on the door -- Emmeline gives her golden nose a final shine --



EMMELINE  
(in bad French)  
*Entrez-vous!*

A FOOTMAN dressed in a similarly ridiculous and thread-bare French garb enters -- with Harry and Sophia in tow.

FOOTMAN  
Mademoiselle Emmeline! May I  
present to you --

He turns to Harry, dropping all pretensions --

FOOTMAN (CONT'D)  
What'd you say your name was, kid?

Harry whispers in his ear --

FOOTMAN (CONT'D)  
Harry Weisz, and company!

Emmeline turns to Harry and Sophia, arms out-stretched, smile spreading across her make-up crusted face --

EMMELINE  
Harry! *Mon ami!* It's been far too  
long, darling. Just *look* at you --

HARRY  
Hiya, Emmeline --

EMMELINE  
You're almost a man! And what -- no  
Crane? Too busy to see the old  
Mademoiselle?

HARRY  
Crane. He, um. He's not --

Harry's face falls, looking down at his shoes. Silent.  
Emmeline sees it in his face --

EMMELINE  
...Oh. Oh my. I'm sorry, dear.

She places a hand on his shoulder. Tender and maternal --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
Truly, I am. Crane loved you, you  
know. Like a son. He was a good  
man. A great man. A *talented* man --

She drifts off, lost in memory --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
...A very talented man, in fact. In  
more ways than one. Those fingers  
could do far more than pick locks --

Sophia BLANCHES. Emmeline's eyes flit towards her --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
You've brought a friend?

HARRY  
Oh! This is my, uh -- *cousin*.  
Cousin Farkas. From the old  
country. Fresh from Ellis Island,  
doesn't speak English --

Sophia scrambles to do her best Hungarian impression --

SOPHIA  
Um -- *Na Zdorovie!*

Emmeline smirks. Not buying it.

EMMELINE  
Honestly, Harry. Do you think I was  
born yesterday?

Emmeline plucks the pageboy cap from Sophia's head. Her long  
locks tumble down over shoulders -- caught red-handed.

Emmeline circles her, inspecting a new racehorse --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
My, my...the pout of the lips...the  
arch of the nose...the curve of the  
jaw...You're not in the market for  
a *new line of work*, would you?

SOPHIA  
Um -- no. Not at the moment...

Sophia hurriedly SNATCHES back her cap, tugging it back on  
her head. Emmeline sighs --

EMMELINE  
Beauty -- wasted on the young...

She crosses the office, sitting behind her lopsided desk, in  
front of the portrait of her and her SCRAGGLY DOG --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
So -- what can I do for you today?  
I'm sure this is not just a social  
visit.

HARRY  
We need your help --

He pulls out the puzzle-box, dropping it to the desk.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
With this.

EMMELINE  
And what is *this*, may I ask?

HARRY  
That's -- confidential.

EMMELINE  
Of course. Never show your hand  
early, a man after my own heart.

Emmeline picks up the puzzle-box, inspecting it --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
A puzzle-box. Steel -- plated in  
sterling silver. Employing a  
variation of the *Yosegi-Zaiku*  
movement, designed in Imperial  
Japan, circa 1800. Impressive...

HARRY  
Can you open it?

EMMELINE  
Of course. The real question is --

Emmeline's jovial facade drops, revealing the hawkish, ice-cold gaze of a cut-throat businesswoman --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
What are *you* going to do for *me*?

Harry swallows, trying to keep a stony face. He knows this is making a deal with the Devil...

HARRY  
...What do you have in mind?

EMMELINE  
Oh, plenty of things, plenty of  
things...

Emmeline stands up, crossing to the window, looking out at the rough, soot-stained streets below.

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
How familiar are you with the Dead Rabbits?

SOPHIA  
*Dead Rabbits?*

HARRY  
I've had one or two run-ins with 'em. The most notorious street gang in the Five Points --

EMMELINE  
The Rabbits have...*stolen* something from me. Something of great value. As long as those brutes have it, my retaliation is -- *incapacitated*.

Emmeline's lip twitches in fury --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
...I need you to get it back.

HARRY  
Get it *back*?

EMMELINE  
Sneak into their head-quarters at the Five Points. Crack their safe. And bring me back my property.

HARRY  
Don't you have a whole army of thugs and goons to do that kind of thing for you?

EMMELINE  
Yes, yes. But none of your...*stature*.

HARRY  
Hey! Are you calling me *short*?

Sophia SNORTS, hiding her mouth behind her hand --

EMMELINE  
Don't laugh, girlie. You'll have a part to play in this too...

Sophia abruptly stops laughing -- face suddenly pale.

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
So -- do we have a deal?

Harry hesitates --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
You *do* want that puzzle-box open,  
don't you?

**EXT. THE RABBIT'S HEAD - DAY**

A ramshackle, multistory BEER HALL -- headquarters of the DEAD RABBITS.

Unlike The Gilded Lady, there's not an even an *attempt* at pretension -- filthy and squalid, more pig barn than pub.

A brutish man in a BOWLER HAT stands GUARD outside the doors, whistling tunelessly. He trails off as a figure approaches --

SOPHIA. Doing her best to project wide-eyed innocence --

SOPHIA  
E-excuse me? S-sir?

A lecherous grin breaks out across Bowler Hat's face --

BOWLER HAT  
Hello there, little lady. What's a pretty thing like you doin' here?

SOPHIA  
I seem to have, er -- taken a wrong turn, and, well -- since you look like such a kind gentleman, I was wondering if, perhaps -- you could help me find my way?

Bowler Hat's grin widens at his own good fortune --

BOWLER HAT  
Of course, Miss. Come inside. Get yer pretty face out of the sun...

Bowler Hat gestures to the dark, murky cavern beyond the door. Sophia GULPS, not exactly acting any more...

**ACROSS THE STREET --**

Harry hides behind an overturned BEER BARREL, watching as Bowler Hat leads Sophia into the bowels of the Rabbit's Head.

Before she disappears, she flashes a look back across the street towards him -- *GET. ME. OUT OF HERE.*

As the doors swing shut behind them, Harry races across the street towards the beer hall -- now left UNGUARDED.

Harry sneaks around the side of the Rabbit's Head, spying a SMALL IRON GRATE set into the wall -- the TRASH CHUTE.

He hurries towards the grate, slipping out a small SCREWDRIVER, unscrewing the iron bars from the wall. They clatter to the floor --

Releasing a TORRENT of ROTTING TRASH, splashing RIGHT AT HARRY. He stumbles back -- gagging, almost vomiting --

He kicks away the RATS that scurry over his feet -- staring disgustedly into the BLACK VOID of the trash chute...

HARRY

Robert-Houdin, whatever you locked  
in that damn puzzle box better be  
worth it...

Steeling himself, Harry takes a deep breath -- and PLUNGES AHEAD INTO THE TRASH CHUTE --

#### **INT. THE RABBIT'S HEAD - BEER HALL - DAY**

Bowler Hat leads terrified Sophia through the dingy darkness.

They arrive at the BAR, populated by THE DEAD RABBITS -- thieves, murderers, thugs, drinking their troubles away. WATCHING Sophia...

SOPHIA

M-maybe I should go -- all I really  
needed were directions home, and --

BOWLER HAT

Nonsense!

He pulls out a BAR STOOL --

BOWLER HAT (CONT'D)

Take a load off, m'lady! Rest for a  
moment. Barkeep! Two pints!

The cauliflower-earred BARKEEP slides two PINTS down the bar, sloshing to a stop before Sophia.

Sophia grimaces at the pulpy GROG in front of her. Bowler Hat DRAINS his pint in one gulp --

BOWLER HAT (CONT'D)

Try it. Made in house...

Bowler Hat looms over her, menacingly. Sophia lifts the pint, taking a dainty sip. She COUGHS, choking it down --

SOPHIA  
(through hacking coughs)  
Mm -- lovely --

**INT. TRASH CHUTE - DAY**

Harry crawls his way through the dark trash chute. Barely large enough to fit him.

Feet contorted against one side of the chute, shoulders against the other, he slowly inches UP THE CHUTE --

But he's still got a long way to go -- he's only about TWENTY FEET off the ground below --

*SQUEAK! SQUEAK!* An enormous RAT scampers across Harry's shoulders! He YELPS, almost losing his grip and PLUMMETING back down the shoot, and --

CATCHES himself just in time. Shaking at his near miss. But he only has a second to catch his breath, because --

*SPLAT!* A few floors above him, the TRASH CHUTE FLAP swings opens. A barrage of garbage SPLATTERS down on Harry's head.

Harry GAGS, spitting out a CHICKEN BONE --

**INT. THE RABBIT'S HEAD - BEER HALL - DAY**

Bowler Hat's now on his SECOND PINT. Sophia still trying to stomach down her first.

BOWLER HAT  
Yer not from round here, are ya,  
Miss?

SOPHIA  
Um -- no. London, actually.

BOWLER HAT  
London!

He wipes his mouth. Suddenly introspective --

BOWLER HAT (CONT'D)  
Always wanted to see London...

The Barkeep wipes down a filthy pint with a filthy rag --

BARKEEP

Ha! That's a sight. You, prancing  
around Picker-dilly Circus --

BOWLER HAT

What? A man can't yearn for a bitta  
art n' culture? Nice change of pace  
from *this* grubby ol' shack --

SOPHIA

W-well. It *is* a wonderful city...

A beat. Bowler Hat and the Barkeep look at her expectantly.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

...The Crystal Palace, for  
instance. It's -- like nothing  
you've ever seen. Like something  
out a fairy-tale book...

As she talks, she grows more animated --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Full of all these plants and  
animals, from around the world.  
Once, they had a giraffe there. Do  
you what a giraffe is?

BOWLER HAT

That's...the one with the horn?

SOPHIA

Close, but not quite --

Sophia's caught the attention of some other CROOKS AND CUT-  
THROATS. A crowd begins to gather around her...

# **INT. THE RABBIT'S HEAD - SECOND FLOOR STORAGE ROOM - DAY**

The trash chute flap SQUEAKS OPEN, and out tumbles --

HARRY. Dripping with filth, GASPING for fresh air --

He looks around the dim storage room -- apart from stacks of  
musty crates, it's EMPTY. He's alone.

Harry navigates through the labyrinth of old crates, finally  
coming to the center of the room, at which sits --

AN ENORMOUS SAFE. Reinforced steel. Whatever Emmeline wants,  
it must be in here.

Harry approaches the safe -- inspecting it, sizing it up --



A large COMBINATION LOCK sit at the center of the safe door.

Harry considers -- his eyes scan the room, resting on --

A rusty old FUNNEL, rolled into the corner.

Harry picks up the funnel. He places it against the safe door, Then PRESSES HIS EAR to the other end --

He's turned the funnel into a make-shift AMPLIFIER.

Ear pressed to the funnel, he slowly rotates the combination lock, listening to the amplified CLICKS. Then, finally --

CLUNK. Bingo. Harry rotates the dial the opposite direction --  
 Click. Click. Click. CLUNK --

Only a few more numbers to go. Harry moves a little faster.  
 Click. Click. Click --

BARK!

Harry pauses. What the hell was that? Faint. Muted. Coming from INSIDE THE SAFE --

...BARK! BARK! BARK!

#### INT. THE RABBIT'S HEAD - BEER HALL - DAY

Sophia's mug of grog is now ALMOST EMPTY.

The crowd around her is EVEN BIGGER -- she LECTURES to them, like a kind schoolteacher to a group of dim-witted children --

DEAD RABBIT 1

So...the Queen. She lives in -- the  
 Tower of London?

Sophia laughs, her words a bit slurred --

SOPHIA

Heavens, no! *That's* where they used  
 to execute prisoners. The *Queen*  
 lives in Buckingham Palace --

DEAD RABBIT 2

Ahhhh. You ever met her? The Queen?

SOPHIA

One from a distance, but she's  
 usually with her Royal Guard --

DEAD RABBIT 3  
 Them's the boyos in the furry hats?

SOPHIA  
*Exactly.* You could be a native in  
 no time --

She drains the rest of her grog, peering into the empty mug --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
 You know, at first I thought this  
 stuff was absolutely *disgusting* --  
 but it's beginning to grow on me.

BARKEEP  
 ...Another round?

THE CROWD  
*ANOTHER ROUND!*

**INT. THE RABBIT'S HEAD - SECOND FLOOR STORAGE ROOM - DAY**

The iron safe door slowly CREAKS open, revealing --

A DOG.

Or more particularly, D'ARTAGNAN. Emmeline's ratty little  
 BICHON FRISE. Cowering behind a pile of gnawed ham-hocks.

HARRY  
*What the...*

D'Artagnan YAPS at Harry --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
*Shhhhh! Not so loud!* Now come --  
 let's get you out of here --

Harry reaches in the safe to grab the dog -- it GROWLS --  
 bares its teeth --

-- and BITES Harry in the hand, little needle-teeth sinking  
 into the flesh of palm --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
*Jesus!* You ratty, no-good --

Harry's about to PUNCH the canine-- but thinks better of it.  
 He sighs in exasperation, turning to scan the room --

A BURLAP SACK lies empty near a stack of crates...

**MOMENTS LATER --**

Harry holds the sack, dangling an old ham-hock in front of it. Trying to put on his friendliest voice --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
*C'mere, boy! C'mere! Don't you want  
 a nice, juicy ham-hock...?*

D'Artagnan sniffs, considers -- edges towards the bag...

HARRY (CONT'D)  
 Don't you want a ham-hock, you  
 furry little cretin --

The dog inches forward -- one more step, and -- *SWOOSH!* Harry WRAPS the sack around it. It SQUEALS as its dropped inside --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
*Gotcha!*

Harry ties the back in a quick knot, trapping D'Artagnan inside. He's about to sneak back down the trash chute, when --

SOPHIA'S VOICE echoes from beyond the storage room door, accompanied by a ROAR OF LAUGHTER.

Harry frowns. Peeks through the storage room door, over the BALCONY, down into the --

## BEER HALL

Sophia talks to the rapt crowd, words even more SLURRED --

SOPHIA  
 -- Though I quite fancy New York,  
 as well. Everything's so...*peculiar*  
 here. All sorts of characters --

She takes another swig of grog --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
 I've recently been swept off on his  
 romp with this boy I've just met --

Harry breaks out in a slow grin --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
 Fancies himself some sort of  
 magician. But really? He's just  
 this funny little street urchin --

Harry's face falls -- *wait, what?*

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Can you imagine? *Me*, running around New York with an urchin. Anyway, a far more interesting holiday than I imagined, should make for some *fantastic* stories...

Harry draws back into the shadows of the balcony -- HURT in his gaze. About to slip back into the storage room, when --

*BARK!*

D'Artagnan lets out a resounding YAP from inside the bag. Harry scrambles to clamp down on it, but --

*BARK! BARK! BARK!*

A shifting of wooden chairs as THE ENTIRE CROWD OF DEAD RABBITS look up at the balcony, DIRECTLY AT HIM.

Sophia's face lights up --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Oh! There he is now! Come down and have a drink with my new friends!

Harry freezes -- a deer in headlights --

A sea of scar-faced, broken-nosed faces stare back at him, realization slowly dawning --

BOWLER HAT

Wait a minute...*he's got the dog!*

SOPHIA

Wait! Let's not jump to --

DEAD RABBIT

*GET HIM!*

Sophia's protests are drowned out by WAR CRIES. Dead Rabbits leap out of the seats, grabbing CLUBS, KNIVES, and PISTOLS --

Harry turns and HIGH-TAILS IT back into the --

# **STORAGE ROOM**

Leaping over crates as the Dead Rabbits THUNDER up the stairs after him. He scrambles to the trash chute --

HARRY

Sorry, mutt --

And TOSSES the burlap sack down the chute, D'Artagnan YELPING as he plummets downwards --

The door BURSTS OPEN behind him. Harry DIVES into the chute --

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Harry BURSTS from the chute, onto the cobblestone street in a heap. He grabs the burlap sack --

SOPHIA (O.S.)

*Harry!*

Sophia emerges from the doors of the Rabbit's Head, jogging towards Harry. She almost TRIPS over her own feet --

HARRY

*Are you drunk?*

Sophia stifles a hiccup --

SOPHIA

*Don't be absurd --*

HARRY

*Never mind. Let's just get this dog back to Emmeline --*

SOPHIA

*What dog?*

HARRY

*This dog --*

Harry holds up the burlap sack, which is --

COMPLETELY EMPTY. A ragged HOLE chewed in its bottom.

*BARK! BARK!* Harry and Sophia turn to see D'ARTAGNAN, trotting across the street, straight towards --

BUTCHER'S ALLEY. Crowded with blood-spattered BUTCHERS in street stalls -- SLICING, CHOPPING, POUNDING, GRINDING --

HARRY (CONT'D)

*I hate that little animal --*

The Rabbit's Head doors EXPLODE OPEN once more as the Rabbits come pouring onto the street, making a beeline for Harry --

HARRY (CONT'D)

*Come on!*

Harry grabs Sophia's arm, tugging her towards --

**EXT. BUTCHER'S ALLEY - DAY**

*THUNK!* A BALD BUTCHER swings a MEAT CLEAVER at a sausage --

But hits the bare wooden chopping block. He looks up to see --

D'Artagnan has ABSCONDED down the street with the sausage --

BALD BUTCHER

*What the --*

The Butcher's KNOCKED ASIDE by Harry and Sophia as they barrel towards the dog --

The dog DISAPPEARS inside a labyrinth of BEEF SIDES hanging from meat hooks, skinned and glistening under the hot sun --

Harry and Sophia dive after, buffeted by hanging carcasses --

The Dead Rabbits plunge in hot pursuit, TEARING the beef sides down and throwing them aside --

Harry catches a glimpse of WHITE FLUFF between the dead cows. He LUNGES for it, but instead COLLIDES into --

BOWLER HAT. Stepping out from behind a beef side, SPIKED CLUB in hand. About to swing it at Harry, when --

*THWACK!* Sophia NAILS Bowler Hat upside the head with a MEAT TENDERIZER she's grabbed off a chopping block.

Bowler Hat goes down like a ton of bricks. Sophia winces --

SOPHIA

*So sorry, really enjoyed our chat --*

HARRY

*No time!*

Sausage rolls still clamped in his mouth, D'Artagnan LEAPS UP on to a long table, manned by dozens of BUTCHERS, wielding all kinds of horrific instruments --

Harry and Sophia chase the dog down the length of the table --

ANGRY BUTCHER

*What the hell are ya doin', kid?!*

D'Artagnan WEAVES down the table, NARROWLY AVOIDING knives, hammers, and skewers. Harry FLINCHES with every near miss --

The Dead Rabbits PUSHING AND SHOVING through the Butchers --

One Dead Rabbit grabs a CLEAVER, throwing it like a BOOMERANG -- it whistles past Harry's ear and CRASHES into a rack of blood-spattered sharp instruments --

THUNK - THUNK - THUNK - THUNK --

The knives FALL tip-first into the table, each one narrowly missing the dog as it scurries away --

D'Artagnan hops off the end of the table, into a throng of CHICKENS, pecking about on the ground --

Harry DIVES into the squawking chickens, sending up a PUFF of feathers. He grabs something FLUFFY AND WHITE --

Not a dog. A HEN. He huffs, throwing it aside, when --

A SHADOW falls over him. Harry looks up to see two DEAD RABBITS looming over him, grinning maliciously --

HARRY

Hello, boys --

Harry grabs a handful of CHICKEN FEED from a trough on the ground, TOSSING IT right in the Dead Rabbits' faces --

The chickens GO WILD, ATTACKING the Rabbits, fluttering up and PECKING at the seeds in the folds of their clothes --

The two men SCREAM as they disappear under a mass of undulating feathers --

Harry scrambles to his feet, almost CRASHING into Sophia --

SOPHIA

*There he is!*

D'Artagnan scampers around the street corner --

Behind them, the horde of Dead Rabbits are CLOSING IN -- murder in their eyes. Too many to outrun...

Harry and Sophia both spy it at the same time -- an enormous WOODEN BARREL, filled to the brim with DRAINED PIG'S BLOOD.

They look at each other -- *you thinking what I'm thinking?*

Harry and Sophia rush towards the barrel -- pushing, *straining* against it -- but it will barely budge. Dead Rabbits fifteen yards away. Ten. FIVE --

Harry and Sophia give the barrel one last SHOVE, and --

IT TIPS OVER -- sending a TIDAL WAVE OF PIG'S BLOOD straight towards the crowd of Dead Rabbits --

*SPLASH!* The Dead Rabbits are SWEPT OFF THEIR FEET by the torrent, knocked to the ground like bowling pins.

They try to get up, but the blood is TOO SLIPPERY -- they slip, slide, and trip over each other --

Harry and Sophia watch the spectacle for a moment, their faces a mixture of awe, pleasure, and complete nausea. They're shaken out of the moment by --

*BARK! BARK! BARK!* Harry grabs Sophia's hand, and the two RACE around the corner -- but they SKID to a halt when they see --

D'ARTAGNAN. Standing in the road, wagging his tail -- and about five feet away from --

AN INDUSTRIAL MEAT GRINDER. Rattling and belching smoke as it turns flesh and bone into palatable meat patties.

The dog happily SNIFFS around the meat grinder -- about two seconds away from being SUCKED INSIDE...

HARRY

*Don't. Move.*

He slowly leans down, holding out a trembling hand --

HARRY (CONT'D)

*C'mere boy...That's right. Come towards Harry. Towards Harry -- away from the meat grinder...*

The dog looks up at Harry. Licks his chops. YIPS. And then --

Turns and HOPS INTO THE MEAT GRINDER --

SOPHIA

*No!*

A BUTCHER'S WAGON rolls by in front of the meat grinder, just in time to spare Harry and Sophia the gruesome sight of the little pup being GROUND INTO MUSH...

**MOMENTS LATER...**

Harry and Sophia stand slumped at the far end of the meat grinder, faces drawn and forlorn, as --

*GLORP -- SPLORT -- BLORP --*



The tube belches out a slimy pile of finely-ground pink flesh with a sickening *SPLAT*. A tuft of WHITE FUR in the breeze.

Sophia fights the urge to vomit.

HARRY

Emmeline's gonna kill us...

*BARK! BARK!*

Harry frowns, looking down to see --

D'ARTAGNAN. Sitting at his ankle. Wagging its tail, panting happily, and COMPLETELY UNHARMED.

**EXT. THE BOWERY - DAY**

A filth-spattered Harry trudges back towards The Gilded Lady, clutching a squirming D'Artagnan in his arms.

Sophia skips ahead, still swaying tipsily --

SOPHIA

Now *that* was an adventure. Those  
Dead Rabbits really aren't so bad.  
Some of them are quite friendly --

Harry hangs back, sulking --

HARRY

Glad you're enjoying your *holiday*.

SOPHIA

...Sorry?

HARRY

You can all your high society  
friends about slumming it with a  
*funny little street urchin* --

Sophia stops -- realizing he overheard her in the beer hall --

SOPHIA

Harry, that's -- not what I meant.

HARRY

No? Cause it sure sounded like it.

SOPHIA

I meant that I *liked* you. That  
being here, with you, has been --

She struggles to find the right words --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Like nothing I've ever felt before.  
*Scary, and exciting, and --*

HARRY  
And at the end of it, you go back  
home to your warm mansion and marry  
a rubber baron, right?

SOPHIA  
...That's not fair.

No response from Harry. Sophia bristles --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
What do you expect of me? Live on  
the streets? Sleep on the Brooklyn  
Bridge? Stay here *with you*?

Harry repositions D'Artagnan, frowning down at the ground --

HARRY  
...No. Of course not.

SOPHIA  
I wouldn't even *be* here if you  
hadn't barged into the ball and  
absolutely *ruined* everything --

HARRY  
I don't *want* you here either. This  
woulda been much easier without  
dragging around some snobby British  
broad reminding me I'm *poor* --

SOPHIA  
Like you don't love playing the  
plucky rogue, better than everybody  
because he can pick a pocket --

HARRY  
Unlike some of us, I don't have a  
*choice* what I get to play --

SOPHIA  
And you think I do? You think there  
aren't things I'd rather do than  
get stuffed into a corset and  
tossed into a ballroom, pretending  
I care about boring men in  
tailcoats and steel prices?

Harry opens his mouth to respond --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
 We're all stuck where we are,  
 Harry. Just in different ways.

HARRY  
 I didn't --

SOPHIA  
 Let's just open this stupid box.  
 Then you won't have to deal with a  
 snobby British broad anymore.

HARRY  
 Sophia --

Sophia pushes past Harry, stalking away into the street.  
 D'Artagnan looks up at Harry, whimpering --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
 Shut up.

**INT. THE GILDED LADY - EMMELINE'S OFFICE - DAY**

EMMELINE  
 Oh, who's mummy's little boy!  
 D'Artagnan is, that's who --

D'Artagnan wags his tail, licking Emmeline's GOLDEN NOSE -- a  
 mirror-image of the portrait behind her.

She surveys his matted, tangled, blood-spattered coat --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
 You're filthy, darling. Let's get  
 you a nice warm bath --

Emmeline looks at Harry and Sophia. Standing a few feet away  
 from each other, both refusing to look the other in the eye.

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
 You two seem glum. You should be  
 celebrating! Escaping the Rabbits --

She places D'Artagnan on the floor. He skitters over to his  
 food bowl, wolfing down his meal hungrily.

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
 I had 4:1 odds that they going to  
 capture you and brutally torture  
 you to death. Win some, lose some --

HARRY

We got your dumb dog back, okay?  
Now can we open this puzzle-box?

EMMELINE

A deal's a deal. Hand it over --

Harry pulls Houdin's puzzle-box out and drops it on the desk.

Emmeline RINGS A BELL -- the Footman emerges into the office, carrying a HAMMER AND CHISEL on a ratty pillow.

Emmeline picks up the chisel, placing it in the small crevice between the cylinder and its LID. She motions to Sophia --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)

Hold this steady, dear --

Sophia cautiously approaches the desk. Emmeline raises up the hammer, and --

HARRY

Wait -- stop, what are you --

CLANG! Brings it down VICIOUSLY on the chisel. A small CRACK appears in the lid. A few more BRUTAL SWINGS --

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! Harry's eyes are wide --

CLANG! CLANG! And -- POP! The lid SHATTERS INTO PIECES, falling away from the puzzle-box.

Emmeline smiles, satisfied.

EMMELINE

*Parfaite, parfaite!*

HARRY

We just went through *all that* for you -- we almost *died* -- and you smash open the box with a *hammer?!?*

EMMELINE

You and Crane -- always the same. Everything has to be some sort of *secret*, or *mystery*, or *trick*. If there's one thing I've learned --

She places the hammer back on its pillow, wiping the steel shavings from her hands --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
It's that you should never waste  
intelligence on a task that can be  
accomplished with brute force.

She picks up the open puzzle-box --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
Let's see what's inside, shall we?

Harry and Sophia draw closer to the desk. The moment Harry's  
been waiting for. The greatest secret of the age revealed...

Harry peers down into the silver puzzle-box, which is...

COMPLETELY EMPTY.

Not so much as a speck of dust inside. Harry blinks -- opens  
his mouth -- unable to speak, to comprehend --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
Well...*that's* underwhelming.

HARRY  
I -- I don't understand. It --  
can't be empty --

Harry paces back and forth, thinking, agitated. Sophia stares  
blankly into the empty puzzle-box as well --

SOPHIA  
...So, what? This whole thing has  
all been for nothing, then?

EMMELINE  
Oh, not for nothing. I'll still get  
my reward money, after all --

HARRY  
...Reward money?

EMMELINE  
You haven't heard? It's all over  
town. *Someone* is willing to pay  
handsomely for the capture and  
delivery of a locksmith's  
apprentice and a young London  
heiress, carrying a certain silver  
puzzle-box...

HARRY  
You *wouldn't* --

EMMELINE  
Just business, dear.

Harry tenses -- preparing to either fight or run --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
Don't bother. My men are  
surrounding the perimeter. They're  
far better shots than the Rabbits.

Emmeline RINGS her bell again -- the Footman appears once --

EMMELINE (CONT'D)  
Bring in our new *benefactor*...

The Footman nods curtly, exiting. Harry leans into Sophia --

HARRY  
Okay -- on my count, we'll go for  
the window. Just like the library --

SOPHIA  
Don't be ridiculous --

HARRY  
Then stay here and get captured by  
Crowley, what do I care --

The door swings open. The Footman enters --

FOOTMAN  
Mademoiselle Emmeline, may I  
present to you...

Off Sophia's look of surprise --

SOPHIA  
...*Uncle Neville?*!

SIR BALLANTINE stands in the doorway -- tie loosened, shirt  
front crooked, mustache untrimmed.

He rushes towards Sophia, wrapping her in an enormous hug --

BALLANTINE  
Sophia! I was worried *sick* about  
you! Your mother sends you to  
America and I lose you --

Harry frowns, slack-jawed --

HARRY  
...*You're* the one who put the  
bounty on a us?

BALLANTINE

A bounty? Heavens, no! A reward for  
returning my niece back home to me!

Ballantine releases Sophia, crossing towards Harry. For a moment, it looks like Ballantine's about to yell at him --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

I suppose I should be furious with  
you -- you did drive a carriage  
through my ballroom, after all --

Harry flinches -- but Ballantine only puts out a hand. Harry takes it, baffled, and shakes --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

Though you did look after my Sophia  
-- and for that, I owe you.

Harry and Sophia glance at each other -- than quickly look away, remembering they're not talking.

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

(to Emmeline)

Thank you as always for your help,  
Mademoiselle --

EMMELINE

You know me Neville, any time.

SOPHIA

Wait -- how do you know my Uncle?

EMMELINE

Oh, old Nev has been an esteemed  
client at the Gilded Lady for --

BALLANTINE

Not important! What's important is  
that Emmeline has returned you both  
to me safe and sound.

Ballantine claps his hands together, turning towards the still somewhat baffled Harry and Sophia --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

Now -- what do you say we get back  
to Briarcliff for a warm fire and a  
nice cup of tea?

**EXT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - DAY - ESTABLISHING**

As stately and magnificent as the night before -- except for the demolished stable and tire tracks through the front lawn.

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - HALLWAY - DAY**

BALLANTINE

I've been searching all night --

Harry and Sophia follow Ballantine down the marble hall, Harry holding the empty puzzle-box.

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

Terribly sorry to have gotten you wrapped up in this nasty business. Though you've performed admirably --

He turns to Harry, smiling down paternally at him --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

I underestimated you, boy. You're more than a locksmith's apprentice.

HARRY

What does it matter? Whatever was in here's long gone. Crane died for an empty box...

BALLANTINE

Our friend Hugo Crane died to keep power out of the hands of evil men.

He takes the silver cylinder from Harry, inspecting it.

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

Perhaps I was misled in Algiers. Sold a fake, a recreation, of Robert-Houdin's original box --

Harry looks down at his empty hands, stained with soot and grime. The box left an IMPRINT on them -- a PATTERN --

HARRY

Or maybe...

Realization slowly dawning --

HARRY (CONT'D)

Maybe what we were looking for was right in front of us all along...



SOPHIA

What *now*?

HARRY

Ink! Do you have ink?

BALLANTINE

In my study, but --

HARRY

And parchment. I need parchment --

BALLANTINE

Yes, yes, my study's right this way, but I don't understand how --

Harry grabs the puzzle-box and SPEEDS OFF --

**INT. BALLANTINE ESTATE - STUDY - DAY**

Ballantine and Sophia watch incredulously as Harry rushes around the study, grabbing an INKWELL, a SHEAF OF PARCHMENT --

He SHOVES everything else off Ballantine's desk --

BALLANTINE

Careful, that's --

CRASH! A green-glass lamp SHATTERS on the floor --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)

...Expensive.

Harry spreads out the parchment. Pops open the inkwell, SLATHERING the cylinder of the puzzle-box in blue India ink --

SOPHIA

Will you stop running around like a mad-man and tell us what you're --

HARRY

I didn't see before. Houdin's secret isn't *in* the puzzle-box...

Then ROLLS the puzzle-box across the parchment -- the ink-lathered cylinder PRINTS its pattern onto the parchment --

HARRY (CONT'D)

...It's *on* the puzzle-box.

Sophia and Ballantine look down in awe. Now the image is FLAT on paper, no longer WRAPPED around the puzzle-box, it's clear -- this is not just a pattern, it's --

BALLANTINE  
*Blueprints...*

The ink-spattered image on the parchment depicts various MECHANICAL ELEMENTS, all interlocking together --

SOPHIA  
 Blueprints for *what* though?

BALLANTINE  
 Some kind of *machine*...

Ballantine whips a *pince-nez* from his vest pocket, placing it on the bridge of his nose and peering at the blue-prints --

BALLANTINE (CONT'D)  
 A sort of -- *electro-magnetic* device. Powered by alternating current. Brilliant, but the sheer amount of wattage necessary to power something like this...

HARRY  
 So I was right! Houdin's power wasn't magic. It was *science* --

A voice echoes from behind --

CROWLEY (O.S.)  
 ...And what is magic, if not science we do not yet understand?

All three turn to see --

CROWLEY. Looming in the doorway of the study. Flanked, as always, by Mrs. Vulch and a team of Acolytes.

SOPHIA  
 That's him -- that's Crowley, the man who tried to kill us, and --

But Ballantine only sighs, taking off his *pince-nez* and cleaning it with a handkerchief.

BALLANTINE  
 ...I know, dear. I know.

Harry and Sophia look on in growing horror as Ballantine slowly rolls up the blue-prints, passing them to Crowley.

Crowley inspects the blue-prints, satisfied --

CROWLEY

Thank you, Ballantine. I assure  
you, these will be put to *good use*.

Harry spies something out of the corner of his eye -- a  
gilded LETTER OPENER, laying on a shelf. He takes a  
surreptitious step back, towards the shelf --

BALLANTINE

You got what you came for, Crowley.  
Now, please -- leave my niece and I  
alone, in peace --

SOPHIA

Uncle Neville...you *didn't* --

Ballantine sheepishly refuses to look at her.

BALLANTINE

It was the only way to keep you  
safe. Unless I brought him the box,  
he'd have you *killed* --

Harry creeps back towards the shelf -- fingers CLOSING around  
the letter opener --

CROWLEY

And I'll be taking the urchin, of  
course, for my troubles.

Ballantine deflates, seeming suddenly puny and pathetic --

BALLANTINE

...Yes. Of course. As discussed.

Crowley walks leisurely towards Harry, pulling out a small  
LEATHER POUCH from the pocket of his overcoat --

Sophia LUNGES towards Harry --

SOPHIA

*No!*

But Ballantine holds her back, looking over at Harry --

BALLANTINE

I'm sorry, my boy. Truly --

As Crowley approaches, Harry ATTACKS, swinging the letter  
opener like a DAGGER right at him --

But Crowley POURS a strange, finely-ground DUST from his  
pouch, blowing it in Harry's face with a *POOF...*

Harry's goes WOOZY, the world SPINNING, DARKENING around him. He COLLAPSES, the letter opener clattering to the floor.

The last thing he sees is Crowley, smiling down at him --

CROWLEY  
That's right, Harry...*let go.*

And then -- DARKNESS. Darkness. And more darkness.

Is Harry DEAD? It certainly seems like it. But then --

BLOBS OF COLOR AND LIGHT. Slowly coming into focus.

Harry slowly opens his eyes, wincing at the pain in his head. He blinks. He's no longer in Ballantine's study, but in a --

**INT. INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSE - DAY**

Vast and cavernous, all steel and rust. Sunlight filters through rotting holes in the sheet-metal roof.

Harry comes to. The world suddenly LURCHES as he realizes --

HE'S HANGING UPSIDE DOWN. Dangling in the air, wrapped tightly in THICK IRON CHAINS, hanging from a HOOK.

He sways gently above a large wooden VAT OF WATER, its surface pitch-black and foreboding --

Harry STRUGGLES against the chains binding him -- but they're TOO STRONG. He's trapped.

CROWLEY (O.S.)  
Ah. Good. You're awake.

Crowley stands in the shadows on the warehouse floor, peering up at the incapacitated Harry.

HARRY  
Sophia --

CROWLEY  
Is safe. As is Ballantine. I'm a man of my word.

Crowley prowls the length of the floor.

DARK SILHOUETTES stand in the corners of the warehouse -- ACOLYTES, looking on grimly.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

A thanks is an order. A clever mechanism Robert-Houdin employed -- hiding his secrets *outside* the puzzle-box. If it weren't for you, it would've taken me *much* longer to discover.

HARRY

Pleasure's all mine --

CROWLEY

Why the hostility? You and I aren't so different, you know.

HARRY

I'm nothing like you --

CROWLEY

Do you not have a burning desire to *understand*? To pull back the veil, See how the world works? To achieve knowledge? Recognition? *Power*?

Harry squirms. Crowley sees he's struck a nerve.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Yes. Power. That's what you want. To rise above your station. For the world to know your *name*...

HARRY

What if we pull back *your* veil, huh? A British schoolboy playing dress-up as a wizard cause he got kicked out of boarding school?

CROWLEY

And *spirit*! That's the most important. Perhaps in another life we could have been colleagues -- if I had been born in the gutter, or you, in the tower.

HARRY

How bout you let me outta these chains -- then I'll show how much *spirit* I really have --

CROWLEY

I'd love to. But now that I know the secret of Houdin's power, there's much to prepare for --

Crowley crosses to a large LEVER built into the warehouse wall, attached to a PULLEY SYSTEM.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
I can't have you meddling with my  
designs any further. You've proven  
to be quite the deft escapist --

He PULLS the lever. Metal SHRIEKS as gears begin to GRIND,  
slowly LOWERING the bound Harry into the vat of water.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
Let's see how you can handle this  
one...

Harry's struggles INCREASE as he draws nearer to the water's  
icy surface --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
I'd love to stay and watch, but  
there's so much to do.

The Acolytes draw closer, gathering around the vat --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
Enjoy the show, gentlemen.

Just as Crowley disappears through the warehouse door --

*SPLASH!* Harry is suddenly --

**UNDERWATER --**

Dark. Murky. Disorienting.

Cheeks bulging with air, heart POUNDING in his chest, Harry  
WRITHES against the chains --

He's on the verge of PANIC, the chains feeling heavier and  
heavier with each passing second. He THRASHES -- KICKS --  
TUGS -- wild, uncoordinated, desperate. But then --

He stops. Still. Clearing his head. Panic slowly fading.

He SPIES SOMETHING above him, near his feet --

A THIN IRON ROD -- one of several that keep the hook in  
place. All of Harry's thrashing has almost KNOCKED THIS ONE  
LOOSE.

Closing his eyes, Harry RELEASES all the air in his lungs --  
sending oxygen BUBBLING to the surface. With his lungs empty  
and his chest contracted, he now has the slightest bit of  
WIGGLE ROOM in the chains.

He works his LEFT HAND back and forth, slowly but surely, until finally -- he's able to SLIP IT LOOSE from the shackles.

Harry then works his feet, barely able to TAP the small iron rod with the base of his heel --

With as much power his bound legs will allow, he KICKS at the iron rod, making it LOOSER and LOOSER, until finally --

The rod POPS out of its slot, FLOATING DOWN through the water towards Harry.

Harry STRAINS -- reaching out his free left hand to CATCH the drifting rod. For a terrifying moment, it seems like the rod may float right past him --

But Harry barely brushes it with his fingertips as it passes by, GRABBING IT --

Harry's blood POUNDS even louder in his ears -- splotches of BLACK appear in his vision -- he's running out of oxygen. Not much time left --

Working faster, he WRENCHES his left hand around as much as the chains will allow, stretching towards the large iron PADLOCK hanging by his chest --

The rod SCRAPES the keyhole, but doesn't go in -- Harry almost DROPS IT -- but steadies his hand just in time --

Another attempt to get the rod in the keyhole -- another SCRAPE -- another miss --

A third attempt -- Harry BITES down his lip, trying to stay conscious. And finally --

SHUNK! The rod enters the keyhole. Harry turns it in the lock, trying to find the lock-pins inside. An agonizingly long wait -- small bubbles drifting from Harry's mouth --

CLINK! The padlock UNLOCKS -- if Harry had any air left, he'd breath a sigh of relief --

Vision darkening, blood pulsing, Harry KICKS AND WRIGGLES, loosening himself from the heavy chains around him.

He's FREE -- with only seconds to spare. But as he's about to swim towards the surface --

His pant leg SNAGS on the iron hook, ENSNARING HIM once more. He attempts to TUG it away, but the fabric only TWISTS MORE.

The sharp hook SCRAPES against his leg, sending out a red BLOOM of blood in the water --

Harry puts up a fight -- but his movements begin to grow slower. Weaker. The darkness closing in --

Harry's body goes LIMP in the water. The life leaving him. He floats a long moment But then --

WHHHIIIIIRRRRR! The gears once more GRIND TO LIFE, the hook PULLING HARRY out of the water --

**INT. INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSE - DAY**

THUD! Harry's water-logged body hits the cold concrete floor. He lies still for a moment, and then --

ROLLS OVER, hacking and coughing, GASPING for air in between VOMITING torrents of water.

He pants heavily, still on knees. Looking up to see --

SOPHIA. Standing above him, hands on her hips.

He swallows. Catches his breath. Looks up at her.

HARRY

I did the hard part myself, y'know.

SOPHIA

Oh, come off it, you bloody idiot.

A long beat. Are they going to fight, or --

EMBRACE. Long and lingering, Harry's drenched clothes soaking into Sophia's.

HARRY

I'm sorry. For everything I said, back in the Bowery. I didn't mean --

SOPHIA

Oh? I meant every word of it --

The corner of her mouth turns up in a smile --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

-- Though I suppose it can be forgiven, no?

They look in each other's eyes -- faces only inches apart. But then Harry frowns --



HARRY

Wait a minute -- what about  
Crowley's men?

He looks around to see THE ACOLYTES -- all slumped on the floor around them, unconscious. Sophia holds up Crowley's pouch of SLEEPING POWDER --

SOPHIA

You're not the only one who can  
pick-pocket now and then.

One of the Acolytes SNORTS, stirs --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Though we probably want to get out  
of here --

HARRY

Probably --

**EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY**

Harry and Sophia walk down an empty, trash-strewn street.

SOPHIA

I snuck out of Briarcliff as fast  
as I could. I know Uncle Nev is a  
lot of things, but a *coward* --

HARRY

We'll deal with your uncle later.  
Right now we have to worry about  
Crowley --

SOPHIA

Crowley's only got the blue-prints.  
What could he really do?

HARRY

You saw those illustrations in the  
*Conjurer's Compendium*! Robert-  
Houdin used that machine to conquer  
an entire country.

SOPHIA

Even if he did build it, Uncle  
Neville said it would require an  
enormous amount of electricity --

Harry's eyes lands on something over Sophia's shoulder --

HARRY

And there's only one place he could  
find that much power...

Sophia follows his eyes towards a row of COLORFUL POSTERS  
plastered along a wooden fence, depicting a MAGNIFICENT  
MARBLE BUILDING glowing with a BRILLIANT LIGHT.

**-- GRAND OPENING --**

**THE OLYMPIA THEATER**

**POWERED BY EDISON'S MARVELOUS DIRECT CURRENT!**

Harry and Sophia approach the fence, Sophia TEARING one of  
the posters down --

SOPHIA

The Olympia. Uncle Neville's been  
fundraising for this event for  
months. The first theater in New  
York powered by electric current...

HARRY

Of course! Alexander Hermann's  
supposed to be performing --

SOPHIA

Alexander *who*?

HARRY

Hermann the Great! Crane and I were  
gonna go, we had tickets...

SOPHIA

You and everyone else in New York.  
Mayor Grant, Governor Hill, Morgan,  
Vanderbilt...

HARRY

When's the opening?

SOPHIA

In three days...

They look back down at the poster, depicting the theater's  
regal stone facade, as the image --

**MATCH-FADES TO:**

**EXT. OLYMPIA THEATER - NIGHT**

Even MORE IMPRESSIVE than the illustration lets on.

A towering structure in a French Renaissance style. Exterior LIT UP with thousands of glittering INCANDESCENT BULBS --

The GRAND OPENING has arrived.

Packed with THROGS OF PEOPLE -- STOCK-BROKERS rub shoulders with HOUSE-PAINTERS, BANK PRESIDENTS with WASHER-WOMEN.

They watch in wonder as FIRE EATERS spit plumes of flames, SWORD SWALLOWERS swallow razor-sharp blades, and ACROBATS perform daring feats of agility.

**ON THE OPPOSITE ROOF-TOP --**

TWO FIGURES crouch among the pigeons, peering down --

HARRY AND SOPHIA. Harry looks through a pair of OPERA GLASSES, getting a better look at the crowd.

A line of well-dressed SOCIALITES enter the theater --

SOPHIA

We've been up here for hours. I don't think Crowley's going to show. Maybe he couldn't build the machine in time, or --

HARRY

*There!*

Harry passes the glasses to Sophia, pointing to the crowd --

TWO ACOLYTES, clad in signature black garb, push their way through the crowd. They turn and disappear into an ALLEYWAY --

HARRY (CONT'D)

Come on!

**INT. OLYMPIA THEATER - NIGHT**

A cavernous hall -- THEATERGOERS stream into rows of seats, overlooking an ENORMOUS STAGE framed by velvet curtains.

At the balcony, various TITANS OF INDUSTRY -- MORGAN, ROCKEFELLER, VANDERBILT -- sit in plush boxes.

An ANNOUNCER hurries onto the stage in front of the burgundy curtains, speaking to the crowd --

ANNOUNCER

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen!  
Please, please -- find your seats,  
the show shall begin shortly...

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

Now sweaty and panting from their chase, Harry and Sophia stumble into the alleyway, which is --

A dead end. The other side blocked-off by a SOLID BRICK WALL. Yet the Acolyte has VANISHED.

HARRY  
...Where'd they go?

SOPHIA  
Maybe we lost them -- they slipped  
out when we looking, or --

Harry's gaze catches on something -- an iron MANHOLE COVER leading to the SEWERS, left slightly AJAR --

HARRY  
Or maybe...

**INT. SEWERS - NIGHT**

*SPLASH!*

Harry drops down into the SEWER TUNNELS, landing in a few inches of brackish water.

Sophia descends after him, wrinkling her nose at the FETID STENCH that drifts from the muck.

SOPHIA  
If you had told me last week that  
I'd running around the sewers of  
Longacre Square...

Harry peers down the sewer, which seems to stretch on forever, disappearing into an inky darkness.

HARRY  
These must go on for miles...

SOPHIA  
...Right under the Olympia.

Around the bend -- a soft BLUE LIGHT emanates from an unknown source. The Acolytes' voices echo down the tunnel --

Sophia and Harry share an anxious glance...

**MOMENTS LATER --**

Sewer rats SCATTER as Harry and Sophia splash along the tunnel, groping their way through the darkness towards the blue light, growing BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER --

As they draw closer, the Acolytes' voices are accompanied by another sound -- a kind of CRACKLING, HUMMING noise --

Harry and Sophia creep out of the pipe, into the --

#### **CENTRAL CHAMBER**

A large INTERSECTION where all the pipes connect.

Harry and Sophia peek out of the pipe into the central chamber. Their eyes go WIDE --

At the center of the chamber is ROBERT-HOUDIN'S MACHINE.

A gigantic TESLA COIL -- a shining steel orb, encased in a metal cage, crackling with BLUE ELECTRICITY --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
He built it -- Crowley actually  
built it...

Harry looks down at his arm -- the electricity causes the hairs to STAND ON END...

#### **INT. OLYMPIA THEATER - NIGHT**

The crowd has settled into their seats, still buzzing with anticipation for the show about to begin --

ANNOUNCER  
May I now present to you -- the  
most wondrous conjurer of illusion  
and amazement the world has ever  
seen -- the Great...*Hermann!*

The velvet curtains slowly roll open, revealing --

ALEXANDER HERMANN (40s), in a crisp tailcoat, joined by his young female MAGICIAN'S ASSISTANT.

Hermann raises his hands -- the ELECTRIC CHANDELIER hanging over the stage suddenly GLIMMERS to life, bulbs GLOWING --

The audience CHEERS, CLAPS, and GASPS in awe --

**INT. SEWERS - CENTRAL CHAMBER - NIGHT**

The two Acolytes stand at attention, guarding Houdin's machine. One narrows his eyes, peering into the tunnel --

ACOLYTE 1  
-- Who's there!?

A FIGURE emerges from the tunnel -- SOPHIA.

ACOLYTE 2  
It's -- a *girl*.

ACOLYTE 1  
What the hell's a *girl* doing in --

*CLINK!* The Acolytes' look down to see --

They've been HANDCUFFED TOGETHER. They instinctually PULL in different directions, BOUNCE back, and --

*CLONK!* Harry emerges from the shadows behind them, BANGING their heads together as hard as he can. The Acolytes collapse in an unconscious HEAP.

HARRY  
Mulberry Street Precinct really  
needs to keep a better eye on their  
handcuffs.

Sophia approaches the machine, flinching as it SPITS crackling bolts of electricity --

SOPHIA  
Uncle Neville said it's some kind  
of -- *electro-magnet* --

HARRY  
Whatever it does, it can't be good.  
We gotta shut this thing off --

Harry steps towards the machine, slowly reaching his hand out towards a coil of WIRES that extend from the base --

*ZAP!* A bolt of electricity LASHES OUT at Harry, BLASTING HIM backwards. He stumbles, sitting down HARD in the water --

SOPHIA  
*Harry!*

Sophia rushes to Harry's side -- he winces --

HARRY  
Gas lights won't do that to you.

Harry clambers to his feet -- he traces the coil of wires, snaking out of the base of the machine, up the wall --

And THROUGH A MANHOLE COVER ABOVE THEM...

# **INT. OLYMPIA THEATER - NIGHT**

On stage, Hermann stands before a LARGE WOODEN ARMOIRE. He opens the oak doors, and his Assistant clambers inside, shutting the armoire behind her.

Hermann crosses to a rack OF RAPIER SWORDS on stage, drawing one of the glimmering blades --

And STABBING IT through the armoire, PIERCING his Assistant. The audience GASPS -- Hermann draws a second sword...

# **INT. SEWER - CENTRAL CHAMBER - NIGHT**

Harry and Sophia stand beneath a TRAP DOOR.

HARRY

If we can't shut it off down here,  
maybe we can turn it off from the  
source -- here, I'll give you a  
boost up --

Harry helps Sophia clamber up towards the trap door. She SLIDES it open and disappears ABOVE GROUND.

Harry LEAPS up after her, grabbing onto the edge, and pulling himself up into a --

# **DARK SPACE**

Sophia breaths in the dark beside him. But they're NOT ALONE. The hushed whisper of --

HERMANN'S ASSISTANT

*What are you doing --*

*SHHNNK!* A sword blade pierces through the darkness, millimeters away from SLICING Harry's throat --

They've climbed straight up INTO HERMANN'S ARMOIRE!

HERMANN'S ASSITANT

*Get outta here! You're ruining --*

*SHHNNK!* Another sword almost pierces Sophia through the stomach. Sophia GULPS, looking wide-eyed at Harry --

One by one, the swords are PULLED BACK out of the armoire --

HERMANN (O.S.)  
I shall now reveal my assistant --  
*completely unharmed!*

The doors are THROWN OPEN, stage lights FLOODING IN. The audience APPLAUDS as lights illuminate Hermann's Assistant --

Along with Harry and Sophia, crouched in the corner. The audience applause dies off, confused --

A baffled Hermann stares at Harry and Sophia. A moment of stunned silence. Harry clears this throat --

HARRY  
Um -- amazing! The Great Hermann  
has transmuted *one* human being --  
into *three!*

Confused claps. Harry climbs out of the armoire, rushing to the edge of the stage, addressing the audience --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Uh -- ladies, gentlemen -- thank  
you for attending tonight's  
performance. Unfortunately there's  
been a *slight* change in plans, and  
we must cut this revue short, so...

No one moves --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
So what I'm really saying is -- go  
home! Get outta here! Leave!

The chandelier above the stage begins to FLICKER -- BUZZ --

A voice echoes through the theater --

CROWLEY (O.S.)  
*Leave?* Oh, but the show is just  
beginning...

All eyes turn towards the TOP OF THE STAIRS --

CROWLEY stands in the aisle, dressed in full CEREMONIAL REGALIA, the Golden Dawn symbol across the chest of his robe.

Strange fire BURNS in his eyes -- as if he really *is* magic --

Not sure whether to be angry or confused, Hermann's eyes flit between Harry and Crowley.



Crowley descends the steps, speaking to the audience -- they eat up every moment, still believing its part of the show.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Have you grown tired yet? Tired of cheap conjurer's tricks? Would like to witness a display of *real* magic?

Crowley holds out his hands -- on each of his palms is a strange METALLIC DISC, etched with the Golden Dawn symbol.

The discs seem to be able to INTERACT with the machine under the stage, through a kind of ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FORCE.

Electricity CRACKLES from the discs, giving the illusion that Crowley is SHOOTING LIGHTING from his fingertips.

Crowley holds out his hand towards a pair of large MARBLE LIONS that flank each side of the stage.

Lightning BLASTS towards the statues, accompanied by a magnetic force that ripples through the air.

With a grating GROAN, one of the marble lions begins to MOVE, slowly lifting off its pedestal --

LEVITATING in the air. Raucous applause from the audience.

Crowley smiles deviously down at Harry on stage.

HARRY

Run --

Hermann and his Assistant run into the wings as --

The enormous chunk of marble goes SAILING straight towards Harry and Sophia. They DIVE OUT OF THE WAY --

CRASH! The lion EXPLODES against the armoire. The swords going SKITTERING across the floor --

Harry lands in a heap. He slowly clambers to his feet, scanning the wreckage. Sophia's nowhere to be found --

HARRY (CONT'D)

*Sophia!*

Harry hurries over to the s remains of the armoire -- Sophia' been THROWN down into the sewers below -- bruised, but alive.

SOPHIA

I'm okay! I'll get the machine shut off -- distract Crowley!

**CRASH!** The second lion comes **SAILING** by Harry, almost taking him with it. It **EXPLODES** against the theater backdrop --

HARRY

Easier said than done --

The audience is beginning to comprehend -- this is no show. Some hide under their seats -- some crowd the aisles, trying to make it to the exit --

Crowley steps on to stage, striking a truly imposing figure with dark robe and wild eyes, bolts of lightning **CRACKLING** all around him. Like an **ANCIENT GOD** --

He looks up at **PRIVATE BOXES**, where the high society men and women look on in growing horror --

CROWLEY

You've forsaken me. Made an outcast  
-- a pariah. It's time you see what  
real power looks like.

Crowley hold his hands towards the boxes -- a crackling magnetic wave **BLASTS** towards them --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

A new age! A *Golden Dawn* --

The balcony **GROANS** -- about to **COLLAPSE**. The socialites **SCREAM**, scrambling for safety --

**THUD!** Harry **TACKLES** Crowley from the left, knocking him to the ground. The two tussle in the marble rubble --

**IN THE SEWER --**

Sophia approaches the **HISSING**, **SPUTTERING** machine beneath the stage, trying to find a way to shut it off.

Behind its iron cage, she spies a **RUBBER-CLAD LEVER**. She reaches tentatively out to pull the lever, when --

A meaty hand reaches out of the darkness, **GRABBING** Sophia and **TOSSING** her against the brick wall of the sewer --

**MRS. VULCH**. Emerging from the darkness, ready for blood --

**ON STAGE --**

Harry and Crowley wrestle. Crowley's magnetic disc glows --

A blast of electricity **KNOCKS** Harry backwards, off of Crowley. Crowley stumbles to his feet, snarling --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
Why won't you *die* --

Crowley holds out a hand towards the scattered rapiers --  
they LEVITATE into the air, and -- SAIL towards Harry --

THUD - THUD - THUD! Harry twists and turns, barely managing  
to avoid the deadly blades. One SLICES him across the arm --

**IN THE SEWER --**

Mrs. Vulch reaches down, LIFTING up Sophia with one hand.  
Sophia can barely catch her breath, before --

SLAM! Mrs. Vulch tosses her against the brick wall again,  
like an overgrown child playing with a rag-doll.

Mrs. Vulch lurches towards her, going in for another strike --

**ON STAGE --**

Crowley points his hands up towards the ceiling --

A metallic SHRIEK as a row of STAGE LIGHTS plummets down  
towards Harry -- barely able to ROLL out of the way before it  
CRASHES to the ground --

Crowley sends a BARRAGE SAILING towards Harry -- lights,  
props, trunks --

Harry dodges some, but others STRIKE HIM HARD, knocking him  
back to the ground. Harry doesn't stand a chance --

**IN THE SEWER --**

Mrs. Vulch lifts the half-conscious Sophia out of water,  
STRIKING her hard in the face. Her head SNAPS back --

Mrs. Vulch HURLS Sophia to the ground. Stalking towards her,  
a cat going in for the kill of a defenseless mouse --

Sophia's eyes flutter open, landing on --

The WIRE, stretching across the sewer floor.

**ON THE STAGE --**

Harry lies battered and beaten on the stage, attempting to  
get to his feet but unable to.

Crowley holds his hands up to the enormous CHANDELIER,  
dangling DIRECTLY OVER HARRY --

Magnetic waves emanate from Crowley's hands, the chandelier begins to shake, plaster ceiling crumbling, about to DROP --

**IN THE SEWER --**

Mrs. Vulch draws closer to Sophia -- closer, CLOSER --

At the last moment, Sophia lunges out and GRABS the wire, TUGGING IT TAUT --

Mrs. Vulch TRIPS over the taut wire, stumbling --

RIGHT INTO THE MACHINE. Her enormous mass FALLS against the electrified iron cage, acting as a kind of ELECTRIC CHAIR --

Mrs. Vulch's body TREMBLES, thousands of volt of electricity COURSING THROUGH IT -- hair SMOKING, skin CHARRING --

As Mrs. Vulch is electrocuted, the machine begins to glow BRIGHTER and BRIGHTER, until finally --

BOOM! With a final BURST OF LIGHTNING, the machine CATCHES ON FIRE, its current OVERLOADED by Mrs. Vulch --

But Mrs. Vulch STILL ISN'T DEAD. Black smoke curling from her charred clothes, she staggers forward towards a terrified Sophia, seeming to stay alive through SHEER WILLPOWER alone --

And COLLAPSES to the ground in a resounding THUD.

Sophia gets to her feet. The machine is now consumed by a RAGING FIRE, still spitting sporadic BOLTS of electricity --

**ON THE STAGE --**

Crowley's about to BRING DOWN the chandelier on top of Harry -- but the discs on his palms SPUTTER --

He tries again -- another SPARK -- SPUTTER -- still nothing.

Harry dusts himself off, slowly getting to his feet --

HARRY

Having some trouble with that  
little gimmick of yours?

Crowley SNARLS in fury, rushing towards Harry. He grabs a rapier from the ground, SWINGING it towards Harry --

Harry DUCKS out of the way, grabbing his own sword --

CLANG! Crowley LUNGES towards Harry --

The two SWORDFIGHT -- Crowley a trained, disciplined fencer, attacking with grace and precision. Harry defends wildly --

Crowley corners Harry against the COUNTERWEIGHT ROPES that control the various curtains and back drops --

Harry sees a METAL CATWALK above the stage. He SLICES one of the counterbalance ropes --

A heavy sandbag attached to the other end of the rope PLUMMETS downward -- Harry grabs on to the rope, suddenly YANKED UPWARDS, dozens of feet, away from Crowley.

He LEAPS from the rope, rolling on to the catwalk above the stage -- momentarily safe from Crowley.

But not for long. Crowley slices his own rope, grabbing on and SAILING upwards towards the catwalk.

He lands on the catwalk and immediately LAUNCHES at Harry --

CLANG! Their blades CLASH once more --

#### **IN THE SEWER --**

Sophia watches as the fire-engulfed machine begins to SHAKE, harder and harder -- tiny metal screw POP from their cases --

A low rumble grows LOUDER AND LOUDER. Sophia realizes at the last moment -- the machine is about to BLOW --

She races back towards the trap door, LEAPING UP. Her fingers barely brush the edge of the manhole. But she is able to HOLD ON, pulling herself out onto stage, just as --

FWOOSH! A blast of FIRE AND LIGHTNING explodes across the stage behind her, sending Sophia SAILING into the audience, landing HARD in a row of chairs. She looks up to see --

HARRY AND CROWLEY. On the catwalk high above the burning stage, facing each other down --

#### **ON THE CATWALK --**

Harry and Crowley stand tense, swords held high. They take a few tentative swipes at each other --

Harry's breathing hard, clothes torn and ragged, blood seeping from his wounds. His sword trembles in his hand --

Crowley gestures to the raging fire building below them --

CROWLEY

It's gone now -- such a pity. The  
greatest invention in history --

Harry SLASHES at Crowley. Crowley easily deflects him.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)

You'll never get a chance to know  
its secret. To wield it's power.

Another attack from Harry -- another easy block --

Crowley BARES DOWN on Harry with his rapier. Harry BLOCKS --  
straining as Crowley's sword draws closer to his neck --

**IN THE AUDIENCE --**

Theater-goers make a panicked RUSH towards the doors as the  
blaze grows LARGER, CRACKLING with electricity. Except for --

Sophia. She stays behind, eyes locked on the catwalk above --

**ON THE CATWALK --**

The support beams begin to BUCKLE from the heat. The catwalk  
GROANS, TIPPING precariously, threatening to COLLAPSE.

Neither Harry nor Crowley notice --

Face contorted in a grimace, Harry holds off Crowley. In  
BURST OF STRENGTH, he TWISTS his sword round Crowley's hilt --

HARRY

That's the thing about secrets.  
Once you figure 'em out --

Harry KNOCKS the sword from Crowley's hand. Crowley's weapon  
sails into the inferno, leaving Crowley DEFENSELESS --

Harry holds his blade up to Crowley's throat.

HARRY (CONT'D)

-- It turns out most were kinda  
disappointing after all.

Crowley's caught. No way out. Yet as the catwalk begins to  
COLLAPSE even further, Crowley only laughs --

CROWLEY

I'm surprised at you, Harry. You of  
all people should know --

With a flick of his wrist, a snub-nosed REVOLVER extends out  
from the sleeve of Crowley's cloak --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
-- Always check up the sleeve.

*BANG!* The gunshot echoes through the theater, the bullet blasting RIGHT INTO HARRY'S CHEST.

Harry is KNOCKED BACK, skidding along the catwalk and coming to a stop in a lifeless, motionless heap.

**IN THE AUDIENCE --**

SOPHIA  
*Harry!*

Tears streaming down her soot-stained face, Sophia runs back towards the stage, but is blocked by a WALL OF FLAMES --

**ON THE CATWALK --**

Crowley prowls towards Harry, a cruel, victorious smile spreading across his lips. He stands over the boy, peering down at the BULLET-HOLE torn through his shirt. Suddenly --

HARRY  
And *you* should know --

Harry's eyes suddenly POP OPEN. He grins up at Crowley --

HARRY (CONT'D)  
-- Every good magic act has a surprise ending.

Fury slowly spreads across Crowley's face --

Harry lashes out with his foot, kicking a loose STEEL SUPPORT BEAM. The catwalk GROANS, on its very last legs --

Harry GRABS onto the cut rope, just in time before --

The catwalk COLLAPSES, SPILLING Crowley off of it --

Crowley GRABS ON to the twisted railing -- hanging on by the fingertips, dangling above the swirling LIGHTNING below --

He STRUGGLES for a moment -- attempting to pull himself up --

But then relaxes. Face eerily calm -- serene. Almost KNOWING. He looks up at Harry, who dangles from the rope above him --

CROWLEY  
Robert-Houdin's work is only the beginning. There is magic in this world you could never begin to understand.

Crowley slips further from the railing -- barely hanging on --

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
Magic that can reach across the  
mortal plane -- that can stop *death*  
*itself*. The Golden Dawn will still  
come, Harry...

He smiles -- despite the burning heat from the fire below, a  
SHIVER runs down Harry's spine.

CROWLEY (CONT'D)  
Until we meet again.

Crowley lets go of the railing --

FALLING down into the maelstrom of FIRE below. There's a  
sudden BLAST OF LIGHTNING, a DEATH THROE of the machine --

In the flash of light, it seemed like Crowley VANISHED INTO  
THIN AIR before he hit the fire.

But no. That would be impossible...*right?*

The electric storm dies down. Even the angry orange flames  
seem to lessen somewhat.

Through the holes in the smoldering stage, Harry sees the  
remains of ROBERT-HOUDIN'S MACHINE, little more than a  
charred metal skeleton.

Sophia looks up at Harry from the ground below --

SOPHIA  
You're -- you're alive! But  
Crowley's gun -- and, how did you --

Harry pulls something out of his breast pocket, TOSSING IT  
down to Sophia. She catches it, looking down at --

THE SILVER POCKET-WATCH that Harry stole from the BANKER,  
what now seems like forever ago.

Its case DENTED where it was struck by a bullet, the glass  
watch face SHATTERED --

HARRY  
Knew that thing would come in handy  
eventually...

Harry grins down at Sophia. She smiles back up at him...



**EXT. OLYMPIA THEATER - NIGHT**

A FIRE WAGON is parked outside the theater, FIREMEN unwinding a long hose from a WATER TANKARD on the back of the wagon.

The displaced crowd of theater-goers gathers outside the theater, looking on at the dark drifting through the windows.

A SHOE SHINE MAN sits on the curb, blank-faced, still somewhat shell-shocked from the night's events.

A man in a BLACK SUITCOAT and SILK TOPHAT sits down on the curb beside him -- CORNELIUS VANDERBILT JR.

VANDERBILT

Now *that's* what I call a good show!

The Shoe Shine Man shrugs, nodding in quiet agreement. They sit on the corner, looking up at the Olympia...

**EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE - MORNING - ESTABLISHING**

The earliest hints of fall have arrived in the city.

The air is crisp and cool, the VENDORS and NEWBOYS clad in long sleeves and light coats.

Leaves of orange and red drift from the trees, caught by horse's hooves or carriages wheels.

**SUPER:** ONE MONTH LATER...

**EXT. CRANE'S LOCKSMITH SHOP - MORNING - ESTABLISHING**

Something about its shabby facade seems different -- newer, brighter. A FRESH COAT OF PAINT.

The SKELETON KEY SIGN hanging above the door has also received a new paint job. It now reads:

**- HARRY HOUDINI -**

**FINE LOCKSMITH**

And below, in smaller letters, barely fitting on the sign:

**AND MASTER OF ILLUSION**

**INT. CRANE'S LOCKSMITH SHOP - DAY**

Autumn sunlight streams through the windows, revealing a shop that is CLEANER and BETTER-ORGANIZED than ever before.

Every key on its correct hook. Every tool on its right shelf. The floor tidy and spotless.

The walls are now plastered with large MAGIC POSTERS, colorful depictions of illusion, escape, and mystery.

**IN THE LOFT --**

Harry sits at his workbench, dressed in a crisp shirt and new leather apron. He's hunched over, CONCENTRATED on something --

A PAIR OF HANDCUFFS. But not just any handcuffs. Complex and intricate -- something of Harry's own design.

He delicately fiddles with the mechanism, using a lock-pick --

*CLICK!* The hand-cuffs POP OPEN.

Harry barely hearing the *DING* of the front door bell ringing. He calls out distractedly --

HARRY

We're still closed! You'll have to come back in an hour, or --

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Are you sure? Because I just happen to have a very peculiar puzzle-box that needs opening.

Harry's face breaks out into a grin. He drops the handcuffs, peering over the loft railing --

Sophia stands on the shop floor, dressed in a brown traveling dress and carrying a valise.

**MOMENTS LATER --**

On the shop floor, Harry and Sophia EMBRACE --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

The shop looks good! I didn't think you had it in you --

HARRY

You think Crane would like it?

SOPHIA

I *know* he would.

Harry's eyes drift towards the traveling valise.

HARRY

...Today's the day, huh?

SOPHIA

Today's the day. Uncle Neville's going to take me to the ocean liner this afternoon --

HARRY

Guess your ol' pal the rubber baron'll miss you, right?

SOPHIA

Alexander? Possibly. But he's a bit *boring*, don't you think? I thought maybe I'd see the world a bit. Greece, Tangier...

She trails off. A long moment --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

...You could -- come with me, you know. If you wanted to.

Harry looks at Sophia -- he wants to. *Really* wants to. But...

HARRY

I think...I think I have to stay here. At the shop.

He looks around the shop -- small, but it feels like home.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I've been thinking...maybe you're right. Maybe boring isn't so bad after all. And besides --

He winces -- some of his wounds haven't fully healed yet.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I might have had enough adventure for a little while, y'know?

SOPHIA

We'll see how long that lasts.

She picks up her valise, smiling sadly at Harry -- a bittersweet moment.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

You must promise you'll write me.

HARRY  
Sure -- I promise.

SOPHIA  
...Goodbye, Harry.

Sophia hesitates --

Then leans in, planting a TENDER KISS on Harry's lips. She lingers for a moment -- then pulls away.

Harry blinks. Swallows.

HARRY  
...Well, now I *definitely* promise.

As Sophia's about to exit, she pauses, turning back --

SOPHIA  
I almost forgot to ask. Who's *Harry Houdini*?

HARRY  
Oh -- that's me! That's my stage name. Figured every magician needs a good stage name, right?

SOPHIA  
But what on earth does *Houdini* mean?

HARRY  
Well, in French, right -- adding an "i" to the end of a word means "*greater than*."

He picks up a lock, tossing it idly up and down.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
So I figured, since I solved Houdin's secret, I must be *greater than* Houdin -- so, *Houdini*!

SOPHIA  
...Harry, that's -- that's not what that means at all.

HARRY  
...It's not?

SOPHIA  
No, not at all! In fact, it's more or less the opposite -- adding an "i" means *small* or *little*.

Sophia grins mischievously --

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
So I guess you'd sort of be  
like...*little Houdin*.

HARRY  
Wait -- *what?!*

We DRIFT through the window, back out on to the --

**EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS**

A group of BOYS runs by playing with a hoop and a stick.

HARRY (O.S.)  
Well what I supposed to do *now?!*

SOPHIA (O.S.)  
I'm sure you can change it later --

HARRY (O.S.)  
But I already paid the sign  
painter!

SOPHIA (O.S.)  
Don't get so upset! Who knows --  
maybe it'll grow on you...

As Harry and Sophia's voice FADE OUT, we drift further out  
over out over the city, over its thousands of denizens --

HOLDING for a moment on the familiar metropolis of iron and  
steel, reaching closer to the heavens by the day...

**FADE OUT.**