

BONE

by

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Based on the Drummond Bone stories.

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SUPER:

**ENGLAND, 1856. A YEAR OF FURY AND RUSSIAN ROULETTE. LONDON'S
NEW DETECTIVE SQUAD IS UNTRIED. UNTRUSTED.**

1 INT. BRITISH MUSEUM -- DAY

1

CLOSE ON the glowering face of a COLOSSAL SCULPTURE - a winged bull with a human head.

CLOSE ON a pair of FROST-BRIGHT EYES staring back - locked in a silent duel with the statue.

Their owner: DRUMMOND BONE, 32. Once a wild rover. Now mostly broken to the yoke. Think the Artful Dodger, grown up and working for the other side. Brutally short hair. Raw, port-wine birthmark blazing down his neck.

A SNOT-NOSED BOY gawks at him, slack-jawed.

MOTHER (O.C.)

(hissed)

Josh? Joshua! Come here!

Bone blinks, snaps back to the present. Snot-nose scurries off. Bone checks on his team.

At the far exit: DROOPY, 28, gangly with a mournful moustache, crowd-gazing. He flicks a tired glance at Bone. Bone answers with a ghost of a smile.

Nearby: RITA, 24, indulges the charms of a paunchy MUSEUM GUARD. Her smile flatters - mock-coy - but her eyes dart, scanning every face.

Bone moves, cutting through the top hats and bonnets shuffling for a peek at the battered gods and kings hanging on the walls. He stops at a towering GLASS CASE. Inside: a BLACK BASALT SLAB etched with wedge-shaped symbols.

Bone feigns interest in the exhibit label, while his eyes focus on the REFLECTION of a PALE MAN, 28. Jittery. Nail-bitten fingers fidgeting over a battered FOB WATCH. Bone's jaw tightens.

Rita laughs - low, rich, the kind that gets under the skin. The guard lights up. Thinks it's for him. Rita's smile stays, but her eyes flick to Bone. A silent cue - a NEW ARRIVAL. WOMAN IN PURPLE, 48. Striking. Composed. Bone sees her too. Straightens.

The Pale Man peels away from the display. Brushes past the woman. Flawless. A CLUTCH BAG passes between them - smooth and fast. The Pale Man slips the bag beneath his jacket. The woman adjusts her pince-nez and leans into an exhibit. Just another tourist.

Bone signals Rita. She drops the guard and glides toward the woman. Droopy on her heels.

WOMAN IN PURPLE (O.C.)
(outraged)
What? Unhand me!

Bone closes on the Pale Man - but a swarm of uniformed SCHOOL CHILDREN cut him off. The Pale Man slips out. Bone dodges the obstacle, yanks a door open.

2 EXT. MUSEUM -- MOMENTS LATER

2

The clutch lies discarded on the steps, empty. The Pale Man is gone.

Two SHOPGIRLS chatter arm-in-arm, laughter brittle with exhaustion. A HASIDIC RABBI, chin buried in his collar, drifts past like flotsam.

Movement - a flicker. A CAB lurches forward - the Pale Man glowering from inside.

Bone hurls the bag. Vaults the steps.

3 INT. CAB -- CONTINUOUS

3

The Pale Man turns a PISTOL over in his skeletal hands, examining it with surgical precision. He checks the barrel. Tilts it to the light. Eyes narrowing. He flips open the breech.

From a worn leather pouch, he draws a single brass cartridge. He slides it in - slow, deliberate. The cab jolts. He SNAPS the breech shut. Peers out the window.

4 EXT. GATES -- CONTINUOUS

4

Bone barges through a bottle-neck of top hats, coat-tails, bonnets and silk.

CROWD (OVERLAPPING O.C.)
Here - watch it! *Careful* chum! *Oi!*

A burly MUSEUM GUARD seizes him by the arm. Bone shoots a withering glare. The guard loosens his grip.

5 EXT. ROAD -- MOMENT LATER 5

Bone barrels down the pavement, weaving through startled pedestrians.

Up ahead, the PALE MAN'S CAB swerves hard down a side street.

Bone lunges off the curb, looking for a shortcut - straight into the path of a rumbling DRAY CART. A massive BLACK SHIRE HORSE rears, hooves thrashing - inches from his face.

Bone ducks, spins, and bounds into a shadowy -

6 EXT. ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS 6

- skidding across slick cobblestones. He crashes down hard, scattering pigeons in a flurry of wings.

A GRIZZLED WOMAN, 74, sits slumped on a stone step, cradling a baby. She stares at him - flat, unreadable.

Bone flashes a crooked grin.

She spits a wad of brown tobacco, slow and deliberate. It oozes down her chin.

7 EXT. PICCADILLY -- MOMENT LATER 7

Bone bursts from the alley into blinding sunlight, eyes darting for the Pale Man's cab. Dozens choke the street - identical, indistinguishable, each a potential hiding place.

He lunges to the nearest one.

8 INT. CAB -- CONTINUOUS 8

Bone's face *slams* against the window, startling a smartly-dressed CHINESE COUPLE.

The woman's PEKINGESE explodes into frenzied YAPS.

9 EXT. CAB -- CONTINUOUS 9

The CABMAN SNAPS his whip.

DRIVER
(roaring)
Get aht of it!

10 EXT. PICCADILLY -- CONTINUOUS 10

Bone stands frozen in the middle of the highway, chest heaving, eyes scanning left, right - nothing.

The traffic grinds back into motion, whips snapping, drivers cursing. The pale man is gone.

Then - BANG. A cab door swings wide. A DRIVER shouts, furious, waving after a fleeing fare - *unpaid*.

11 EXT. GREEN PARK -- MOMENT LATER 11

THE PALE MAN

Hurls himself through the park gates and pounds down a footpath. Sunday strollers scatter with startled cries.

BONE

Charges through the same gates - skids left and vaults a hedgerow, breath ragged.

THE PALE MAN

Glances back, wipes sweat from his brow, then yanks out his fob-watch. *Damn it*. He surges forward.

BONE

Zig-zags through trees and shrubs. He scrambles over a fence, boots thudding into turf.

THE PALE MAN

Glances behind - nothing. His pace eases to a jog, then a brisk walk. A smile flickers at the corner of his mouth.

MUTED CHEERS drift in. The Pale Man slows. A sandy bridleway cuts across his path. HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY - immaculate, gleaming - trot past, sunlight flashing off breastplates. A picnicking FAMILY rises, curious.

The Pale Man barely sees them. His hand slides into his jacket, his eyes locking on the occupants of an OPEN-TOP CARRIAGE, rolling gently by.

Bone BURSTS from a hedge - BATON swinging in a brutal arc -

CRACK! The side of a tree EXPLODES. A thunderous ROAR echoes. Birds take flight. People duck. A rider - splendid in scarlet and brass - wrestles vainly to control his bucking horse.

Bone's boot lashes out - kicks a smoking pistol into the underbrush.

The Pale Man flicks open a POCKET KNIFE - slashes. Bone sidesteps, backpedals - topples over a picnic hamper, cutlery and china scattering. Steel flashes. Bone parries, ducks, retreats. The Pale Man lunges. Bone counters - disarming him with one swipe of the baton.

With a shriek, the Pale Man leaps, clawing for Bone's throat. They grapple. The Pale Man fights like like a madman until - Bone locks him in a VICE-LIKE CHOKEHOLD. He squeezes. Then squeezes harder. The Pale Man jerks, kicks. Then - goes limp.

SILENCE. Bone staggers upright, nearly tripping over a tangle of deck-chairs. He wipes blood from his chin. He eyes his foe - *this wasn't the ending he'd planned.*

THUNDERING HOOVES. A GUARDSMAN - face like a bulldog, sword out - rides up. Sun at his back. His jittery horse snorts and paws the earth. The sword-tip presses into Bone's chest.

GUARDSMAN

Move an inch, I'll have your guts for garters!

Bone eyes the blade...then the Guardsman...then pulls out a HIP FLASK. Two swigs. Calm. He kicks something on the ground. The Pale Man groans.

SMASH CUT TO:

12 EXT. SEAFRONT PARADE -- DAY

12

A PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW. Bright sunshine. SHRIEKING seagulls.

On the tiny, striped canvas stage, a GUARDSMAN HAND-PUPPET, sword raised, chases a POLICEMAN HAND-PUPPET. Frenzied. The whole booth trembles with the unseen puppet-master's effort.

WHACK! The roles flip. The Policeman, wielding his SLAPSTICK BATON, lays into the Guardsman.

The audience ERUPTS - LAUGHTER, SQUEALS, pure delight.

The puppets vanish. Then - PUNCH pops up, grinning. He's a puppet parody of the Pale man - twitchy, whey-faced and sweating with varnish. He pulls out an oversized FOB-WATCH.

Behind him, silent as shadow -

The Policeman. Baton raised. Creeping closer...

AUDIENCE (O.C.)
(shouting, ecstatic)

He's behind you! He's *behind* you!

CLOSE ON a creepy HANGMAN HAND-PUPPET, greasy GIBBET AND ROPE in hand, waiting in the wings.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 EXT. MARGATE, FIELD -- DAY 13

CLOSE ON simple knee-length cotton dresses. Stockings. Sturdy boots. Two girls - VIOLET (19) and ALICE (18) - wade through summer barley, pock-marked with blood-red poppies. The stalks rustle, part and ripple in their wake.

Alice casts a wary glance behind her.

VIOLET
(grinning)
Stop *worrying*. No one's watching.

14 EXT. WOOD -- MOMENTS LATER 14

A lone bird call. Dappled sunlight. The girls pick their way over roots and fallen branches. A gust stirs the leaves. Violet's eyes flick to the clouds tearing across the sky.

VIOLET
It's going to rain. Come on.

15 EXT. WALL -- MOMENTS LATER 15

Alice trails her fingers over crumbling bricks, humming.

Ahead, Violet moves with purpose, eyes sharp on the ground. She stops, drops to her knees, and sweeps aside tangled greenery.

A small, dark tunnel appears under the wall - just big enough for a girl to crawl through.

Violet looks up at Alice. Grins.

16 EXT. YARD -- MOMENT LATER 16

A blocked gutter drips. A squirrel pricks its ears, stares, scampers off.

The girls pass darkened windows, a flat-bed haulage cart, crates stamped STRAFFORD & SONS and an enamel sign: 'All visitors should report to the Gatehouse.'

They stop at a weathered door. Alice presses a key into her friend's hand. Violet turns it in the lock.

A dark cloud swallows the sun.

17 INT. DISUSED WORKSHOP -- MOMENT LATER

17

Fat raindrops PATTERN the windowsill. Dozens of rounded wooden hat moulds stand mute on shelves.

Alice glides between the shelves, her fingers trailing the worn shapes.

Violet moves toward the far corner to retrieve a blanket and quilt hidden behind a cupboard. She spreads them out on the floor. Alice joins her on the makeshift bed.

Violet strikes a match, the flame flickering as she lights a tallow candle. The two girls fall into each other's arms. Urgent but tender, fumbling with buttons.

INTERCUT BETWEEN WORKSHOP AND CORRIDOR

SLOW MOTION -- a murky passage...grimy windows catching weak uneven light...

WORKSHOP

Alice's breathing quickens. Her eyes squeeze shut, overwhelmed. She leans her forehead against Violet's.

CORRIDOR

CLOSE ON door signs: 'FOREMAN'S OFFICE', 'PRODUCTION: MEN'S WORKSHOP', 'BLOCKER'S OFFICE.'

WORKSHOP

A sudden FLASH of light. The distant growl of THUNDER. Alice clutches Violet closer, a quiet sound escaping her throat.

CORRIDOR

CLOSE ON dust swirling off the floor, caught in a sudden draft. Somewhere - a metallic CLANG, almost inaudible.

WORKSHOP

The girls lie curled together, asleep. A BUMBLEBEE drifts through narrow shafts of light, its soft HUM barely audible over the rain.

CORRIDOR

BANG! Something SLAMS into a door, forcing it open with a SCREECH. CLOSE ON a SACK-TROLLEY WHEEL grinding forward. The RUMBLE is deafening.

WORKSHOP

Violet's eyes snap open. Alice stirs. Violet clamps a finger to her lips. Snuffs the candle. They scramble - Alice fumbles with her boots, fingers shaking. Violet shoves bedding behind the cupboard.

They freeze. A blade of light seeps under the door. Stretches...grows. The rumbling gets louder...then fades.

Violet creeps to the door. Presses her ear. Gently eases it open - just a sliver. Alice is horrified.

VIOLET'S POV - CORRIDOR

Three shapes. One leads. One pushes a loaded sack-trolley. One holds a flickering lantern. Shadows lurch and twitch. Violet squints - *recognition dawning*. She draws the door shut, careful not to make a sound.

VIOLET

Pretty sure it's Arthur. Couldn't see the others...

ALICE

God. Let's go. Please.

She grabs Violet's arm. Violet pulls away, stubborn.

VIOLET

(daring)

No. You go. I want to see what lover-boy's up to. Didn't he say he was headed into town?

ALICE

Yes, but -

Violet flashes a quick grin, reckless, and vanishes into the corridor.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Vi!

VIOLET (O.C.)

(playful, distant)

It's Sunday. They're not supposed to be here...

18 INT. FACTORY FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

18

The rain DRUMS. Slumbering metal machines and row upon row of workstations stretch into darkness, lifeless.

A lone gaslight sputters, pitching furtive shadows into the gloom. Two DARK SHAPES crouch over something. A shuffle. MEN'S VOICES, low, muffled.

INTERCUT BETWEEN FACTORY FLOOR AND THE CORRIDOR

Hesitation flickers in Violet's eyes. *Should she?* Alice catches her gaze, shaking her head fiercely.

FACTORY FLOOR

Violet slips between the workstations, a sly grin tugging at her lips. She stifles a giggle, contorts her face and flashes Alice a playful grimace.

A door SQUEAKS. She freezes. Her smile fades. Eyes wide, gleaming. FOOTSTEPS echo, fading into the distance.

CORRIDOR

A lightening FLASH. A fierce RATTLE of rain. Alice's eyes flicker behind her.

FACTORY FLOOR

The HISS of a kerosene lamp - glimpses of a SCALE DRAWING: a BARBED, EGG-SHAPED OBJECT. A detailed MAP OF THE CHANNEL. Small GLASS PHIALS, arranged in a test-tube holder.

Violet's gaze settles on a bowl of OILY SILVER LIQUID. She tentatively dips a finger in, then her whole hand, marvelling at the way the mercury dances in her palm.

The lamp fizzes, flickers, dims. She reaches out and shakes it, glancing at the far door. The lamp recovers. The rain DRUMS.

CLOSE ON Violet's finger tracing the red routes crisscrossing the Channel, lingering over the destinations: *MARGATE*, *LONDON*, *LE HAVRE*. When she lifts the map, we see a partial ARCHITECT'S DRAWING - upside down.

She circles the table, looks up at Alice's face bobbing in the window.

CLOSE ON the SCALE FIGURES in the drawing, seated on a dais beneath a huge glass atrium.

The lamp flickers, then dies. Violet swats at it, frustration mounting.

A glint of movement draws her gaze to the window -

Alice's face. Wide eyes. Frozen terror. Violet spins -

Two SHADOWY FIGURES slip from the darkness. Her breath catches. She bolts, but -

A hand clamps her wrist.

She twists in pain, the grip is vice-like - yanks her back.

VIOLET

Ow! Get off! I didn't touch anything -
honest!

(squints, recognises, giggles)

Wait. What are you - ?

The SLAP lands with a resounding CRACK, shattering her nose. Blood gushes, streams down her chin, splatters the grubby floor. She crumples.

CORRIDOR

Alice JOLTS, drops quivering to her knees.

FACTORY FLOOR

DRIPPING blood and slow, deliberate FOOTSTEPS drawing closer.

CORRIDOR

Alice rocks on the floor, eyes squeezed shut, hands clamped over her ears. She forces herself up - legs wobble, collapse. She tries again, shaking, daring a glance.

FACTORY FLOOR

Violet writhes - one figure crushes her wrists, another her ankles. A third crams a filthy rag into her mouth.

Violet jerks her head free, eyes wide, locking on Alice.

The figures freeze. Three heads swivel toward the pale face in the window. Alice stiffens. Breath catches.

CORRIDOR

Alice bolts. Hands clawing at a locked door. She slams into another, yanking the handle, rattling it furiously. Locked. She staggers forward, eyes wild. Another door - it gives. She stumbles through -

WORKSHOP

- tripping, sending wooden hat blocks CRASHING to the floor. She scrambles up, knocking shelves, blundering into the -

YARD

Rain pounds the cobbles. Gutters overflow. A DELUGE.

Alice glances back, dread twisting her face - someone or *something* is CRASHING through the workshop behind her. She hurtles across the slick yard, plunging headlong into the muddy tunnel beneath the wall, kicking and squirming.

WALL

She wriggles through, bricks scraping her arms. Mud slicks her skin. She claws for the far side -

She's YANKED back.

ALICE
(screaming)
NO, NO - PLEASE - GET OFF ME!

She kicks wildly, nails scraping masonry. Another violent JERK.

ALICE (CONT'D)
NO, NO, NO --

We HEAR children's raucous LAUGHTER.

SMASH CUT TO:

19 EXT. SEAFRONT PARADE -- DAY

19

The Punch and Judy show. Punch is BATTERING Judy.

PUNCH
(shrieking, maniacal)
THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT! THAT'S THE
WAY TO DO IT -

Men stand smoking, smiling slyly. Women close-eye the children sitting cross-legged on the sand - some laughing, others straight-faced.

At the back, a BOY (16) nudges a GIRL (15). The couple slip away.

20 EXT. BEACH -- MOMENTS LATER

20

The girl clutches her bonnet as the boy chases her. They stop, embrace - clumsily, the girl pushing the boy off - then

saunter, occasionally pausing to pick up a shell. Waves roll in lazily. The girl stares out to sea catching the blood-red sunset.

Up ahead, there's a GULL FEEDING-FRENZY around SOMETHING WHITE on the seashore. The girl furrows her brow. SCREAMS.

SMASH CUT TO:

21 EXT. LONDON, CRICKET PITCH -- DAY

21

A cricket ball CLATTERS the stumps. Polite APPLAUSE ripples through the spectators.

The scaffold-covered Palace of Westminster looms over the tree-tops - Big Ben's clock face conspicuously absent.

A rail-thin man in black weaves through parasols and top hats, drawing startled glances. He circles the boundary - then slips in beside a military type: grey temples, lantern jaw. Neither man acknowledges the other.

BONE

Nice day for it.

Bone scans the crowd, his gaze catching a PRETTY GIRL (25). For a moment: eye contact. No smile. No invitation. Just a flicker of recognition. Bone drops his eyes. Raises them again.

The girl now whispers to a friend, laughing behind a hand - mocking. A small, cruel smile. Bone looks away. No reaction.

The COMMISSIONER watches him, then slaps a folded-copy of the Times into Bone's chest. Bone unfolds the paper.

CLOSE ON a small headline circled in pencil:

GIRL'S BODY DISCOVERED ON LOCAL BEACH

COMMISSIONER

This one worked for a close friend of the PM. In his factory. Which explains the unwelcome press attention...

A new batsman strides toward the crease. Bone folds the newspaper, pockets it.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

I want you to assist the local force.
A change. Fresh air.

Bone's eyes flick to Rita and Droopy loitering by a cab.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)
Just you. Discreet. Follow?

He flashes a row of teeth.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)
It's probably nothing.

Bone studies the crowd - the leisured class in full plumage. Trimmed beards. Coiffed hair. Painted smiles. Silk, swagger and ease. A peacock parade.

He feels a gaze on him. The Commissioner, relaxed, observant. Waiting.

BONE
They're no different.

COMMISSIONER
No?

Bone looks back at the crowd - longer this time.

BONE
People. Just lies.
(softer)
Wrapped in skin.

The Commissioner offers a slow, knowing nod.

COMMISSIONER
And you're paid to peel it back.

Bone holds his gaze, expecting something more. Nothing. Bone exhales, a breath he didn't realize he was holding. He turns.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)
Oh - here.
(offers a small velvet box)
I almost forgot. I know you're not one for ceremony but Her Majesty insisted.

Bone hesitates. Takes it.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)
The park. That mess. She's grateful you stepped in. Seems you're getting quite good at this. Don't let it go to your head.

He sniffs, turns back to the cricket. Bone opens the box.

CLOSE ON a MILITARY MEDAL. Queen Victoria's profile. A clasp: CRIMEA. Bone frowns. Confused.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

(dry)

Well...he was Russian.

CRACK - willow on leather echoes. Applause. The Commissioner claps, brightening.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

Oh, well caught sir!

Bone doesn't react. Just stares at the medal.

22 EXT. RAILWAY STATION -- DAY

22

Snatches of chatter. Heels striking stone. The hiss of steam.

Bone steps into the gleaming crowded concourse, a weathered canvas bag slung over his shoulder. He slows - taking it all in. Progress. A different rhythm. He hesitates a moment, before moving toward a booth. Pays. Pockets his ticket with an awkward nod.

Nearby, a tight knot of people crowd the curb, newspapers clutched tight, heads bent.

A news placard screams:

SLAUGHTER IN PARIS

Bone flicks a coin onto the counter. The vendor snatches it up, fingers smudged with ink. Bone unfolds the paper.

CLOSE ON headline: **BOMB TARGETS FRENCH EMPEROR AND EMPRESS**

His brow furrows. His eyes skim down.

CLOSE ON headline: **LIGHT BRIGADE ARRIVES IN CRIMEA**

CRASH! A deafening SHATTER cuts through the station.

Bone flinches - along with everyone else.

A saucer spins wildly across the floor, WHIRRING, shrill, wobbling... and finally toppling to silence. A WAITER stands paralyzed, porcelain shards glittering at his feet. A bearded BUSINESS MAN, 52, wets his lips and snaps his newspaper.

BUSINESS MAN

(mutters)

If it's not the Russians, it's the bloody anarchists.

The air shifts. We HEAR the metallic clink of canteens. Heavy boots pounding in step. Blood-red SOLDIERS file past, faces

grim, uniforms sharp, buttons gleaming. Behind them, children skip, Union Flags fluttering, smiles bright as new pennies.

A train whistle SHRIEKS. Bone pulls his bag tighter to his shoulder.

23 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- DAY

23

AERIAL SHOT

Of summer fields and the occasional ribbon of blue, then an ugly gash - the new railway.

MOVING SHOT

Of a train hurtling down the tracks, billowing clouds of steam.

24 INT. RAILWAY CARRIAGE -- DAY

24

The carriage jolts and sways.

Bone sits stiffly on a hard wooden bench, a library copy of *Moby Dick* open but half-forgotten in his hands.

Opposite him, a lively gang of TWENTY-SOMETHINGS - straw hats, seaside dresses - laugh and jostle, bursting with easy energy. To his right, a flushed GENTLEMAN mops his brow, pinned beneath the disapproving glare of his sharp-eyed WIFE.

The train plunges into a long, pitch-black tunnel. Instantly, the carriage erupts: SHRIEKS, LAUGHTER, the rattle and grind of metal amplified by the dark. Bone stiffens, gripping his book tighter, invisible in the chaos.

Light bursts back.

A COUPLE share a heated kiss in plain view. The sharp-eyed WIFE tuts loudly, scandalized. Another girl swats her laughing boyfriend on the arm.

Bone's lips twitch with the ghost of a smile. He closes the book, marking the page with a careful fold, and turns to the window. Rolling meadows, dense hedgerows, and muddy ditches blur past.

For a moment, Bone locks eyes with a BLANK-FACED TRAMP standing in a lonely field, staring as the train roars by.

Bone blinks. Looks away.

25 EXT. MARGATE, STREET -- LATER

25

SHRIEKING gulls wheel overhead, their cries sharp, foreign.

The pavement thrums - gaudy silk parasols bob in the sun, easy laughter drifts sharp as glass. Curved shop windows flash glimpses of ELEGANT WOMEN, strangers' faces.

Bone weaves through the crowd, shoulders tight. He stops, gestures for a COUPLE to pass. They glance at his birthmark - eyes narrowing - before quickly sweeping past.

He passes a row of tall, stucco houses - pale, watchful. Sentinels against the sea. One stands out - newly painted with a manicured front garden, MARGATE INFIRMARY spelled bold above the doors. Next door, a CLIFF-TOP FUNICULAR - under construction - rails glinting, pointing to heaven.

Bone hovers, then jogs across the street - a little too quick, a little too alert.

A WIRY MAN rattles by with a handcart stacked high with gleaming fruit. An apple tumbles loose - Bone catches it without thinking. He tucks it into his pocket, almost smiling. Almost.

26 INT. BAR -- DAY

26

Dimly lit, with a haze of tobacco smoke. REGULARS nurse pints at scattered tables, faces weathered, familiar. A MAN in the corner, clay-pipe in hand, glances briefly over his newspaper as the door creaks open.

A scrawny TERRIER makes a beeline for Bone's trouser leg. Sniffs. Bone kneels briefly, scratching behind the dog's head, before moving to the bar.

BONE

Brandy. Water. The name's Bone. I telegraphed.

The BARMAN shuffles off. Bone throws back the first, pours himself another. His shoulders relax.

The barman returns, squinting at his bookings ledger.

BARMAN

Scotland Yard? Where's that then?

27 EXT. STREET -- MOMENT LATER

27

Bone holds an apple between his teeth as he consults his notebook and looks at a street sign. He takes another bite, then flings the core away.

28 EXT. POLICE STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

28

Bone threads his way through a knot of JOURNALISTS gathered outside a brick-fronted house.

A door is held ajar by JACK FOLEY, 62, flea-bitten, hard-nosed head of the local police - a man out of his depth, but coming out swinging.

VITTORIA STRAFFORD, 29, clutches the door frame. Not your average second wife. Enigmatic. Beautiful.

FOLEY

(faltering, defensive)

Listen. The place is cold, and the doctor -

VITTORIA

(seething)

Foley, you promised she'd be treated with dignity. It's unforgiveable -

She glares, spins and leaves. Bone shoves his boot between the door and its frame, flashes his warrant card and jabs an envelope at Foley.

29 INT. LOBBY -- MOMENT LATER

29

Foley shoots home the bolt and shambles away. A timid police volunteer, JIMMY, 22, tries to catch his eye. Foley ignores him.

30 INT. FOLEY'S OFFICE -- MOMENT LATER

30

Foley wedges behind a cluttered desk and slumps into a battered chair, waving Bone to sit. Bone stays on his feet. Foley fumbles his wired spectacles, rips open the thick envelope. Eyes flick across his new orders. Grimace.

Bone takes in the room. It's a wreck: Reports half-written, letters unopened, blanketed across the desk. Memos jammed onto the wall in no order, curling at the edges. A potted plant in the corner - skeletal, parched.

BONE

Who's the woman?

FOLEY

Edward Strafford's wife. His second. Do-gooder. Reported the girls were missing. Been on my back ever since.

Foley scrunches up the letter, lobs it at a waste-paper basket. Misses.

FOLEY (CONT'D)
But seeing they've sent in the
cavalry...

Bone almost smiles.

BONE
Why don't we start with the body? Then
your written report.

Foley leans back in his chair. Chews the end of his pencil.

FOLEY
Confident cock, aren't you?

KNOCKING - sharp, insistent - rattles the front door.

REPORTER 1 (O.C.)
Foley - when's the statement? You
can't hide all day!

The knocking persists - harder now. Bone's eyebrow lifts - slight, amused.

Foley throws the pencil on the desk. His chair bumps upright with a squeal.

31 EXT. POLICE STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

31

The two policemen shoulder their way through a swelling crowd.

REPORTER 1
Source says suicide -

FOLEY
Inquest.

REPORTER 2
Any word on Alice - found her yet?

FOLEY
Inquest!

REPORTER 2
And what's the PM's interest? She his
bit of fluff?

Foley stops in his tracks and yanks the reporter closer.

FOLEY
(hisses)

Print that. *Please.* No, *really.*

REPORTER 2

Alright, alright, calm down!

A barnacled Titan with piercing blue eyes - let's call him WILKIE (55) - tugs at Foley's sleeve.

WILKIE

Jack, d'you want me to start trawling the shallows for the other one?

FOLEY

You do that Wilks - but run aground and you'll get no help from me.

The hangers-on fall away. Bone glances back, sees Vittoria urging on her pony trap.

32 INT. RED LION CELLAR -- DAY

32

Bone circles the table dominating the room. Violet's body lies beneath a sheet. Above: distant chatter, the clink of glasses from the bar.

Doctor PEACHEY, 41, lean-jawed, long yellow hands, takes a pinch of snuff. Offers it to the policemen. No takers.

PEACHEY

(bracing himself)

Right.

He whips back the sheet. Bone blinks. Foley retches.

PEACHEY (CONT'D)

(whispered, horrified)

Lord...

Bone digs out his notebook. Foley stumbles up a rickety stairway. Above: a burst of laughter as the bar door swings opens, then shuts.

Peachey swallows, adjusts his gold-rimmed spectacles.

PEACHEY (CONT'D)

First impressions. Height and weight can only be estimated - partial remains. Right arm missing, significant tissue loss to thorax and abdomen. May I have a glass of water please?

Bone reaches for a cracked jug. Pours a glass.

PEACHEY (CONT'D)

(blunt, rattled)

Blunt force trauma to the head.
Bruising around the mouth and nose -
smothering. This was not a suicide -

He drains half the glass, hand trembling.

PEACHEY (CONT'D)

Has Foley warned the coroner d'you
know? Ante-mortem bruises around feet
and ankles. Post-mortem injuries from
being in the water - two, maybe three
days. Fish. Seagulls.

He swallows another gulp.

PEACHEY (CONT'D)

(flat)

She was killed on land. Dumped at sea.
Whoever did it tried to make it look
like a boat accident.

BONE

(calm)

So if the body resurfaced, it would
seem she caught a screw...sometime
after she "killed herself."

Peachey nods, indicating ligature marks.

PEACHEY

You can't hide these.

Bone leans in. Tweezers flash. He scrapes under a fingernail.
Something drops into his hand.

CLOSE ON a miniscule SILVER DROPLET running across his palm.

BONE

Quicksilver?

Sudden commotion from the stairway.

VITTORIA (O.C.)

Let me pass Foley, you have no right -

Vittoria hurries down the stairs. Bone steps in, blocking her
view of the body. Extends his hand.

BONE

Mrs Strafford. Detective Inspector
Bone.

33 EXT. PUB -- DAY -- MOMENTS LATER

33

The pub overlooks the seafront promenade - families stroll past, laughter snagged on the breeze.

Vittoria - small brandy in hand - stares toward the waves pounding the pebbled shore. Simple dress. Polished shoes. Black brooch at her throat. Bone rolls a cigarette, eyes flicking over her, weighing her silences.

VITTORIA

I found them in the union workhouse.
No parents. Easy prey.

She avoids meeting his eye, gulps her brandy.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

I thought they'd run away. Start a
life. Together.

The pub door swings open. Foley lurches out, flushed and careless. He palms Bone a folded document.

FOLEY

(low)
Coroner's report.

Bone pockets it without looking, eyes fixed on Vittoria.

BONE

Mrs Strafford -

VITTORIA

Vittoria, please.

Bone nods once.

BONE

I'd like to see the factory. Meet your
husband.

A flicker of wariness crosses her face.

VITTORIA

I was told by Superintendent Foley -
suicide's the likeliest cause.

Foley looks down, scratches his head; Bone's gaze is steady. Vittoria exhales sharply, distracted.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

What about Alice?

Bone and Foley trade a fleeting glance.

BONE

We'll know when we find her.

Vittoria stiffens, hides it with a smile.

VITTORIA

Of course. It's just - unexpected. We try so hard to make their lives... bearable. We feel responsible. It's a shock. Why would anyone want to kill them?

BONE

I intend to find out.

She buttons her coat, fast, eager to escape. She nods a goodbye before hurrying across the street and climbing into a trap. Their eyes meet - a flash of something - then she's gone in a clatter of hooves.

Bone digs out his notebook, writes, slow and deliberate. Foley leans in.

FOLEY

(mischievous)

Vittoria, eh?

Bone signals to a bar boy without looking up. Foley catches the signal and straightens. Rubs his hands together with a smile.

34 EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

34

We follow Bone as he wanders back to his digs. He pauses at a corner, gets his bearings, crosses a road.

35 EXT. NIGHT MARKET -- LATER

35

Oil-lamps, bunting, shadows. A steady hum of voices, gasps and chuckles, the clink of coins and the occasional sharp holler of a hawker. Bone shoulders through the crush of top hats and bonnets haggling beneath striped awnings.

Goods spill over in chaotic abundance: crates of apples, quinces, lemons, and oranges; precarious towers of second-hand books with cracked spines; and glittering baubles glinting on velvet cloths. He stops at the book-seller to browse.

36 EXT. NIGHT MARKET -- LATER

36

CHILDREN dart through the crowd, their laughter piercing the

din. A FIDDLER saws out a lively tune, his shadow leaping as pennies are tossed.

A FIDGETY MAN loiters outside an oyster and porter house, peddling from an open crate. A price is murmured; Bone nods, palms the bottle, and tucks it smoothly into his coat.

37 EXT. ALLEY -- LATER

37

Now we're somewhere quieter, darker. Two slight figures sidle up, one on each side, girls, no more than 14 years of age.

GIRL 1

Me and me sister could use a drink.

She slides her hand in his.

GIRL 2

(whispered)

Daddy, we could show you *such* a good time -

Bone shakes them off gently.

A SHADOWY FIGURE looms, menace in its stride. Bone shifts his jacket, revealing the baton. The figure freezes, then inches back. Bone starts forward, feigning pursuit. The figure and the children scatter, their shoes clattering on the cobbles.

GIRL 2 (O.C.)

Play with yourself then - *FREAK!*

Bone bites the cork from the bootleg, takes a long swig and continues on his way.

38 INT. BONE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

38

The half-full bottle rests on the bedside table - beside Foley's SCRAWLED REPORT.

Bone leans against a cheap headboard, roll-up drooping from his lips. He stares at the wall. Still. But his hands move - a silent rhythm - NEEDLES clicking, YARN drawing smooth.

Loop and twist. Loop and twist. Loop and twist...

Suddenly, the knitting stops. Thought complete. He stabs the needles into the ball of wool. Snuffs the light.

39 INT. TOWN HALL -- DAY

39

Serene oak-panelling, simple benches lining the wall,

portraits of paternal gentlemen and a polished parquet floor. A door BANGS open. People spill out from the inquest.

Bone sweeps a chilly look at two JOURNALISTS comparing notes. Another person shoves past, rushing for the exit.

BONE

Call it murder and the flies swarm.
Issue a statement - you're following
up on some promising leads.

FOLEY

I am?

BONE

Yes. Several.

Vittoria is surrounded by men with notebooks. Bone catches her eye and she points to the exit.

40 EXT. COASTAL ROAD -- DAY

40

AERIAL

Bright summer sunlight. A chalky bridleway runs very close to the edge of a coastal clifftop. Seabirds glide on the ocean breeze overhead. A cloud of dust rises in the distance.

MOVING

A pony and trap races along the bridleway.

INT. OPEN PONY AND TRAP - FAVOURING VITTORIA

Vittoria navigates the uneven ground. Bone sits nearest to the cliff's edge and has a dizzying view of the waves below. Vittoria catches a glimpse of his deadpan profile, flicks the reins.

41 EXT. FACTORY YARD -- DAY

41

The trap clatters into a cobbled yard with high walls. Vittoria jumps down, tethers the horse quick. Bone slides off, gaze ticking over the scene - wagons sagging under weight, workers moving fast, crates stacked high.

Two men break off from a delivery: PERCY Strafford, a short, stocky 25-year-old with permanent frown lines, and NICK, a 30-year-old foreman with long black hair and a face scarred by acne.

Bone's stare lingers, noting the fresh, dark bruise under Nick's eye. Percy glares back.

PERCY (O.C.)
 (calls out)
 We expected you hours ago. Coroner
 went on a bit, did he?

Bone just watches him. Vittoria steps in, voice light, but strained.

VITTORIA
 Percy. My son-in-law. This way.

Three women - DORA (21), MAGGIE (25), and LILY (24) - crouch on a stone step, stealing a break. They spring up as Vittoria and Bone approach, dipping their heads. Dora steps forward.

DORA
 Miss...is it true?

Vittoria's eyes confirm the worst. Maggie pales. Lily fingers the cross at her neck. A door SCREECHES open nearby.

MAGGIE
 (muttering)
 We're late -

Bone notes Vittoria's dismay as the women scramble away.

A battered cart RATTLES past, wheels shrieking against the cobbles. The DRIVER steals a glance, shifty, guilty. He snaps the reins hard. Bone's gaze locks on the cart. A tower of STRAFFORD & SONS crates wobbles precariously in the back. The cart lurches through the gates, dust kicking up in its wake.

BONE
 That your shipping service?

Vittoria laughs - brittle, too fast.

VITTORIA
 No! Paddle-steamer. We've a warehouse
 in the harbour.

Bone clocks the flicker of nerves. Files it. They move on.

42 INT. CORRIDOR -- MOMENT LATER

42

Tall windows overlook the factory floor. A steady HUM, broken by rapid CLICKING, WHIRRING, and blasts of STEAM, fills the air.

VITTORIA
 (raising her voice)
 Progress may improve productivity,
 but...

She taps her ears, smiles ruefully and opens a door.

43 INT. FACTORY FLOOR -- CONTINUOUS

43

Left: MEN mould felt hats with steam-heated presses.
 Right: WOMEN stitch brims at roaring sewing machines.
 Above: An IRON STAIRCASE leads to an office that looms over the floor.

Bone follows Vittoria, weaving through the noise and bustle. Women glance up from their work, giggling at the sight of him.

VITTORIA

Men aren't allowed on this side.
 You're quite the novelty.

They stop at a seamstress's station - wildflowers tucked by the machine. Bone looks to Vittoria. She nods, smile fading. Bone studies the space, silent. A YOUNG SEAMSTRESS (18) nearby sews through tears - barely holding on.

BONE

And Alice's?

Vittoria gestures discreetly to an empty workstation two rows over. Bone clocks the direct line of sight between them - his mind working fast.

EDWARD

They sit where they're told.

EDWARD STRAFFORD (50), is accustomed to control and exudes smooth confidence. He fixes Bone with a look - a beat too long.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

The London detective -

He extends a hand. Bone shakes it, polite but guarded.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

The man with a licence to pry.
 Vittoria, dear - help Percy find
 replacements for these stations, would
 you?

Edward smiles - hollow. He starts up the stairs. Bone lingers. A fallen flower. Bone crouches, reaches. Vittoria's hand is already there. He gives it to her. Their eyes meet.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Shall we?

Vittoria watches Bone follow. Then, she places the flower back on the workstation.

44 INT. OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

44

The room has floor-to-ceiling glass windows with a view over the entire factory floor. There's a large desk up one end and a committee table with eight chairs at the other.

A mock-up of a military hat lies on a centre table, surrounded by detailed scale drawings. Bone picks it up.

EDWARD

It's a prototype for our boys in the Crimea. The prince approved the design.

Edward takes the hat from Bone, places it back on the table.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

We also manufacture the hats worn by London policemen - I play golf with your Police Commissioner.

BONE

I don't play golf.

EDWARD

No. I didn't suppose you did.

Bone stands at the window. Edward joins him, working a strand of meat from his teeth with his tongue.

Below them, ELIZA (16) places a wildflower on the makeshift memorial. Bone notes her sunken eyes, pale skin, thin frame. She glances up - meets Bone's eye - then seeing Edward, drops her head and walks quickly back to her workstation.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Superstitious lot...

(beat)

We segregate. For obvious reasons. Here and in the living quarters.

BONE

They live here?

EDWARD

I've converted some outhouses into dormitories. They pay a minimal rent. I provide running water, a meat allowance. I balked at the initial outlay, but contented employees are more productive. Everyone's happy.

(flashes a smile)

They grow their own vegetables.

BONE

(dry)

Sounds idyllic.

Bone crosses the office, eyes on the factory floor. Edward lights a cigar, settling on the desk edge.

Three WORKERS man hissing steam presses. Damp wool felt shaped into domed hats, fast, precise, mechanical. In the chaos - heat, clatter - Nick argues with a foreman: ARTHUR (30s), stocky, bald, soaked in sweat. Nick jabs a finger. Arthur grabs it, twists. Nick yelps. Arthur leans in, growling something, tapping Nick's black eye. Then a laugh. Cold. Dismissive. Nick tears off, seething. Shoots Arthur a look - pure venom.

Arthur drops into his chair. Bone watches him slipping a corked bottle from a drawer, pouring clear liquid into a beaker. A quick swig and lick of the lips. Drawer shut. Smooth. Practised.

Bone turns. Edward exhales cigar smoke, smug.

BONE (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Are the salaries at Strafford & Sons...competitive?

Edward shifts in his chair, wary now.

EDWARD

I like to think so, Sixteen shillings a week for the men, eight for the women. What has this to do with -

BONE

Not a lot, is it?

Edward bristles, voice tightening.

EDWARD

I don't see that that's any concern of yours - is it now?

Bone steps closer to the desk, planting his hands on the edge - not aggressive, but pressing.

BONE

Mr Strafford, does quicksilver feature in your manufacturing process?

EDWARD

(frowning)

Quicksilver?

BONE

Yes, quicksilver - mercury.

EDWARD

I know what quicksilver is! Our pelts are dipped in a solution of hot mercuric nitrate and -

BONE

Would Violet have had access to it?

EDWARD

Certainly not. Why d'you ask? What in heaven's name could mercury - ?

BONE

I'd like to see where it's stored.

Edward grinds his cigar into the ashtray, shrugs on his coat and pushes through the door.

45 EXT. YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

45

Edward strides across the yard, Bone close behind. Two WORKERS doff their caps. Edward doesn't slow.

They round a cart stacked with STRAFFORD & SONS boxes. In the shadow beyond, Bone spots Percy gripping a YOUNG SEAMSTRESS by the arm, stroking her face. She twists, trying to pull free.

Bone locks eyes with Percy as he passes. Percy lets her go - smirking. The seamstress slips away.

46 EXT. DIPPER'S WORKSHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

46

Edward and Bone approach a ramshackle building wedged up against the factory wall. Bundles of rabbit and beaver pelt rot beside the door. Edward halts, pulling a handkerchief from his pocket. He glances at Bone.

EDWARD

Wait here. The fumes -

Bone's already covering his face with a handkerchief.

47 INT. DIPPER'S WORKSHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

47

Pelts sway on taut lines, dripping onto the stained floor. Two immense cast-iron vats dominate the space, their contents BUBBLING and HISSING. Tendrils of toxic vapor coil into the dim light.

Three hulking DIPPERS loom over the vats. One stirs the foul brew with a grotesquely oversized ladle, while the other two plunge slick animal skins into the churning mix.

They're clad in heavy canvas overalls and cracked leather boots. Their faces are obscured by green-tinted goggles, crude mouth guards and plugs jammed into their nostrils - a fusion of the grotesque and industrial. Other-worldly.

The dippers turn in unison as the door CREAKS open. Edward coughs and waves a hand, summoning one outside.

48 EXT. DIPPER'S WORKSHOP -- CONTINUOUS

48

BERT (55) steps out, pulling off his goggles and mouth guard to reveal a sweat-slick face marred by a rash. His hand trembles slightly.

EDWARD

Bert. Show me the chemicals.

Bert eyes Bone warily, sniffing before leading them to a crude metal lean-to. He yanks the doors open with a screech, revealing shelves of brown bottles labeled: 'MERCURY', 'NITRIC ACID' 'COPPER SULPHATE' etc.

BONE

(to Bert)

Nothing's been touched?

BERT

(shaking his head, grinning)

Not a thing, boss.

BONE

You're sure?

Bert cackles, revealing rotten teeth.

EDWARD

Thank you Bert.

Bert shuffles off.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Happy now?

BONE

(indicating the lean-to)

Shouldn't this be locked?

Edward is about to fire back a reply when a WORKER rushes up - breathless, cap crushed in his hands.

EDWARD

(tight)

Yes - what is it?

The worker leans in, whispers something fast and urgent.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
 (uneasy)
 There's... uh...a situation...

Edward hesitates, then decides.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
 You'd better come with me.

49 EXT. YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

49

A stony-faced Edward cuts across the still yard, Bone on his heels. Clusters of workers murmur, eyes fixed on an open doorway.

From within: a guttural WAIL, raw and primal. Edward's stride quickens, jaw tight.

Dora stumbles into view, her face drained of colour. She collides with Edward, trembling.

50 INT. WORKSHOP -- MOMENT LATER

50

A tight knot of onlookers - Percy, Vittoria, Nick, Lily, Maggie - clog the way. Eyes down, frozen with horror.

Arthur's on the floor. Thrashing, eyes wide, limbs jerking, spit glistening on his chin. Wet, ragged sounds claw from his throat.

Still, no one moves. Bone jolts into action - yanks off his belt, drops to his knees. A beat of hesitation. He purses his lips, then wedges the leather between Arthur's teeth.

BONE
 He might swallow his tongue. Hold his
 legs. Come on!

Percy shoves Nick forward. Edward jolts into action.

EDWARD
 Out! Everybody out -

The crowd barely stirs. Edward erupts.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
 I SAID OUT!

Reluctantly, the workers shuffle back, muttering. Dark eyes flick toward Arthur, unwilling to leave. Percy, Nick, and Vittoria hover nearby. Further off, Lily and Maggie cling together, rooted by fear.

Arthur's spasms peak - his body locks, then collapses in a boneless heap. Bone jabs two fingers to Arthur's neck. His face hardens. No pulse.

For a beat, Bone freezes - legs braced, mind racing. Then he slams a fist into Arthur's chest. Once. Twice. He leans in. Listens. Nothing. Working fast, Bone clears mucus from Arthur's mouth. He flicks a look at Vittoria - urgent, sharp.

BONE

Necktie - c'mon, c'mom, c'mon -

Vittoria rips off her silk scarf, hurling it. Bone catches it, rips it between his teeth, fashions a rough barrier. He plants his knees wide for leverage and plunges down for mouth-to-mouth.

EDWARD

(low, aghast)

What in god's name - ?

VITTORIA

(awed)

Look...

Arthur's chest jerks - then rises again. And again. Bone pulls back. Exhales - barely. Watches.

Arthur's eyes snap open - wild, searching. Land on Vittoria. She recoils, burying her face in Edward's shoulder. Arthur's gaze slides to Percy - narrow, fixed. Percy steps back, defensive.

PERCY

(nervous laugh)

What? Why are you looking at me?

The others shift - a ripple of unease. Bone straightens, tracking the silent exchanges. Percy's mouth twitches - something turns. Curdles.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Don't look at me like that! How dare you - !

EDWARD

PERCY!

Arthur coughs, shuddering - then slumps, out cold. Lily and Maggie trade a few sharp whispers, then melt into the shadows. Bone hovers a hand over Arthur's mouth, nose. Waits. Then slides his crumpled jacket under Arthur's head.

51 INT. CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

51

Bone and Nick haul Arthur's limp body - Bone on shoulders, Nick on legs. The body sways. Nick grins, blows hair from his face, keeps moving.

CHATTERING VOICES from the yard grow louder. Bone intercepts a glance between Edward and Percy.

VITTORIA (O.C.)

Edward, we need to get him to a doctor.

EDWARD

I know! I heard you the first time!

Edward rakes a shaky hand through his hair, his composure slipping. He steps to the door and hesitates, glancing back as if weighing options - before shoving it open.

52 EXT. YARD -- CONTINUOUS

52

Blinding sunlight. Bone squints instinctively. Workers huddle in tight nervous clusters, their murmurs a low, dissonant hum.

Bone's gaze tracks Lily, Maggie and Dora as they weave through the knots of people. Lily jabs a finger toward the workshop - an accusation. Maggie's hands cut the air as she talks. Faces tighten. Eyes dart to Edward, then to Percy.

Bone clocks Ted (30) and Frank (32), two foremen at the edge of the fray - restless, pacing. Ted wipes sweaty palms on his overalls. Frank scans the crowd, his jaw locked tight. More workers drift in, drawn by the swelling noise.

Edward steps forward, hands wide, palms out.

EDWARD

All right, everyone - calm down. He's fine. Arthur's fine. Back to work now.

Murmurs rise. Sharper now. Uneasy. Maggie stands planted, arms crossed, daring Edward to lie again.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Listen. I know it's been a hard week -

DORA

It's not right Mr Strafford -

Edward starts to respond - too slow.

MAGGIE

(low, dangerous)

Factory's cursed. First Violet, now Arthur. What are you going to do about it?

Bone's brow lifts. A smirk flickers - involuntary. *This is spiralling.*

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 (catching Lily's eye)
 We saw it. In there. Arthur's bewitched.

Bone's eyes snap to Edward. Back to the crowd. Workers shift.

EDWARD
 Nonsense! He's had a turn, that's all - he's inside, recovering.

LILY
 Bewitched - or...or...poisoned!

The crowd recoils. Bone sees Percy, whispering fast to Nick. Nick stiffens - peels off - disappears into the factory.

MAGGIE
 Violet's been murdered - and now Arthur's been poisoned - and -

Lily jumps in, nodding fast.

LILY
 And we don't know *who's* next -

MAGGIE
 (dark, rising)
 Oh God Lil. What if the murderer's *one of us?*

The crowd jolts. Bone tenses. His eyes search the yard, fast. *There.* He spots it.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 That's it, isn't it? The murderer's here - now - and...wait...Arthur eyed you like you was guilty -

EDWARD
 Don't be ridiculous. Why would I -

LILY
 (pointing)
 Not you, you -

Bone tracks Lily's accusatory finger - straight to Percy. Percy steps forward, face darkening. Vittoria holds him back.

Bone moves. Circles wide. Flanks the crowd - eyes locked on Percy.

EDWARD

No, no, no - listen - Arthur wasn't himself -

Nick reappears. Clubs in hand. He starts handing them out - Frank's eyes huge. Ted looks green. CLOSE ON Edward. Sweating. Cornered. Control gone. Nick raises his club.

MAGGIE

(furious)

Oh, it's like that, is it? High-and-mighty Straffords - always protecting their own.

(snarling)

Where's Alice?

(catching Percy's eye)

I know you Percy Strafford. What have you done to her?

The crowd surges. Angry voices. Jabbing fingers.

CROWD (OVERLAPPING)

Answer her! WHERE'S ALICE? What happened to Arthur?

Nick, Ted and Frank are shouting back, threatening. The clubs raised. The scene tilts toward violence - then -

A WHISTLE - A SHRILL, EAR-SPLITTING SHRIEK.

The crowd freezes. Heads turn. The whistling stops.

Bone stands on a delivery cart, pocketing a POLICEMAN'S WHISTLE. Calm as can be.

BONE

We haven't been introduced. Detective Inspector Bone. I'm here to catch Violet's killer - and find your Alice.

He steps down, slow, composed. Looks straight at Maggie. Flashes a crooked, charming smile.

BONE (CONT'D)

Arthur's not cursed. He's not poisoned. He has a rare medical condition. Been hiding it for years. He'll recover. In time.

The crowd wavers - tension loosening, but not gone. Bone lets the quiet stretch, then presses.

BONE (CONT'D)

I know emotions are high. You've lost someone. Another girl is missing. You want answers -

VOICE FROM THE CROWD (O.C.)

You're not wrong there mate.

The edge softens. Shoulders ease. Clubs lower. Bone sees it. Reads it. Frank fidgets, licking dry lips. Percy scowls. Maggie, Dora, Lily and others crane for a better look as the crowd parts. Bone steps through them - unhurried, unwavering.

BONE

You'll leave early today. Take the afternoon. Clear your heads.

EDWARD stiffens.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD (O.C.)

What about pay?

Tension snaps back. Bone swivels to Edward, head tilted, mock-curious. All eyes follow. Edward's fists tighten. Vittoria watches, braced.

EDWARD

Your wages will not be affected.

A collective exhale. Relief ripples through the throng. Percy is incandescent. He shoves past Vittoria.

PERCY

Father, you *can't*. We can't have *them...Father* -

Edward ignores him, his focus pinned on Bone. Bone looks back at him coolly. The workers peel away, muttering, casting curious glances at the stranger. Percy barrels toward Bone, Nick at his heel. A face-off.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Who the hell d'you think you are?

Bone spins on his heel.

53 INT. WORKSHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

53

Arthur's desk contains a corked bottle of clear liquid, a chipped mug, the usual desk clutter.

Bone scans the memos and orders, then picks up the mug with a handkerchief and sniffs it. He reaches further into the drawer. Frowns. Something's wedged at the back.

He pulls out a RUSSIAN NESTING DOLL, turns it in his hands, marvelling at the crude design. He twists and opens each doll in turn.

CLOSE ON the smallest doll, which when opened, contains a LOCK of strawberry blonde hair. Bone rubs the hair between his fingers thoughtfully, before replacing it inside the doll.

Vittoria enters, calm but still visibly shaken by events in the courtyard.

VITTORIA

God. What must you think of us...?

She perches on the edge of the desk watching Bone fit the dolls back together. She holds out her hand.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

May I?

BONE

Uh-uh. Evidence. Sorry.

She runs a trembling hand through her hair. Exhales. She watches the detective as he meticulously empties the drawer into the wastepaper basket, her gaze lingering over his profile.

VITTORIA

Arthur. Earlier.

(pointing to her lips)

Your...how did you -

BONE

Books.

She nods to herself.

VITTORIA

What makes you so sure he *wasn't* poisoned? A rare medical condition? Really? He's worked at the factory for years, we'd have known...

(pondering his silence)

You know, Detective Inspector Bone, you can be very...aloof.

He shifts slightly. She turns to go, then pivots back.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

We'd like to invite you to supper.

This evening. It was Edward's suggestion. Well?

Bone nods once.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

Good. King Edward Square - all the cabbies know it. Seven for seven-thirty.

(striding out)

He's been taken to the new infirmary. Arthur.

Bone reaches for his hip flask, takes a thoughtful swig, tightens the cap. He snatches the wastepaper basket containing Arthur's possessions. Hurries out.

54 EXT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

54

A HUM of bees. The newly-built Margate Infirmary faces the sea, nestled in a manicured garden.

Two Crimean War CASUALTIES sit on a bench, one missing a leg, the other an arm, both in red infantry uniforms. They watch Bone arrive with sober envy as the detective takes the entrance steps two at a time.

55 INT. ARTHUR'S ROOM -- NIGHT

55

Bone is slumped in a corner watching a NURSE change the saline drip. She turns and smiles before leaving. He yawns.

56 INT. ARTHUR'S ROOM -- LATER

56

Bone stirs in the dim light, pushing himself upright from the chair. He crosses the room and peers down at Arthur's ashen face. The door opens. Foley slips in quietly, shutting it behind him.

FOLEY

How is he?

Bone grabs the wastepaper basket stuffed with Arthur's belongings and thrusts it at Foley. Foley eyes the half-drained gin bottle poking out.

BONE

Don't be tempted. Get it tested.

Foley frowns, shakes the bottle, listening to the slosh. Bone's look lands. Foley sags.

BONE (CONT'D)

Press statement?

Foley exhales slowly, nods.

BONE (CONT'D)
Any sign of Alice?

FOLEY
No. No one's seen her. But there's
talk... a boyfriend or -

BONE
Violet and Alice were lovers.

Foley blinks, baffled.

BONE (CONT'D)
Forget it. Put a guard on this room.
One at the front. I want to know the
moment he wakes.

Bone glances at his fob watch. Snaps it shut.

BONE (CONT'D)
I'm late. Straffords for supper. I've
a mind to have a sniff around their
warehouse afterwards. Know it?

FOLEY
Know of it. My brother-in-law used to
work there...

BONE
Good. I'll meet you outside the Red
Lion. Midnight. We can practice our
breaking and entering. Game? Good man.

Bone leaves without waiting for an answer. Foley looks from
Arthur to the bottle. Tilts it. Watches the liquid cling to
the glass. He hisses after Bone.

FOLEY
Hey! You gonna tell me what the hell
happened, or am I supposed to guess?

No answer. Foley scrubs a hand through his thinning hair, the
wastebasket drooping in his grip.

57 EXT. STRAFFORD RESIDENCE -- NIGHT

57

Bone looks up at the impressive stucco-fronted mansion, draws
deeply on his roll-up, flicks it away. There's a black
brougham in the drive. A burly, knuckle-headed coachman -
let's call him GEORGE (50s) - sits hunched on top. His eyes
narrow.

BONE
Evening. Who you with?

There's a rustle. A rough-looking woman, EVA (30), squats on her haunches, urinating.

EVA
George don't speak. He's dumb or lost his tongue.
(cackles, witchy)
You must be the peeler they're all so excited about.

She thrusts out her hand, still balanced on her heels.

EVA (CONT'D)
How d'you do, Mr Peeler? I'd shake hands, but I'm otherwise engaged. Got a hanky?

She arches her eyebrow. Bone looks at her levelly.

EVA (CONT'D)
Not a gentleman then. How disappointing...

Bone ascends the stairs to the front door. Glancing back, he finds her sitting demurely in the footman's seat next to George.

58 INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

58

Bone shrugs off his coat and bowler. EDNA (19), a maid, takes them with a practiced dip of her head. From beyond a nearby door, bursts of laughter and quick chatter spill into the corridor, bright and discordant. Bone lingers, studying a LARGE PAINTING dominating the wall - The Crystal Palace. The colours are garish under the low light.

A rustle of silk. Bone turns his head - Vittoria sweeps toward him in a shimmer of formal evening dress. Her eyes flick over him - noting the unchanged clothes.

VITTORIA
(airily)
Hideous, isn't it? Edward and I met at the Great Exhibition...

She tucks an errant hair back into place with a precise movement, already steering Bone toward the...

59 INT. DRAWING ROOM -- MOMENT LATER

59

Five faces turn as Bone enters: Edward and Percy; ELEANOR (25), mousy, anxious; HASTINGS (50), florid, portly, a cigar clamped between sausage fingers; LADY HASTINGS (27),

glinting, restless, too young for him. All dressed for dinner, polished but brittle.

VITTORIA
 (to Bone)
 Eleanor, Percy's fiancée. Lord and
 Lady Hastings.

Bone's gaze lingers a beat on Lady Hastings - just long enough to catch her eyes skimming him with open interest.

LADY HASTINGS
 The hero of the hour.

Bone crosses to them, his handshake brisk, polite - clocking Edward's and Percy's tight scrutiny.

VITTORIA
 Brandy - yes?

Bone gives a small nod.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
 (deliberate)
 Percy, be a darling...

Percy scowls but moves stiffly to the drinks tray, shoulders rigid. Edward flashes his teeth.

EDWARD
 You must forgive Percy's antics this afternoon. He hates being upstaged when there's a drama.

BONE
 Is that a regular occurrence? Not your son's theatrics. This afternoon.

Edward smiles.

EDWARD
 (dry)
 No factory is immune.

HASTINGS
 More's the pity. Time was the worker knew his place. Nowadays, you have to show you care.

Hastings holds Bone's gaze. A test.

BONE
 Your workers' quarters. Mr Strafford had a lot to say about them...

Percy returns, thrusts a brandy at Bone a little too hard. Bone takes it, barely glancing at him.

HASTINGS

(leaning in)

The dormitory model will go national. A government contract. Not something to...unsettle, eh?

Bone doesn't react. Instead, he rolls a cigarette with deliberate slowness. A clot of cigar-ash tumbles - onto Hastings' pristine white jacket.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)

Dammit - !

He brushes at the stain. Lady Hastings giggles behind her hand.

LADY HASTINGS

(inaudible, excepting Vittoria)

How *delicious*.

VITTORIA

How are your investigations going?

(half-smiling, pointed)

Or can't you say?

Bone answers with the barest smile.

EDWARD

Come on man, you're among friends here. Why the interest in mercury?

A pause. Bone doesn't bite. But sees it - Percy's eyes narrow. Lady Hastings watches Bone with open curiosity.

LADY HASTINGS

I'm sure the Inspector has several lines of inquiry...

HASTINGS

Well. *I* have a theory.

Lady Hastings rolls her eyes. Vittoria moves to the window.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)

(undaunted)

Both girls have a sweetheart...but it's the same chap - get it?

(leaning in, animated)

Violet get's wise to his shenanigans - confronts him - there's a row - he kills her. Then runs off with the other girl - what's her name again?

VITTORIA
 (patiently)
 Alice. Just checking on cook -

Vittoria flashes Bone a quick, apologetic smile - a flicker of shared understanding - and slips out the door.

ELEANOR
 I thought she ended up in the sea?
 Hastings waves a hand, dismissive.

HASTINGS
 He's a fisherman! Or a smuggler! Or a
 randy Poseidon!

The room erupts in easy laughter, save for Percy, who glowers openly at Bone.

VITTORIA
 (overly bright, forced)
 Dinner!

60 INT. DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

60

Chairs scrape. Everyone settles. Percy plants himself opposite Bone, stiff-backed and watchful. Edward and Vittoria take the heads of the table, presiding.

Bone glances down, surveying the gleaming forest of cutlery - not confused, calculating. Sizing up the battlefield. Percy leans in, voice just loud enough to slice the air.

PERCY
 (smirk)
 Work your way in from the outside.

A few polite chuckles around the table. Bone doesn't rise to it. He simply unfolds his napkin with a slow, deliberate snap - a soldier preparing for ritual - then turns, smooth as glass, to Eleanor.

61 INT. DINING ROOM -- LATER

61

The meal winds down. Edward, flushed and careless, nearly fumbles his glass, spilling claret across the linen.

EDWARD
 (to the room)
 So what possessed you to become a
 detective?
 (grins at Hastings)

What is it they call you - copper? Raw lobster?

He turns back to Bone, mock-earnest.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

That *is* what they call you, isn't it?

Across the table, Hastings gnaws a peach, juice glistening on his chin. He flashes Edward a greasy smirk.

BONE

(even)

I'm interested in how people work - especially when they're at their worst.

(beat)

And the money. I used to labour. Law enforcement pays more. Gives me personal time.

PERCY

(acidly)

For reading books. Bettering yourself.

Silence cuts through the table. Lady Hastings smiles like a cat with a trapped bird. Bone dabs his mouth with his napkin, places it carefully beside his plate - controlled.

BONE

You've only got one go...best make the most of it.

Edward, emboldened, reaches for a peach.

EDWARD

Where did you grow up? What were your parents like?

(gesturing at Bone's birthmark)

And that - how'd you come by it? We're all *dying* to know.

Lady Hastings leans forward, greedy for gossip. Percy watches Bone, hungry for a slip. Vittoria stiffens.

VITTORIA

Edward, I really don't think this is -

EDWARD

I'm sure the detective can speak for himself.

VITTORIA

But, is this really - ?

Edward SLAPS the table - harder than he means to. A wine glass wobbles. He lunges, catches it - but his cuff drags through the spill. He freezes, flustered, raising his hands in clumsy apology. Percy sniggers behind his napkin.

BONE

London. St Giles. The slum.

All heads turn. Bone has quietly produced his battered notebook and a pencil. He flips to the last page, reading as he speaks - voice even, almost detached.

BONE (CONT'D)

Where I grew up. My mother worked in a blacking factory. Fifteen hours a day. Died. Cholera. Never knew my father. Grandmother raised me. Taught me my letters.

As Bone speaks, he writes - methodical, unbothered by the discomfort rippling around the table. Hastings exchanges a sly glance with Lady Hastings. Edward leans forward, smirking. He points at the notebook.

EDWARD

(mocking)

What's that?

Bone looks up slowly. His gaze, when it lands on Edward, is a blade - cold, sharp, and suddenly very present.

BONE

(flat)

Mr Strafford. Could you answer a few questions, please?

A beat of thick silence. Percy guffaws - the only one foolish enough to laugh.

EDWARD

(incredulous)

You can't be serious.

Bone's stare remains steady. Edward fidgets in his seat, seeking reassurance from the others.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

What? Here? Now?

HASTINGS

You're off duty!

BONE

(wearily)

I could insist you come to the station, but since we're sharing personal histories?

Stunned silence. Every eye glued to Bone.

HASTINGS
(tensely)
Perhaps the ladies should retire.

BONE
I'd prefer they stayed.

Bone consults his notebook, voice almost casual.

BONE (CONT'D)
Your first wife.
(finishes reading)
She financed your haberdashery expansion. Paid for the factory. That right?

Edward's face darkens. He grips the edge of the table, knuckles whitening.

BONE (CONT'D)
Was that a yes?

Bone - deadpan - leans slightly towards Lady Hastings.

BONE (CONT'D)
Did that look like a yes to you?

Lady Hastings stares, lost for words. Bone scribbles, unhurried.

BONE (CONT'D)
Lord Hastings.

Hastings shifts, uneasy, pours himself a brimming glass of wine.

BONE (CONT'D)
You and Mr Strafford - schoolfellows.
Business partners now. A *sleeping* partner, if I'm not mistaken -

HASTINGS
(defensive)
What of it man?

Edward breathes hard through his nose, clinging to the table.

BONE

You supply the London contacts.
Investment capital. You also lease out
your paddle steamer to Strafford &
Sons - shipping from Margate to
London. And abroad.

HASTINGS

Yes, yes - though what that has to do
with the murder of two trollops -

He breaks off, realising.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)

I meant one! You threw me - Edward,
this is intolerable!

Across the room, Vittoria's chair scrapes loudly as she rises
- the signal of the evening collapsing.

Bone calmly pockets his notebook, adjusts his cutlery with
meticulous precision, folds his napkin. Then leans toward
Percy - a ghost of a wink.

BONE

(low)

Good advice, that. Working your way in
from the outside.

62 EXT. RED LION -- NIGHT

62

The weather has turned foul. A man in black adjusts his
collar, shakes the wet off his bowler and stamps his feet.
Foley shambles up, carrying a bullseye oil lamp. Bone flicks
his cigarette away. Foley mutters to himself.

FOLEY

I don't know what time of day you call
this, but I should be at home. Curled
up with the Mrs...

63 EXT. WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

63

We're opposite the entrance of a tall, timber-framed harbour
warehouse. There are double doors at ground level and a
pulley system to hoist goods to the upper floor.

Bone tries the double doors, then gestures Foley to follow
him around the side of the building.

64 EXT. WAREHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

64

Bone uses his elbow to break a glass pane. Foley's horrified.

He unlatches the lock, opens the casement, climbs in. He grabs the lamp from Foley, leaving him in the dark. Completely.

65 INT. GROUND FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

65

Rain hammers the roof in relentless waves and shadows bounce and jive as Bone sweeps the lamp across the room.

Stacks of large plywood crates loom, each branded *STRAFFORD & SONS*. Nearby, we see neat piles of hat boxes and assorted hats ready for packing. Bone runs his fingers over a cargo box, calculating.

A shadow flits behind him, gone before it registers. He turns, scanning the room. Nothing. He moves to a staircase and ascends.

66 INT. FIRST FLOOR -- MOMENT LATER

66

Bone's lamp sweeps across a battered wall map of the Channel. His gaze sharpens, zeroing in on the clustered ports: London, Boulogne, Calais.

He plucks a leather ledger from a shelf and flips it open. Pages of freight schedules flutter past - a neat parade of dates, times, destinations.

CLOSE ON the entries - the camera picks out irregular patterns: departures just minutes apart, arrival times that don't line up. Bone's brow furrows. He leans closer, the tip of his pencil hesitating before jotting quick notes into his notebook.

A faint SCRATCH breaks the silence. The lamp swings toward the noise: a BLACK CAT glares at him, a mouse squirming beneath its paw. Bone turns back to the ledger.

67 INT. SECOND FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

67

A heavy padlock bars access to the top floor. Undaunted, Bone crosses to the double doors and shoves them open. The rain lashes against the black, oily harbour below. A steam crane looms by the dock, silhouetted in the storm.

BLACK CAT'S POV

Leaning out, Bone squints up at the hoist. He attaches the bullseye to his belt, grasps the slippery rope, jumps out and s-wraps upwards. The rope is slick with wet, making the climb difficult.

A flicker of motion - he catches sight of the black cat perched nearby, its eyes gleaming.

BONE
(through gritted teeth)
What are you staring at?

The crane lurches violently, swinging him out over a 100-foot drop. Bone dangles precariously, his body twisting in the storm. With a grunt, he shifts his weight, forcing the crane back toward the wall.

68 INT. TOP FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

68

The double doors burst open - Bone swings in, soaked and gasping. He pulls a handkerchief from his pocket and dries his face and hands.

His bullseye sweeps the cramped room: more cargo chests stacked like tombs. A crowbar leans against the wall. He grabs it and pries open the lid off a chest. Shines the light in.

69 EXT. WAREHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

69

Bone tosses a BOTTLE toward Foley - a lazy, underhanded arc. Foley fumbles it, barely catching it against his chest.

BONE
This one you can have.

Foley squints at the torn label.

FOLEY (O.C.)
(chuckling)
How many?

A faint RUSTLE in the gloom. From the darkness, Percy's foreman, Nick, steps into view - slow, deliberate. His glacial eyes cut across the harbour, tracking the retreating policemen.

70 INT. BONE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

70

Bone stares into the middle distance, working the clues as his fingers loop and twist, loop and twist...

A SCRATCH. His hands still. He sets the knitting aside, crosses to the window. Opens it. The black cat slinks inside, leaping onto the bed like it owns the place. It stares at him, unblinking. Bone stares back.

71 INT. BONE'S BATHROOM -- DAY

71

Bone, stripped to the waist, drags a cut-throat razor across his jaw. The chipped mirror wobbles as he leans in - studying his reflection.

KNOCK. Sharp. Urgent. Bone pauses - blade hovering at his throat.

72 INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

72

BONE (O.C.)
It's open. Who is it?

VITTORIA'S POV - her hand hesitates, then turns the handle. She cracks the door.

VITTORIA
Vittoria Strafford.

She stays at the threshold. Sees the half-empty bottle of brandy. An ashtray brimming with cigarette butts. A dog-eared book, spine cracked wide. She nudges the door wider - glimpses into the bathroom.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
Passing your door. I've been at the church. Arranging Violet's funeral...

She catches Bone just as he yanks on a fresh shirt - too fast, awkward. His back stiffens. A flash of surprise. Embarrassment. He doesn't turn. She lowers her eyes. Takes a step back. Footsteps - deliberate, quick. Bone strides into view.

He opens the door wider. Meets her gaze. Awkward pause. Then steps aside, gesturing her in.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
You've not seen the workers' dormitories - and given your reservations, I thought you should.

The cat slips past - tail high, brushing her calf - Vittoria startles as it purrs, weaving between her legs.

73 EXT. DORMITORIES -- DAY

73

The trap halts before a sprawling brick building, framed by trees and meadows. Birds trill. Bees hum. A stream whispers in the distance. Bone's gaze lingers on patchwork gardens - damp earth steaming under summer sun.

Vittoria dismounts. Opens a door marked: WOMEN ONLY. Starts up the stairs. Bone hesitates at the threshold.

VITTORIA (O.C.)
Should be empty.

74 INT. DORMITORY - MOMENTS LATER

74

Rows of neatly made beds under tall windows. Light spills across polished floors. Dust hangs in the air. A pot-belly stove. A worn table. On it - a chipped vase of wildflowers, a tarnished hand mirror.

VITTORIA
The men are below us. Separate entrance.

She coughs - light, practiced. Runs a hand through her hair. Not quite unconscious.

Bone walks the aisle, fingers brushing iron bedframes - slow. Evaluating. But distracted. He stops at a stripped bed. A simple bouquet rests on the mattress. He opens the drawer. Empty.

BONE
Which is Alice's?

VITTORIA
I'm afraid I have no idea.

She watches him. Pleasant. Still. But her eyes track him carefully. Bone picks up a toiletry bottle. Turns it once, then sets it down.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
The PM believes it's the future of British factories. Which is why -

BONE
A government contract. I know.
(his eyes sweep the room)
A community of equals.

VITTORIA
Exactly. They take turns cooking, cleaning, gardening. There's a rota. They look out for each other -

BONE
(dry)
Yes. I saw that yesterday.

He steps closer.

BONE (CONT'D)

Some might call it a recipe for disaster. Housing single women so close to single men. Scandalous even.

VITTORIA

Is it fair to bind unmarried women to their families? Shouldn't they have independence? Work?

She speaks with conviction. But there's something behind it - a flicker of amusement. Or calculation.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

This gives them a way out.

BONE

It's certainly progressive. How do you stop them...coming together?

VITTORIA

I'm sorry?

Their eyes lock. Tension thick.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

The older women police the girls. The same with the men and boys.

He steps slightly closer. Not too close. Just enough.

BONE

Let me see your hand.

VITTORIA

(mildly)

What?

He takes it - uninvited. Deliberate. She allows it. Her expression neutral - or masked.

CLOSE ON their hands. Bone brushes his thumb across her skin. Once.

BONE

You've been bitten. Don't scratch it.

He lets go. Steps back. Turns and walks out. She watches him go. Expression unreadable.

75 EXT. DORMITORIES -- MOMENTS LATER

75

Bone stands alone, smoking. His shoulders taut, eyes scanning the surroundings. Beyond a beaten field, a ragged stone wall, choked in ivy and bramble snags his eye.

BONE

What's that?

VITTORIA (O.C.)

Something from the chalk mines. The site's riddled with old shafts - cheap land for a factory.

Bone looks down. Stamps the ground beneath his heel - as if testing something that might give way.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

(chuckling)

Don't worry - we've found them all.

Bone doesn't smile. His gaze strays - past the wall, toward a distant hedgerow. He squints. Lingers. Lost in thought.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

You still think Alice is alive. I could help. Why won't you let me?

BONE

Your husband wouldn't approve.

VITTORIA

(lightly)

He's away. London, then the continent. His usual rounds. Visiting clients.

BONE

With Hastings.

A flicker - Vittoria looks away.

BONE (CONT'D)

I need to go.

He drops his cigarette. Stamps it out sharply, as if to seal off something. Turns.

VITTORIA

He's written to the Police Commissioner. Says you're acting improperly - no regard for process.
(softer)
Above your station.

Bone stops, mid-stride. Back still to her.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

He's furious. Wants you off the case.

She steps forward - smooth, deliberate - and produces a sealed envelope from her coat. Holds it up. A moment of silence, charged.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

He wanted to telegraph. I persuaded him to write. Ink and paper carries more weight, don't you think?

Bone turns back. Reaches for the letter. She pulls it back, just out of reach. A sly smile touches her lips.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

(shakes her head, mimicking)

Uh-uh. Evidence.

(shrugs, sweetly)

Sorry.

She slips by him.

76 EXT. TREELINE -- DAY

76

ALICE'S POV - Hidden in shadow. Breath shallow. Eyes locked.

Vittoria untethers the horse before climbing into the seat beside Bone. A flick of the reins. The trap rolls out.

77 EXT. GRAVEYARD -- DAY

77

Spitting rain. Grey light. Still air. Two GRAVE DIGGERS rest on their spades - waiting, watching. A shabby priest intones the service. Bone stands just beyond the mourners. Alone. Rain streaks his coat.

The mourners cluster tight: Vittoria, Percy, Eliza, Dora, Lily, Maggie, Frank, scattered WORKERS. Heads bowed. Faces unreadable.

Bone begins to move. Slow. Deliberate. Circling. Each face - a silent question. He passes Percy, Eliza, Frank. Then - Vittoria. She feels it. Glances up. One look. Everything unsaid. A flicker in Percy's gaze - he sees it. Vittoria turns away. Bone keeps walking.

78 EXT. GRAVESIDE -- MOMENTS LATER

78

Eliza lingers by Violet's grave, her gaze darting between drunken headstones and black, dripping yews. Bone approaches. She dodges his glance and stumbles away. His eyes sweep the graveyard, narrowing. Foley shuffles up, sneezing into a handkerchief.

FOLEY

You were right - sodium cyanide.

Foley shivers, glancing at the clearing sky.

FOLEY (CONT'D)

I've been thinking. About the bootleg brandy in the warehouse. If Violet and Alice uncovered a major smuggling ring, that's motive enough to silence them. Maybe they told Arthur, maybe -

Mourners drift away, black coats swallowed by gray mist. Bone stands still, eyes locked on their backs. Sharp. Searching. His gaze halts. One figure hasn't moved. Percy. Watching him. Bone's eyes narrow.

BONE

Where's the other foreman?

FOLEY

What?

BONE

(harder)

The one with the shiner - Percy Strafford's man. He locked horns with Arthur at the factory...

Percy's lips curl into a slow, taunting smirk. A quiet, loaded challenge.

BONE (CONT'D)

(dead calm)

You did put a guard on Arthur's room...right?

Foley turns - alarm flashing in his eyes.

79 EXT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

79

Nick saunters toward the entrance holding a bouquet of flowers. He stops and holds a door open for a NURSE, offering a glint of teeth. He brushes a strand of hair from his face.

80 EXT. STREET -- DAY

80

Bone barrels down the pavement, dodging pedestrians, eyes darting, trying to get his bearings.

INTERCUT NICK/BONE

NICK

Asks a YOUNG INTERN for directions. The intern gestures upstairs. Nick smiles, then, as the intern walks off, his expression hardens. His eyes focus on a door marked STAFF ONLY.

BONE

Shoulders through holiday crowds. He passes a PUNCH & JUDY kiosk. Children roar with LAUGHTER. He vaults a balustrade and dashes across a busy road.

NICK

Stuffs the flowers in a bin.

BONE

Is forced to wait as an ELDERLY MAN in a WHEELCHAIR inches through the hospital entrance double doors.

NICK

Moves cat-like down a deserted hallway.

BONE

Bounds up a stairway, two at a time. Slows. A GUARD sits outside Arthur's room, legs crossed, lost in his newspaper.

Bone glances through the small window: Arthur is motionless. A NURSE adjusts a saline drip. Calm. Ordinary. Bone exhales, steadying.

GUARD

Alright?

BONE

Yeah. Anyone been in?

GUARD

Nah. Just nurses. They reckon he's on the mend...

The guard rustles his paper. Bone's shoulders ease a fraction. A young intern passes, yawning.

YOUNG INTERN

He find you?

(nods toward Arthur)

His brother. Asked for directions.

BONE

When?

YOUNG INTERN

Just now. Ground floor.

BONE

Black hair? Thin?

YOUNG INTERN

Yeah. Sorry, I didn't think -

BONE

(to Guard)

Stay here. No one gets in. Nobody.

The intern hurries off as Foley appears - sweaty, breathless, rattled.

BONE (CONT'D)

(urgent)

I think our man's here. And he knows where to find Arthur -

Foley's mouth opens, but Bone is already moving down the corridor, tense, scanning.

BONE (O.C.)

No time. Cover the entrance. Long black hair. Pale.

Foley shakes his head, exasperated, does a three-sixty.

Two JUNIOR DOCTORS stroll pass, chuckling at a private joke.

81 INT. CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

81

A NURSE exits Arthur's room, tray in hand. Calm. Precise. She passes the guard chatting with a DOCTOR. As she tucks a black curl under her cap -

The Doctor stops mid-sentence. Stiffens. He turns -

Brushes past the guard into Arthur's room.

JUNIOR DOCTOR (O.C.)

Help! I need help! Nurse!

She doesn't break stride. Doesn't look back. Reaches a door: STAFF ONLY. Slips inside. Behind her -

Bone spins - and a flash of skirt vanishes through the STAFF door.

82 INT. SERVICE ENTRANCE -- MOMENT LATER

82

A nurse's uniform, cap, and tray - dumped in a heap. A broom jammed tight in the door handle. FOOTSTEPS thunder down the stairs.

Bone SLAMS the door open. Kicks the broom aside. Spots the pile - and takes off down the stairs.

83 INT. LOBBY -- DAY

83

Nick bursts from a STAFF ONLY doorway, striding fast across the foyer toward the exit.

FOLEY

(stepping in, casual)

Hold on, chum, I need a word -

WHAM! Nick slams into him, knocking him clean off his feet without breaking stride.

84 EXT. HOSPITAL -- MOMENT LATER

84

Bone explodes through the double doors. Stops. Scans the garden. *There* - a figure scaling a hoarding panel. Bone takes off after him.

85 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE -- MOMENT LATER

85

NICK

Scrambles over a stack of sleepers.

BONE

Lands hard behind him - grunts - then vaults the pile.

NICK

Cuts right - fast. Slides feet-first into a pipe ditch.

BONE

Dives in after him. Eyes snap up - Nick is climbing a ladder.

NICK

Yanks the ladder up - out of reach.

BONE

Spins - trapped. A chunk of concrete SLAMS into the wall beside his head. He ducks - ZING! Another missile glances off a pipe, showering sparks. He looks up -

NICK

Glares down. Their eyes lock. Both men panting, seething.

BONE

Grabs two rail anchors. Drives them into the wall - hauls himself up - grits his teeth - and powers over the trench lip.

86 INT. FUNICULAR FOYER -- MOMENT LATER

86

NICK

Barrels into a scaffold tower. Paint pots and brushes CRASH to the floor. Three decorators stagger back in alarm. Nick barely notices -

Vaults a red sign: DANGER - ENTRY FORBIDDEN and leaps through the air.

Grabs the cliff-face rails with both hands. Starts to climb the sleepers like the rungs of a ladder -

BONE

Vaults the barrier - does the jump without breaking stride - barely makes it.

His hand slips - he dangles for a breathless moment - then scrambles, fingers clawing for the rail.

NICK

(above)

Wedges a stone loose from the cliff face. He glances down - calculated, cold.

BONE

Flattens against the sleepers -

CLANG! The stone ricochets off a rail, inches from his head.

NICK

Smiles. Grim. This is a game - and he's winning.

BONE

Grunts. Grabs for the next rung - he won't stop.

NICK

Grasps the haul cable - swings in under the car, vanishing into the shadowy underbelly.

BONE

Looks up -

Gone. His quarry has disappeared.

NICK

Hauls himself silently onto the -

87 EXT. TOP PLATFORM -- MOMENT LATER

87

An iron undercarriage rests on the rails - the cliff-top car, mid-construction. Nick inspects the newly rigged cable and pulley. The counterweight. Smiles to himself.

BONE

CLANG. CLANG. CLANG.

Metal strikes metal. The rails shudder. Above, the half-finished car jerks forward.

Bone's eyes snap up - it's directly above him.

He quickens his pace.

CLANG. CLANG. CLANG.

Louder. Faster. The structure groans.

Then -

SCREECH!

The car breaks loose, thundering down the rails. And from below -

Something else - smaller, faster - streaks toward him.

No time.

Bone throws himself sideways - releases the rail and LEAPS -

SLAMS onto the roof of the ascending car.

CRUNCH! It collides with the cliff-top platform. Bone is flung -

- airborne -

- lands hard, tumbling across the gravel, crashing into a ticket kiosk.

CRASH! Below, the partner car smashes into the base station - a shriek of splintering wood and twisted steel.

88 EXT. TOP PLATFORM -- CONTINUOUS

88

The platform TREMBLES.

Nick stares at the carnage below - a tangled wreck where the car once stood. Workers slowly converge, dazed.

He turns. Bone stands before him. Blood streaks his face. Baton in hand.

Nick feels the weight of the winch in his hand. Considers.

BONE

Really? Haven't we done enough damage
for one day?

The platform lurches. Both men stagger. Nick stumbles toward the edge. Bone steps back, steady.

A SHRILL SCREECH. The metal beneath them GROANS. The structure tilts.

Glass and debris rain down on Nick as he scrambles, legs dangling over open air. He looks up. Meets Bone's eyes - just for a second.

Then - the cantilever SNAPS.

The platform gives way -

CRASHES to the ground in a roaring cloud of steel and dust.

89 EXT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

89

Chaos. The once-trim lawn now a triage field. Nurses kneel beside stretchers. Blood on blankets. Three bodies under sheets.

Bone pushes through the frenzy, pressing a bloodied handkerchief to the gash above his brow. Foley stands near the entrance, unsteady, hand to the back of his head. Bone approaches. Foley jabs a thumb at the hospital.

FOLEY

That foreman - Arthur - he's dead.

BONE

(flat)
So's his killer.

FOLEY

(seething)
And? Got a name - or is that too much
trouble?

A flicker of surprise - then something like approval in Bone's eyes.

BONE

Nick. Percy Strafford's foreman.
Arthur survived the poisoning. So Nick
had to finish him off.

Foley's face hardens.

FOLEY

(flaring)

No more waiting. Gut the warehouse.
Arrest Edward and Percy Strafford.

(voice rising)

This is Margate for God's sake. We
don't do murder here. We do sand, sea,
slap and tickle -

BONE

(level)

It's too soon. We don't know *why*
Arthur was killed.

FOLEY

To shut him up. Same as Violet -

BONE

Two murders - maybe three - for
brandy? Here?

FOLEY

If it jeopardizes a government
contract? Wipes out your "legitimate"
business? No question.

Bone holds his gaze - respect flickering in his look now.

BONE

(deciding)

I'm returning to London. A few days.
Maybe longer.

He turns. Stops. Looks back.

BONE (CONT'D)

Find Alice.

Foley's eyes track the detective as he walks away, then he
clenches his fists. Screams. Silently.

A trap barrels in, scattering gravel. Percy reins in the
horse, Vittoria beside him, pale, eyes narrowed - scanning
the injured and the dead. Foley's head drops.

FOLEY

(under his breath)

Fuuuuuck.

90 INT. BONE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

90

SHARP KNOCK.

Bone opens the door. Vittoria steps in fast - too fast. Her breath high in her chest. Eyes bright, unsettled.

He closes the door behind her. She turns - freezes. Sees the cut above his eye. The half-packed canvas bag. Her gaze snags on the knitting. The needles. The navy-blue yarn. She picks it up. Turns it in her hands. Touch slow. Distracted.

VITTORIA
(brows knit)
I thought maybe...

She trails off. Still holding the yarn. Lifts her head.

Bone steps close, peels the yarn from her fingers, lets it fall. His hands find hers - cradling, tracing. Slow, deliberate. His fingers stroke her knuckles, the soft web between each finger. An intimate map.

He lifts a hand to her cheek. She leans into his touch, eyes fluttering shut.

Bone stills.

A knitting needle presses against his throat.

Vittoria's smile is slow. Dangerous. Bone tilts his head back as she applies pressure. Their eyes lock.

Without a word, he very slowly sinks to his knees, sliding down the length of her body. She watches, unmoved - then releases the needle. It clatters to the floor.

She slowly lifts the hem of her black dress. Laced boots. Stockings.

CLOSE ON Vittoria's face - lips parted, head tilted back.

The black cat's eyes gleam in the shadows. It slips soundlessly out the window.

91 INT. BONE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

91

Moonlight spills through the open window, silvering the bare floorboards. A candle gutters on the nightstand, its flame bowing in the draft.

Bone lies on his back, eyes on the cracked ceiling. A roll-up burns slow at his lip - he draws in, silent. Beside him, Vittoria rests, her head tucked into the crook of his arm. Still. Breathing with him.

BONE

Italy. Why did you leave?

VITTORIA

I'm from Calabria. The south.
Beautiful. Backward. Brutal. Very
poor. Not like London.

Bone exhales. A thin line that fades before it reaches the ceiling.

BONE

More sun.

VITTORIA

My father broke his back on land that
wasn't his. My mother scrubbed
strangers' clothes.

Bone shifts. Not much. Just enough. He taps ash into the basin beside the bed, eyes on the window.

BONE

You wanted out.

VITTORIA

(quietly)
Wouldn't you?

A pause. Her gaze rises. Catches something in him. He looks away before it forms.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

The hardest part is deciding. After
that -

He grinds the roll-up into the basin. The ash smears.

BONE

Your parents?

A small shake of her head. Controlled.

VITTORIA

Another drought. They begged the
landowner for water. He sent men with
guns. Paid off the courts.
(voice raw)
It's how it works. Justice.
Everywhere. Always has.

Bone watches the candle. The wax runs.

BONE

How did you get out?

VITTORIA

A boy loved me. We went North.

She smiles. Tight.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

And now I'm the wife of a rich factory owner. I'm sure you see the irony.

She watches him. Testing. Seeing what lands.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

Edward has his faults. But he asks little of me. When I speak up for the workers - he listens. He acts. He values my voice.

Bone's face is unreadable - except for the faint tension around his mouth.

BONE

The dormitories. They were your idea?

Vittoria leans closer, her hair brushing his throat. She presses her lips to his - soft, deliberate. Her hand slips beneath the covers.

VITTORIA

(whispers)

What do you think?

The candle stutters.

92 INT. BONE'S BEDROOM - LATER

92

Vittoria sleeps, breath warm against his chest. Bone lies wide-eyed. Still.

The candle gutters - wax pooled, flame gone. Moonlight spills across the FOB WATCH and OPEN NOTEBOOK on the bedside table - paddle-steamer times, scribbled notes.

Bone eases out from under her. Careful. Quiet. He sits at the edge of the bed - elbows on knees, head low.

A roll-up flares at his lips. His fingers tremble as he lights it. He picks up the watch, turns it toward the moonlight. Draws in smoke. Holds it. Thinking.

93 INT. BONE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

93

SOFT CLICK. The door shuts.

Vittoria's eyes snap open. She bolts upright, still for a beat, listening. Nothing. She moves to the window, careful, silent. Parts the curtain with two fingers.

VITTORIA'S POV - STREET BELOW

A ragged cloud peels from the moon. Bone slips into the mist, moving away from the pub.

Vittoria presses her palm flat to the glass - then pulls it back, leaving a fogged print. She watches him go, her face unreadable. Her hand curls into a fist at her side.

She lets the curtain fall. Turns her back to the window - and stands there, motionless in the dark.

94 EXT. HARBOUR -- NIGHT

94

A PADDLE-STEAMER looms - a hulking, riveted beast. It scrapes against the dock, metal shrieking on soaked oak.

The paddle wheel churns the oily black water, coughing up froth and filth. A towering funnel belches gas and blood-red embers into the night.

CREWMEN move fast, silent. Bow and stern lines snap tight. The gangplank clatters down. Crates - *STRAFFORD & SONS* - are muscled ashore in a rough, relentless chain.

A SHADOW flickers among them. Bone, in stolen dockhand clothes, cap yanked low, blends into the flow. His breath shallow, his gaze sharp. He lets a crate-laden crewman stagger past, stepping aside, timing his move. Up the gangplank - two steps behind the next man.

Once aboard, he melts into the shadows.

95 EXT. DECK -- MOMENT LATER

95

Winches groan as crates rise to the warehouse's top floor. Lighter boxes flow below into the steamer's yawning hold - a practiced, mechanical rhythm.

A CREAK. The helm door swings wide. The CAPTAIN (40s, unshaven, battered by years at sea) strides out, cigar clenched in his teeth. His boots thud down the gangplank.

Percy slips from the warehouse, an envelope clutched tight. He offers it up. The Captain barely glances before pocketing it - transaction complete. The Captain whistles - two sharp notes. *Wrap it up.*

Percy lingers, scanning the crew as they hustle cargo aboard. A final nod to himself, then he vanishes inside.

Bone watches from the shadows. The steamer shudders - engines coughing to life.

96 EXT. LONDON DOCK -- NIGHT

96

Bone jerks awake. The hull churns as the ship slows. Two crewmen jump ashore, dragging thick lines onto iron cleats. Sick yellow gaslight drips over the quay.

Warehouses loom, black and hollow. The gangplank rattles as the Captain goes ashore. A brougham waits, horses stamping nervously. George sits like a statue on the driver's perch.

Hastings climbs out of the cab, wrapped in a thick overcoat. He mutters something to the Captain, who nods and returns on board with George at his heels.

Another carriage rattles up. Eva pulls the reins, cigarette burning between her fingers. Her eyes catch Hastings and hold.

EVA

Here we are, loves. Quick now - one at a time.

The cab door squeaks opens. SALLY (12) emerges, bleary-eyed. She hesitates at the sight of Hastings, then cautiously approaches.

He examines her hands, then gestures for her to open her mouth. He peers in.

HASTINGS

Name?

SALLY

Sally, sir.

HASTINGS

Lady's maid, is it?

SALLY

Yes, sir.

Hastings flashes pearly teeth then waves Sally toward the gangplank. George grunts, scoops her up, and disappears into the hold.

HASTINGS (O.C.)

Next!

Another groggy CHILD drops from the cab.

The captain leans on the railing above. Yawns. Eva, cigarette between her lips, leans back and sends a plume of smoke heavenward.

INTERCUT BETWEEN BONE AND GEORGE

BONE

Slithers toward the cargo hatch. Peers inside.

GEORGE

Clamps a handkerchief over Sally's mouth. She thrashes, then goes limp.

BONE

Flinches, watching George fold her into one of six crates marked *PARIS*. A small brown bottle gleams in George's hand. Bone retreats to the shadows.

HASTINGS (O.C.)

Next!

The gangplank rattles.

GEORGE

Reaches up for the second child.

BONE

Glances toward the helm -

A SHARP CRACK. Darkness swallows him.

97 EXT. DECK -- DAY

97

The steamer churns through open water.

BONE'S POV - blinding sun. A nauseous sway.

CLOSE ON Bone's blood-smeared face, his right eye gashed and leaking. He blinks, dazed. Rope bites into his chest, wrists, ankles - he's lashed to an iron bollard. He strains to move - no give.

A looming SHADOW crosses him. Bone tilts his head. George, smug, towering.

HASTINGS

(cheerful)

Thought about tying you to the anchor.

Eva's cackle cuts through the slap of water against hull.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
But where's the fun in that?

Bone's gaze drops - the ropes around his waist snake out across the deck, taut toward the railings. His breathing hitches.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
Worked it out yet?

Bone squints up. Hastings steps closer, a grin splitting his face.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
Oh, right. You can't see.

Fingers trail across Bone's bleeding eye, slow, mocking. Hastings smears the blood on Bone's shirt, then - without looking - takes a handkerchief from Eva and wipes his hands.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
Keelhauling.
(reading Bone)
You've heard of it. Bookworm.

Bone writhes against the ropes - gestures, desperate. Hastings motions. Eva rips off the gag.

BONE
'Kielhalen'

HASTINGS
What?

BONE
Dutch. You're saying it wrong. Is that how you killed Violet and Alice?

A stillness. Then Hastings leans in, mock-sombre.

HASTINGS
You really are touched.

Eva laughs, shrill and mean. Bone tips his head back into the brutal sun. His cracked lips twitch toward a grim smile.

BONE
I'm guessing the children are headed for a Parisian brothel.

Hastings signals. Two weathered CREWMEN step forward.

HASTINGS
You guess correct. 'Gentleman's Relish' commands an exorbitant price. The

pleasure of a ten-year-old? Twenty-five guineas. Give or take.

Bone spits blood at his feet.

BONE
You disgust me.

The crewmen seize the slack rope binding Bone, yank it taut.

HASTINGS
Yes, well, the feeling's mutual.

Bone strains against the rope.

BONE
How many? How many children?

HASTINGS
(cheerful)
Depends. London's awash with brats this time of year. Business is booming.

The captain hauls Bone upright, shoves him toward the rail. Bone stumbles, skids across the deck - George yanks him back to his feet.

BONE
Are the Straffords involved?

A pause. Hastings' smile sharpens.

HASTINGS
I'm in haulage. Strafford & Sons are one of many respectable clients.
(barks a laugh)
We're all part of the success story that comes with Empire and ruling the waves. God bless her majesty!

George hoists Bone over the railing. Below -

BONE'S POV: the sea, blurred and rushing past.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
Not too quick George. Enjoy it.

Hastings closes his eyes to savour the moment. Smiles. Nods once.

George shoves Bone overboard.

98 EXT. KEEL -- MOMENT LATER

98

The steamer roars ahead. Bone, tethered, is yanked toward the spinning, massive paddle wheel.

BONE'S POV - the blades whip closer - inches from slicing him apart.

A savage jerk to starboard -

Bone's back slams into the ship's barnacle-crusting hull. Blood blooms in the water. He's dragged slowly along the keel. Pulled from port toward starboard.

INTERCUT - DECK AND KEEL

Above, the two CREWMEN stagger backward, dragging the rope across the deck. Boots scraping wood.

Eva flits madly between rails, shrieking and laughing. George slaps his thighs, hooting. Hastings steps forward, annoyed.

HASTINGS

Slow it down lads!

KEEL

Bone, wrists lashed, rubs the rope furiously against the barnacles. Flesh tears. Blood clouds the water. The rope begins to fray - strand by strand.

DECK

The crewmen skid to the port rail, rope groaning under Bone's weight. Eva leans excitedly over the starboard side.

EVA

He's here! He's here!

A heavy swell rocks the ship. George and the Captain lurch forward, grabbing Bone's lacerated body as it breaks the surface - coughing, gasping. Together they heave him onto the deck. Bone hits the planks with a sodden *WHUMP*.

HASTINGS

(grinning)

Good to have you back, Bone. But we're not done yet, are we? AGAIN!

The Captain signals. The crewmen grab the rope - haul.

Bone, barely conscious, slides helplessly across the slick deck - *SLAM* - into the port railings. A twitch from his hand. A weak plea.

George chuckles, lifts him like a sack, and tosses him overboard.

KEEL

Bone is yanked across the keel again.

Underwater - blood in his eyes, lungs burning - he saws at the rope. Frayed strands snap, one by one.

DECK

Hastings lights a cigar. George leans in, shielding the flame. Eva claps wildly, leaning farther over the rail, eyes manic.

KEEL

Bone folds against the hull, braces his feet, *ripping* at the rope binding his ankles. Blood, bubbles - a drifting cloud around him.

DECK

Bone's head surfaces - a desperate gasp.

EVA
(screaming)
Pull harder! He's stuck!

The crew strains, boots slipping, in a brutal tug of war.

CAPTAIN
(grim)
It's snagged.

He strides to the rail.

The sea ERUPTS.

Bone *BURSTS* from the water - lunges - seizes the Captain. Both vanish in a violent spray.

Chaos. Hastings, George, and Eva frozen in shock.

HASTINGS
(gritted)
GRAB IT!

The rope slithers across the deck - the crew lunges - too late.

KEEL

Bone grapples the Captain, twisting - manoeuvring -

A glimpse of the Captain's terror-stricken face -

Then - *WHAM* - Bone uses him as a shield against the paddle wheel.

The Captain vanishes in a blast of blood and bubbles.

Bone, propelled by the impact, spirals down into the deep, trailing the broken rope behind.

99 EXT. PADDLE STEAMER - DECK -- DAY 99

Shredded remains churn on the paddle wheel. Hastings and George scan the stern - searching. Eva pokes her head out of the helm.

EVA

Want me to turn it around?

Hastings scowls. Flicks his half-finished cigar overboard.

100 EXT. SEA -- DAY 100

Bone's head bursts from the water - gasping.

No sign of the paddle steamer. Just endless grey swells.

Bone treads water, clawing at the cords knotted around his waist - rips them free. He drifts, battered, as glowering clouds roll in - bruised and heavy, promising a storm.

101 EXT. SEA -- LATER 101

Bone struggles against the waves, muscles burning. The sea towers around him, each crash pulling him under.

Through the spray - a TRAWLER, pitching hard, sails full. Bone flails, screaming.

BONE

HEY! HERE! *HERE!*

A wave buries him.

102 EXT. UNDERWATER -- MOMENT LATER 102

Bone sinks, limp, into the dark.

Above - a keel cuts past.

A net snares him - yanking him up toward the surface.

103 EXT. DECK -- MOMENT LATER

103

Sun punches through the storm clouds as Foley and Wilkie drag Bone onto the deck.

Bone rises shakily to his feet and shoving Vittoria aside, grabs Foley's shirt.

BONE
(urgent, gasping)
Don't turn around. Le Havre.

He collapses.

104 INT. CABIN -- DAY

104

A snug space. Walls of sturdy, weathered wood. The hush is broken only by the soft rhythm of waves, the occasional creak of timber.

Bone sits at the small table, cocooned in a blanket, bandaged hands wrapped around a steaming cup of tea. Vittoria sits close beside him. Across from them, Foley, broad-shouldered, anxious under the calm.

A flicker of a glance passes between Foley and Vittoria.

BONE
(to Vittoria)
You followed me.

FOLEY
Just as well she did. Woke me at four
- nearly gave the missus a heart
attack with all the banging.
(grinning)
Knew you hadn't gone to London. Woke
Wilkie. We helter-skeltered it down to
the harbour. Wilkie thought we were
mad - but he was up for the chase.
Followed you - kept a smart distance -
all the way to London...then out into
the Channel...we were never far away,
but -

He scrubs a hand across damp eyes, a rough bark of a laugh escaping.

FOLEY (CONT'D)
It's a miracle we spotted you. A
bloody miracle.

VITTORIA
One of your nine lives.

A beat.

FOLEY
 (softer)
 I'm guessing this isn't about brandy.

Bone exhales. Shakes off the blanket. His voice is dry, stripped bare.

BONE
 Lord Hastings is trafficking children.
 To brothels across the Channel. Using
 Strafford & Sons as cover.

Silence. Heavy.

Vittoria rises abruptly, staggering to the sink. She clutches the edge, retches into the basin.

VITTORIA
 (low)
 Was Edward there?

BONE
 No.

The cabin door creaks. Wilkie sticks his head in. Deadpan.

WILKIE
 Land ahoy.

Foley nods grimly.

FOLEY
 Why Le Havre?

VITTORIA
 (steadying herself)
 Mouth of the Seine. Quick road to
 Paris.
 (flat)
 Hastings has a house there.

105 EXT. DECK -- DAY

105

Wilkie stands at the rail, telescope trained on the port.

He hands it to Bone.

WILKIE
 Friendly with French customs...

Bone lifts the telescope.

THROUGH IT: The PARIS crates are loaded onto a cart. George secures them with rope. Hastings shakes hands with a French official - all smiles.

BONE
Where's the house?

VITTORIA
(pointing)
Headland.

Bone watches as Hastings's carriage pulls away from the quay.

BONE
The cargo - horse-drawn to Paris?

Vittoria nods. Bone tracks the cart a moment longer.

BONE (CONT'D)
Not all of it, it seems.

He lowers the telescope. Hands it to Vittoria.

BONE (CONT'D)
(to Wilkie)
There should be a telegraph office. I
need you to contact the Yard.

Bone ducks back inside the helm.

THROUGH THE SPYGLASS: The cart - George driving, Eva beside him - bypasses the Paris sign, veering onto the coastal road skirting the headland.

106 EXT. HEADLAND -- DAY

106

AERIAL SHOT

The camera soars over a rugged headland.

A blockish, inelegant mansion looms, drenched in the blood-red glow of a dying sunset.

Below, waves batter the rocks.

107 EXT. DECK -- NIGHT

107

The trawler sways gently, silhouetted against a ragged yellow thread of horizon. Below, a ROWBOAT bobs on the black water.

Bone stands aboard, steady. He extends a hand. Vittoria leaps down - light, nimble. Locks the oars into place with practiced speed. Foley steps up, hesitates - rests a hand on Bone's shoulder for balance - then clambers awkwardly into the boat.

FOLEY
(low, just for Bone)

We're out of our depth here. No
jurisdiction -

Bone meets his gaze. Calm. Unblinking.

Wilkie leans over the rail.

WILKIE

Tide turns at midnight. Three hours.
Bon chance.

Vittoria swings onto the tiller. Bone settles at the oars,
sets his grip. Foley throws Wilkie a single, fleeting wave.
Bone pulls. Powerful, deliberate.

The rowboat slides free of the trawler - swallowed by the
dark waters.

108 EXT. SHORE -- MOMENTS LATER

108

Crashing waves. Three figures - Bone, Vittoria, Foley -
wrestle the rowboat onto shore. They drag it clear, into the
deep shadow at the foot of a looming cliff.

Above them, crouched on the headland - the house. Brooding.
Watching.

109 EXT. TERRACE -- MOMENTS LATER

109

Gaslight spills from ground-floor windows—warm, flickering.
Coach lamps sputter in the dark. Carriage wheels crunch
gravel. Doors thud shut, muffled.

Bone slips through the terrace shadows, low and deliberate.
Foley and Vittoria following.

Masked guests step from cabs, draped in silk and velvet.
Laughter echoes. Torchieres blaze at the open door. Servants
stand stiff, silver trays catching firelight.

BONE

There'll be a back entrance. Find the
children. Get them out.

VITTORIA

What about you?

Bone scans the scene - servants, guests, the yawning black
entrance. Foley moves to speak -

Too late. Bone's already gone, slipping toward the last
carriage in line.

FOLEY
 (hissed, incredulous)
 That's your plan?

110 INT. CAB -- MOMENT LATER

110

A face flashes in the window - gone in an instant.

The PASSENGER, startled, lowers the glass. Leans out.

CRACK. He crumples backward. The door swings open.

Bone slides in, efficient and cold. Strips the man. Silences him with a sock.

Jacket. Necktie. Mask. Bone pulls them on, fast.

CARRIAGE-DRIVER (O.C.)
 Tout va bien, monsieur?

BONE
 Parfait.

The carriage lurches forward.

111 EXT. ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

111

The cab slows. Bone leaps down - masked, composed. He waves the driver off. Snatches a champagne flute from a passing tray. Sips. Slow. Eyes scanning.

A middle-aged couple approaches - confident, familiar. They nod. He returns it. Then -

Bone lifts his glass toward the shadows of the garden - signal or farewell, it's unclear - and vanishes through the front door.

112 EXT. GARDEN -- CONTINUOUS

112

Foley watches Bone, disbelief flickering across his face. Vittoria tugs his sleeve.

VITTORIA
 Let's go.

They move - low, fast - slipping toward the side of the house.

113 INT. DRAWING ROOM -- NIGHT

113

Bone weaves through the crowd - cool, calculating.

Masked guests lounge in pools of smoke and velvet - murmurs, idle touches, tension beneath the surface. Others hover, stiff, uneasy, eyes flicking toward the staircase.

Bone clocks George surveying the room. He veers away, feigning interest in a BRONZE SATYR on a pedestal.

A GUEST in heavy makeup (50s) slides beside him - grinning wide, teeth yellow and crooked. She strokes the satyr's erection with a painted nail, eyes gleaming.

GUEST

C'est petite, n'est-ce pas?

Bone gives her a polite, hollow smile - then flags down a passing SERVANT, gripping his arm mid-stride.

BONE

Cognac. Glass. Bottle.

SERVANT

Oui, monsieur.

The servant glides off.

114 EXT. GARDEN -- NIGHT 114

Vittoria crouches by a hatchway - a faint glow leaking from the cracks. She lays a hand on it, waiting.

115 INT. DRAWING ROOM -- NIGHT 115

Bone edges toward the back wall, his gaze fixed now - the staircase. Cantilevered. Grand. A stage.

116 EXT. GARDEN -- NIGHT 116

Foley gives a sharp nod.

Vittoria yanks the hatch open. Light spills out.

117 INT. DRAWING ROOM -- NIGHT 117

Applause erupts.

At the top of the stairs - Hastings. Unrecognizable.

Greased hair. Face caked in powder and rouge. High heels. A bordello madam's dress sways around him like a dare.

He descends - slow, theatrical - crossing the full width of each step with exaggerated poise. He pauses, turns, throws a wink over his shoulder. A hand lifts in a grotesque royal wave - mocking, precise. He retraces a step. And another.

The room watches, breath held.

118 INT. CELLAR -- NIGHT

118

CLOSE ON a rusted CROWBAR. Nearby, PARIS crates - lids pried off, splintered.

Foley kneels beside one. Reaches in. Lifts out a small, worn TEDDY BEAR. Stares. Vittoria watches. Her face tightens - revulsion, sorrow.

Above them - cheers and whistles, muffled through the ceiling. Joy. Applause. *Wrong.*

119 INT. DRAWING ROOM -- NIGHT

119

Hastings stands front and centre, arms raised. The room quiets.

HASTINGS

Mes amis, you're too kind. Welcome one and all.

He spots someone. Finger wave. A little wink.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)

Tonight - six exceptional lots, each meticulously vetted. Private rooms await successful buyers. And afterward... entertainment for every taste.

A grin - wide, polished, predatory.

HASTINGS

Now - without further ado - item one.

A hush.

At the top of the stairs - Eva, composed in an evening gown. Sally, beside her - small, plain smock, pigtails. One hand white-knuckled on the banister.

Bone watches from the edge of the room, masked. Still. Tense. Eyes fixed.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
 This is Sally. Eleven years old.
 Aspiring lady's maid, aren't you
 Sally?

SALLY
 (barely audible)
 Yes, sir. Oui, monsieur.

Ripples of polite approval. Glasses clink. A fan flutters.

Hastings soaks it in.

HASTINGS
 Now...where shall we start -

GUEST 1
 Ten guineas!

GUEST 2
 Fifteen!

Hastings frowns, mock-offended.

HASTINGS
 Gentlemen, Ladies please. Bidding
 begins at twenty guineas. Who'll give
 me twenty?

Hands rise. Voices sharpen.

Bone moves - slipping along the back wall, keeping to
 shadows. Mask unreadable. Gaze locked.

The bidding swells. The crowd leans forward, hungry.

A FAT MAN in a purple pantalone mask raises a stubby hand.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
 Fifty guineas. Fifty, going once...
 going twice...

BONE
 (cutting through)
 One thousand guineas.

Silence. Sudden. Heavy. Heads turn. Eyes scan.

Bone stands still. Arms crossed. Daring.

Hastings squints into the throng.

HASTINGS
 Sir, the bidding stands at fifty
 guineas.

Bone shrugs, loose and casual.

BONE

Fine. Let's make it ten thousand.

(louder)

TEN THOUSAND!

The room erupts - gasps, laughter, jeers.

Hastings hisses to George. George pushes forward - eyes locked on Bone. Bone shifts his stance. Ready. Mid-lurch -

VITTORIA (O.C.)

TWENTY THOUSAND!

All heads whip back.

Vittoria and Foley stand at the far end - shoulder to shoulder. Steady. Unmoving.

George falters.

Vittoria steps forward, hand outstretched.

VITTORIA

(commanding)

Darling, come here...

Eva barrels down the stairs - rage blazing. Then -

Stops. Eyes lock with Vittoria's. Ice.

Sally has frozen. Trembling. Vittoria steps in. Wraps her in an arm. Protective. Final.

Bone rips off his mask. A ripple through the crowd - gasps.

Hastings gapes. Speechless.

Bone bites the cork off a cognac bottle. Swigs. Eyes Hastings. Smiles. Wolfish.

Hurls the bottle at a gaslit sconce.

BOOM! Glass shatters.

WHOOSH - flames leap across a velvet sofa. Burning liquor splashes.

SCREAMS. Chaos ignites.

Gowns catch. Guests shove. Clawing for exits.

HASTINGS

(apoplectic)

GEORGE!

But George is gone, swept up in the stampede.

Bone moves. Fast.

Taps George's shoulder -

CRACK - knee to the groin.

THUD - baton drops him cold.

VITTORIA

Bone - the children! They're upstairs!

Foley flicks a nod - *I'm on it* - and bolts up the stairs.

Bone scans - eyes slicing through smoke and fire.

Curtains billow. A French window - open. Hastings is gone.

120 EXT. ENTRANCE -- MOMENT LATER

120

Terror-stricken guests jam the bottlenecked front door - shoving, clawing, bodies sprawling onto the gravel.

Shouts mix with screams. Drivers yank reins, struggling as horses rear and whinny. A man stumbles into a flaming torchiere -

FWOOOM! Red-hot coals scatter. Sparks erupt, swirling into the icy night air.

121 EXT. HOUSE -- MOMENT LATER

121

Bone brushes aside the curtains. Steps onto the terrace. Eyes cut left. Right. Narrow.

He jogs - fast, focused.

122 INT. BEDROOM -- MOMENT LATER

122

Foley BURSTS through the door - stops short.

MOLLY (10) gasps, frozen - Eva presses a blade to her throat. Smoke coils above them, thick and low. Three terrified CHILDREN cower in the corner.

FOLEY

I'm not interested in you.
I want the children.

Eva's eyes flicker. Grip falters - a beat.

EVA

You break my heart.

A bitter smirk - but her gaze darts past Foley.

A sharp POP - flames lick the landing behind him.

The knife trembles in Eva's hand. Sweat beads her brow. She flicks her gaze back to Foley - calculating. With a sharp breath, she shoves Molly forward.

EVA (CONT'D)

Get out!

Foley's jaw hardens.

FOLEY

(gesturing sharply)

Move!

The other children bolt - coughing - vanishing into the smoke.

The flames now eat the walls - fast, alive.

Eva drops the blade - CLATTER. Her eyes stay locked on Foley, chest heaving. Foley doesn't flinch. Slow. Controlled.

He backs out - face unreadable.

123 INT. LANDING -- CONTINUOUS

123

Foley SLAMS the door. Jams the key into the lock - twists hard.

Silence.

Then - an EXPLOSION of violent rattling from the other side.

EVA (O.C.)

(feral, shrieking)

You FUCKER! Let me out! LET ME OUT!

Foley stumbles back, clutching the key. His breath comes fast, shallow. The children cling to him, tugging at his clothes, eyes wide with terror. Smoke thickens around them. Flames crawl up the floorboards, licking closer.

VITTORIA (O.C.)

Foley!

He whirls toward the voice - leans over the balustrade.

Through swirling smoke below, George rises, blood pouring down his face.

124 EXT. GARDEN -- MOMENTS LATER

124

Bone stands at the edge of a sprawling parterre. Tall Grecian

statues loom above - cold, accusing. Gravel paths snake into blackness. A fountain trickles somewhere, indifferent.

Bone's head snaps left - a flicker of motion. He squints toward the orangery.

Inside, barely visible through the glass - a single ember burns: the tip of a cigar, bright and watching.

125 INT. STAIRCASE -- MOMENTS LATER

125

Foley descends, slow and deliberate - eyes locked on George. The children cling to him, trembling.

EVA (O.C.)

(feral)

Let me out, you fucking pig! LET ME
OUT!

Blood and smoke blind George. He snarls, lunges toward Vittoria - stops cold as Foley lifts his hand.

A key glints in the firelight.

George freezes.

Foley tilts his head, dangles the key over the flames.

Upstairs -

The door to Eva's room catches. Fire chews through the wood. The rattling grows *frantic*.

EVA (CONT'D O.C.)

(hysterical)

Oh, God! Not like this! George!
GEORGE!

Foley shoves the children toward the cellar - then FLINGS the key at George. It arcs - flashes - lands in the flames with a sharp metallic CLINK.

George's face twists - fury, disbelief.

A beat of stillness - then George steps forward.

Into the fire.

Foley's eyes widen.

George grimaces as his boots sink into the embers. Flames claw up his legs - he doesn't stop.

The fire roars. Heat rolls off the walls. Foley stands frozen, sweat pouring down.

George bends - grabs the burning key with a shaking, blistered hand. He rises, smoldering, eyes locked onto Foley.

Foley stumbles back - flames licking at his boots - but can't tear his gaze away from George: ascending the stairs, step by agonizing step, automaton-like, through the inferno.

126 INT. ORANGERY -- MOMENTS LATER

126

Bone stands just inside, eyes locked on a shadowy figure sprawled in a wicker chair twenty feet away.

Outside - the house fire ROARS. Beams SPLINTER. Glass SHATTERS.

Hastings sits calmly - legs crossed, fondling the ivory head of a walking stick. A cigar smolders between his fingers. He's shed his coat - just a shirt, trousers - but still wears his grotesque makeup.

HASTINGS

You spoiled my party.

A deep, booming THUD - a wall collapsing.

Bone moves.

Handcuffs flash from his pocket as he strides down the aisle.

Hastings shifts in his seat.

CLANG!

The MANTRAP springs shut.

Bone jerks - stunned. He yanks his leg - trapped.

His face twists in agony as he drops to the floor, grappling the iron jaws clamped to his ankle.

Hastings rises, grinning like a snake.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)

Use 'em in the colonies. The more you fight - the deeper the bite.

Bone fumbles for his baton - but Hastings kicks it away, clattering into darkness.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)

(mocking)

Must be painful. Scream if you like.

He wags a finger - *tut-tut*.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
 You really must stop meddling in other
 people's affairs.

A slick motion - Hastings draws a stiletto blade from his
 cane, flicks the sheath aside. Jabs the tip under Bone's
 chin, forcing him upright.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
 Who else knows about my little
 enterprise? Other than your half-wit
 colleague and Edward's Italian bitch?

Bone glares back, silent, sweat dripping.

Hastings retreats - blade slicing lazy arcs through the air.

Slowly, theatrically, he lifts his left hand high, wrist bent
 - adopts a mocking fencing stance.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
 I used to fence.
 Prime. Seconde. Terce.
 (grins, baring teeth)
 Lunge.

He strikes.

Bone pivots - too slow - the blade grazes his shoulder.

Hastings circles, lunges again - this time plunging steel
 deep into Bone's thigh.

HASTINGS (CONT'D)
 (exploding)
 ANSWER THE FUCKING QUESTION! WHO ELSE
 KNOWS? WHO -

He chokes off -

A crimson bloom spreads across his chest.

The bloodied tip of a crowbar bursts through his shirt -
 retracts - slams in again with a wet *CRUNCH*.

Hastings yelps, eyes wild with shock.

He sinks to his knees - collapses forward with a wet gurgle.

Behind him, trembling - Vittoria drops the crowbar,
 CLATTERING onto the stone floor.

Bone reaches for it, grimacing. His eyes flick to Vittoria.

BONE

(wryly)

Took your time. Don't just stand there.

Vittoria snaps back to life.

She drops beside him, bloodied hands covering his. They lock eyes.

BONE (CONT'D)

Three.

Together, they PRY the jaws apart - grunting, straining - Bone yanks his ankle free just as the MANTRAP SLAMS shut with a deafening CLANG.

Vittoria hauls him up. Bone points into the shadows.

BONE (CONT'D)

Truncheon.

She retrieves it - and without a backward glance, they stumble into the smoke.

127 EXT. GARDEN -- MOMENT LATER

127

Vittoria steadies Bone, arm tight around his waist as he limps across the terrace toward the cliff path.

Behind them, the inferno paints the night in violent orange. Flames leap skyward, casting mad, shifting shadows across Bone's hard, unreadable face.

GLASS SHATTERS above.

They glance back -

Two burning figures - Eva and George - plunge headlong flaming from an upper window.

CRASH! The front of the house collapses, a roaring avalanche of flame and debris. The shockwave ripples through the garden. Vittoria pulls Bone onward. They don't look back again.

128 EXT. ENGLISH CHANNEL -- DAY

128

AERIAL

The trawler scuds across choppy water, the rising sun bleeding colour into the sky.

129 EXT. DECK -- DAY

129

Bone leans heavily on a makeshift stick beside Vittoria, watching Foley on the foredeck, the children laughing, clambering over him.

VITTORIA
 (quiet, resolute)
 Edward will need me.
 More than ever. Now...

She grips the railing as the trawler bucks beneath them. Her eyes flick to Bone - his profile blank, distant. She turns back to the children. Smiles - thin, mechanical.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
 I'll find them work at the factory.

Bone limps toward the helm where Wilkie stands.

Vittoria stays at the rail. Lifts her face toward the sun - but it's fleeting, strained. She lowers her head. Absently scratches at the back of her hand - a reddened bite mark. Her eyes track Bone across the deck, something dark flickering beneath her gaze.

130 EXT. MARGATE HARBOUR -- DAY

130

The wharf hums with life - fishermen unloading crates, dockers shifting cargo.

Apart from the bustle: the Commissioner, coat snapping sharply. Edward Strafford, gaunt, rigid. MRS FOLEY (52) and her two TEENAGE DAUGHTERS, clutching each other against the cold.

Out on the choppy waters, a rowboat battles toward the quay - Bone, Vittoria and Foley huddled inside.

131 EXT. QUAY -- MOMENTS LATER

131

Foley clambers out - instantly engulfed by his family. Vittoria nudges the children toward Edward, who stiffens, overwhelmed. Bone limps straight to the Commissioner.

BONE
 Not like you...

The Commissioner tugs his collar tighter, eyes hardening.

COMMISSIONER
 Yes...well.

Bone studies him. Breathing shallow.

BONE

I'm not done. The other girl, Alice -
she's -

COMMISSIONER

Snagged on a reef somewhere.

BONE

We don't know that -

COMMISSIONER

(firmer)

The case is closed.

Bone clenches his jaw. His gaze drifts to Vittoria - wrapped in Edward's arms, her face hidden against his chest. Edward returns Bone's stare. Cold. Indifferent.

BONE

You could've telegraphed.

The Commissioner follows Bone's look. Smiles faintly.

COMMISSIONER

(pointed)

And risk my orders being ignored?

He lifts a hand to Edward - a public gesture, warm and rehearsed. Edward nods, helping Vittoria into a waiting carriage.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

(low, looking to sea)

The PM wants the government contract with Strafford squared away - quietly. Before the press get a whiff of this unpleasantness. The prince himself will witness the signing - an incredible honor.

Bone's mouth tightens. Bitter.

BONE

And no one likes an unaccounted-for complication.

COMMISSIONER

Precisely.

BONE

When?

COMMISSIONER

Soon.

BONE

Where?

The Commissioner just smiles - vague, slippery.

Edward's driver snaps the reins. The carriage clatters away over wet cobblestones. Bone watches it go. Something hollow settles behind his eyes.

BONE (CONT'D)

You know their warehouse holds hundreds of bottles of bootleg brandy. Percy -

COMMISSIONER

(shrugging, amused)

Enterprising chap. Let it go, Drummond. The villain got his due. The children are safe.

The Commissioner checks his pocket watch. Signals to his driver.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

(offhand)

I'd offer to buy you some winkles, but I need to get back to London - the PM's asked me to oversee security for the state visit -

BONE

(sharply)

What state visit?

The Commissioner pauses. Studies Bone for a moment - assessing, dismissing. Then hands him a folded newspaper.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

Oh, dear, you are out of touch. Could mean the end of the war -

He turns, striding briskly toward his waiting carriage. Bone watches him go, paper limp in his hand. Then unfolds it.

CLOSE on headline: FRENCH EMPEROR AND EMPRESS GREETED BY CHEERING CROWDS AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

CLOSE on sub-headline: THE END OF THE WAR IN CRIMEA? HOW WILL RUSSIA MATCH THE COMBINED FORCE OF OUR TWO GREAT NATIONS?

Above, the seagulls SHRIEK, wheeling in the slate sky.

Bone lowers the paper. Stares out to sea - motionless.

132 INT. TAVERN -- DAY

132

Bone elbows through the heaving crowd - air thick with sweat, laughter and spilled ale. Tipsy OFFICE CLERKS huddle close, trading gossip. Chairs scrape. Tankards clink.

At the bar, Bone locks eyes with the BARMAN. A bottle and glass slide toward him.

A DUSTY LABOURER, mid-laugh, jostles Bone's elbow. Bone stiffens. Relaxes. Lifts a hand - barely a gesture - and stares at the bottle. He pushes it away and slips out.

133 EXT. IRON PIER -- DAY

133

WOUNDED SOLDIERS disembark from a troop ship - some on stretchers, pale and trembling. Others limp, bandaged and broken. NURSES hover. OFFICERS snap orders.

Bone leans on the railing, watching. Face unreadable.

Foley steps beside him.

FOLEY

Poor buggers. The queen's shilling's not so shiny now.

(eyes Bone's leg)

Should be resting that.

BONE

Or celebrating a job well done.

FOLEY

Clipped yer wings, did he? So?

BONE

So - we keep going. We find Alice. Game?

He turns - eyes cold, daring Foley to push back. He doesn't. Bone strides off.

BONE (O.C.)

I'm heading to my digs. Wash, kip. See you at the station.

134 INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

134

Bone lies sprawled across his bed, tangled in the sheets. His knitting and yarn, half-finished, twist around his fingers in a blue knotted mess - like he fell asleep mid-stitch.

The black cat sits watching him. Licking its paw.

135 INT. DIPPER'S WORKSHOP -- DAY

135

CLOSE ON: A pair of green-tinted goggles, crusted and cracked, hang limp on a hook. Dead-eyed. Ominous.

Below, two vast vats of mercuric acid lie still. No ripple. Pelts sway, ghostlike, in the thick, metallic vapor.

The door creaks open.

A FIGURE slips in, silent. Kneels. Peels back a wooden board, camouflaged as brickwork.

Inside - a shoebox. Gloved hands lift a cylindrical device wrapped in glass barbs. Mercury shifts inside it, sluggish, alive. The figure slides it into a canvas bag. Suddenly - they freeze. We HEAR Eliza humming *Danny Boy*.

FIGURE'S POV - THROUGH GRIMY GLASS: Eliza, moving through tangled brush, a muslin-wrapped bundle clutched to her chest.

136 EXT. WOOD -- MOMENT LATER

136

Eliza moves lightly. Leaves crackle under her worn boots. She follows a narrow path that traces a stream - sometimes beside it, sometimes climbing the steep bank above. Under twisted branches, she halts. Eyes narrow.

She spins. Alert. Fixes on a massive fallen tree - splintered, unnatural. A gust snatches at her. Rustles the weeping birches.

Up ahead - the trees thin. Through the haze: a smudge on the hillside. Murky. Still. She hesitates - then steps forward.

137 EXT. CHALK MINE ENTRANCE -- MOMENT LATER

137

Alice bursts from the dark mouth of the mine, snatching the bundle from Eliza. She tears into the bread and cheese - hair greasy, plastered to her dirt-streaked face.

ELIZA

I'm sorry...it's not much today...

No reply. Alice keeps eating, jaw working fast.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Have you enough water?

Alice nods, eyes fixed on the food. A sudden gust shakes the leaves. Alice freezes. Her gaze snaps upward -

A dark figure barrels toward them, arm raised - a gun glints.

138 EXT. DORMITORIES -- MOMENT LATER

138

Maggie and Lily scrub clothes by the stream.

A sharp CRACK splits the quiet. Birds fall silent. Maggie's hands still mid-scrub. She stands slowly, water dripping from sleeves and hands.

Another CRACK - louder, closer - echoes through the trees.

Maggie locks eyes with Lily. She tosses the half-washed shirt onto the grass.

MAGGIE

Stay here.

139 INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

139

Bone's eyes snap open. Someone is pummelling on the door.

JIMMY (O.C.)

MR BONE, SIR - GET UP! GET UP SIR!
OPEN THE DOOR!

140 EXT. SHAFT ENTRANCE -- DAY

140

SLOW MOTION: Bone and Jimmy crossing the clearing. Bone's as pale as a ghost, clutching his bad leg.

Raging factory workers surge against a thin line of gaunt police volunteers, spitting and shouting obscenities. Maggie and Lily's faces contort, veins bulging as they scream. Dora points an accusatory finger at the detective.

DORA

(ragged, furious)
You said you'd find her - YOU SAID!

LILY

LIAR!

A stone spirals through the air, deliberate, weightless. Jimmy ducks - pure instinct. Bone doesn't. His gaze is fixed ahead. Unblinking.

141 INT. CHALK SHAFT -- MOMENT LATER

141

Foley's bullseye lantern swings, casting jagged shadows on the walls.

Two bodies slump against the shaft - broken dolls.

Eliza's face - erased.

Alice's chest - blackened ruin.

Foley shakes the lamp. It flickers. Dies.

FOLEY

Jimmy! Another light! Two!

(beat)

He killed them outside. Dragged them
in. Risky - the dormitories are close.
Several heard the shots.

Jimmy hands over a fresh bullseye.

Bone sweeps the light along the slick, dripping wall. On the
ground - thin, crumpled blanket. Battered tin cup. Spent
candle. Scattered matches.

He crouches. Lifts a muslin bundle with a pencil. Holds it to
the light.

BONE

She kept moving. Eliza made sure she
never starved.

He trains the lamp on Alice's strawberry blonde hair.

BONE (CONT'D)

Get me a knife.

Foley nods, leaves.

Bone gently rubs a lock of Alice's hair between thumb and
forefinger. Lifts her hands. Examines the nails - dirt under
them, life clinging.

Foley returns silently. Hands over a pocket knife.

CLOSE ON Bone pressing the blade to Alice's hair and sawing
off a thick strand. Foley lowers his head. Looks away. Bone
folds the knife.

BONE (CONT'D)

Move them to the pub.

142 INT. FOLEY'S OFFICE -- DAY

142

The pot-plant's been watered; the room feels cleaner.

Two identical locks of hair lie on the desk.

Bone reassembles the nesting doll with slow, deliberate
fingers as Foley enters.

BONE
Spot the difference.

Foley holds the strands up to the light.

BONE (CONT'D)
Arthur kept one in his desk. Hidden in
the doll.

Foley exhales, heavy.

FOLEY
The boyfriend. Arthur.

BONE
Alice strung him along. A lovesick
foreman - perfect cover for Violet.

Bone watches Foley's face, searching. Foley turns the doll
slowly, eyes locked with Bone's.

BONE (CONT'D)
So?

FOLEY
(soft, hesitant)
Arthur murders Violet. Finds out she's
been playing him. Jealous rage.

He paces, doll turning in his hands.

FOLEY (CONT'D)
Then Nick kills Arthur. Revenge? Love?
Was Nick in love with Violet?

Bone shakes his head, dismissive.

BONE
Too far-fetched.

FOLEY
Think?

BONE
Shakespearean far-fetched.

Bone takes the doll from Foley's hands.

BONE (CONT'D)
Violet and Alice see something they
shouldn't. Violet's killed for it.
Brutally. Alice -

FOLEY
Disappears, *hides*, scared she's next -

BONE
Or won't be believed if she accuses -

FOLEY
Her boss or his son.

BONE
Maybe...

FOLEY
What did the girls see?

Bone holds Foley's gaze, steady, unreadable.

FOLEY (CONT'D)
There's more you're not telling me.

BONE
Quicksilver. Traces under Violet's
nails. None under Alice's. Used in
hat-making. Violet was likely killed
at the factory -

FOLEY
And?

BONE
And?

FOLEY
What *else* is mercury good for?

Bone's gaze drifts - first unfocused, like chasing a memory -
then snaps sharp, locking onto Foley.

143 EXT. STRAFFORD RESIDENCE -- DAY

143

Edna opens the front door. Bone stands just outside. Foley
leans heavily on the doorframe, breathing ragged, watching.

BONE
It's Edna, right?

The maid tilts her head, cautious but polite.

BONE (CONT'D)
Mr and Mrs Strafford. Are they here?

EDNA
I'm sorry, sir. They've gone. With
Master Percy. Would you like to leave
a message?

BONE
When?

EDNA
About an hour ago -

BONE
Where?

EDNA
The Palace. London -

Foley interrupts, incredulous.

FOLEY
Buckingham Palace?

Edna chuckles softly, swinging the door wider to reveal the large gaudy oil painting of the Crystal Palace hanging in the hallway.

EDNA
No, *that* palace.

She lowers her voice, conspiratorial, eyes flickering with amusement and pride.

EDNA (CONT'D)
Meeting the Queen and Prince Albert.
The French lot too.
(big smile)
Big to-do.

BONE
Tonight?

EDNA
Yes. This evening.
(uncertain)
Some business thing, I think.

Before she can finish, Bone spins on his heel and bolts. Foley stumbles after him, shaking his head.

FOLEY
(grinning, to Edna)
Don't mind him. He's like that with everyone.

Edna watches them go, the door swinging gently closed.

144 EXT. STREET -- MOMENT LATER

144

Bone and Foley cut through the crowded pavement - dodging a NANNY wrestling a pram, weaving past TOURISTS gawking at a shop window.

BONE

The contract-signing's a decoy. Our man's playing a bigger game. Heads of state. Crystal Palace. He's setting the stage for slaughter. Mercury's a primer. For a bomb. That's what Violet saw. What got her killed.

Bone stops mid-stride. Scribbles furiously in his notebook, rips out a page, slaps it into Foley's hand.

BONE (CONT'D)

Get this to the telegraph office - Scotland Yard. Now. I'll meet you at the station.

He bolts. Foley pivots hard, nearly sending a fruit cart crashing as he tears off in the opposite direction.

145 EXT. PLATFORM -- DAY

145

White steam BILLOWS and HISSES and passengers hurry to board the train.

An oily DRIVER, face streaked with soot, slowly wipes his grimy hands on a rag as he strains to catch Bone's words.

Behind him, the STOKER dangles casually from the footplate handrail, his expression a mix of curiosity and indifference as he watches the exchange unfold.

Foley has his hands on his hips, catching his breath. Bone has to shout.

BONE

How fast does this thing go?

DRIVER

Depends...

A head appears from a carriage pull-down window.

PASSENGER (O.C.)

(haughty)

Come on driver - we haven't got all day!

Bone pulls out his warrant card and gestures towards the passenger carriages.

BONE

Without all that?

The driver's eyes lock with Bone's, before a grin creeps across his face.

146 EXT. STEAM TRAIN -- DAY

146

ARIEL SHOT

A lone steam engine *hurtles* down the tracks, plumes of smoke and sparks erupting from the stack. The whistle SHRILLS.

147 EXT. STEAM TRAIN FOOTPLATE -- DAY

147

Sweat streams down the Driver's face as he grips the brass regulator, eyes darting between quivering gauges and the blurred tracks.

Grinning manically, the red-faced stoker hefts his shovel and drives it into the roaring furnace.

The two policemen cling to the swaying cab while sparks leap from the firebox. Bone leans into Foley. Shouts to be heard.

BONE

You sent the telegraph, right?

FOLEY

Twice.

(through gritted teeth)

Yes!

A flash of doubt crosses Bone's face. He leans into Foley's ear.

BONE

I could be wrong.

Bone shifts, taps the driver's shoulder.

BONE (CONT'D)

How long?

The driver scowls, eyes locked ahead. The cab lurches violently.

148 EXT. STEAM TRAIN FOOTPLATE -- DAY

148

Bone drops from the footplate - lands hard in a crouch. Grimaces. Grabs his leg.

A surge of STEAM blasts past, swallowing him.

Foley crashes down behind - wheezing, swearing under his breath.

149 EXT. STATION CONCOURSE -- CONTINUOUS

149

Bone and Foley shoulder through the crowd at the barrier. Ahead, Droopy hisses something low at a stone-faced RAILWAY OFFICIAL. The Official spots Bone. Nods. Once.

Pigeons scatter as Bone and Foley break into a run - Bone limping, pushing through. Two black BROUGHAMS wait at the curb. The Commissioner watches from one. Cold. Impatient. Rita grins from the other.

RITA

Boss.

BONE

Rita.

Bone barely slows. Glances up - just for a second - at the gray London sky. A flicker of something... almost a smile. He flings his stick clattering onto the platform. Climbs into the brougham with the Commissioner and Foley. Rita and Droopy take the other.

SLAM. Doors shut in unison.

150 INT. BROUGHAM -- CONTINUOUS

150

The Commissioner raps twice on the cab roof. It lurches forward. He whirls on Bone. Seething.

COMMISSIONER

Why would the Straffords assassinate the queen? That contract makes them richer than Croesus. Besides, Edward's close with the PM *and* the prince - it makes no sense -

BONE

(snaps back)

I don't give a damn. The evidence points to them - or someone inside their factory. This isn't spur-of-the-moment. It's been months in the making.

COMMISSIONER

But why? Oh, wait - let me guess. They're Russian? Anarchists?

BONE

I don't know. Yet. Have you warned the PM?

COMMISSIONER

(bristles)

Majesty's security is airtight.

BONE

Have we got access to the royals' people?

COMMISSIONER

For stop and search? You're barking. It's a state visit. French Emperor. Half the aristocracy dripping in jewels. There'd be a riot.

BONE

Better a riot than regicide.

151 EXT. LONDON STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

151

Whip cracks. Hooves hammer wet cobbles. The DRIVER shouts - losing patience.

152 INT. BROUGHAM -- CONTINUOUS

152

BONE

Where's the contract getting signed?

COMMISSIONER

(taken aback, rattled)

How do you know about that? It's classified -

BONE

Where?

The Commissioner hesitates, then caves.

COMMISSIONER

Anteroom. Off the main gallery. The Prince, the PM, Edward -

BONE

If I were him, that's the place. When?

COMMISSIONER

(quiet)

After the fireworks.

BONE

(flabbergasted)

Fireworks? You've opened the palace to the public?

The Commissioner won't meet his eye. Wets his lips.

FOLEY

And five of us? Bloody hell.

COMMISSIONER

Plus palace security.

BONE

Toy soldiers. Brass buttons.
Assassin's dream.

COMMISSIONER

Assuming there even is one...

The cab SLAMS into a pothole. Rattling steel. Shouts outside. The driver spits a curse.

153 EXT. CRYSTAL PALACE -- DAY

153

The hum of a barrel organ drifts on the air. Gravel crunches under polished boots as a sea of top hats, parasols and bonnets parades the terrace. Children clutch balloons. A juggler tosses flaming clubs. A hawker waves Union Jack ribbons.

Foley's jaw drops as his eyes climb the towering lattice of glass and iron, aglow in the summer twilight. Flags snap high above, nearly two hundred feet in the air.

BONE

First time?

FOLEY

(stammering)

What? Yeah -

The opening bars of Handel's *Zadok the Priest* swell from an unseen orchestra.

Bone yanks Foley, Rita and Droopy into a huddle. Close. Focused.

BONE

We're out of time. Rita - take Droopy.
Work the crowd near the stage. It'll
be heavy, in a shoulder bag or
something.

(beat)

Jack, you're with me. We're finding
the Straffords. If I'm right -

He turns sharply to the Commissioner, who's pacing, rattled.

BONE (CONT'D)
 Paris. Twenty-four dead. A hundred and
 fifty maimed. Talk to the PM. Again.

Rita, Droopy and the Commissioner peel away.

Bone grips Foley's shoulder - firm, final.

BONE (CONT'D)
 C'mon.

154 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE -- MOMENT LATER

154

A low roar - thousands murmuring - builds as Bone and Foley step inside the vast, glittering hall. Light pours through a cathedral of glass. The purple dais commands the room - decked in Union Jacks, French Tricolours, and red-white-blue florals.

Bone's eyes scan the balconies above, groaning with spectators pressed to railings. Foley clocks the marble statues, the jewel-bright fountains, the distant ceiling shimmering like water.

Across the crush, the Commissioner pleads with a sallow, sharp-suited man - the PRIME MINISTER - flanked by two aides.

BONE
 (points)
 There. Back of the stage.

Suddenly, Zadok the Priest CUTS OUT. The orchestra lurches into God Save the Queen. A ripple moves through the crowd - stillness, reverence.

The ROYAL PARTY steps onto the dais. Gasps rise. Bone doesn't stop moving, weaving, nudging past stiff shoulders and silks.

On stage: Edward and Percy, statues in black. Vittoria and Eleanor, poised but taut. The PM, scowling. The Commissioner, wilted beside him, manages a useless smile.

Bone glances back - Foley's stuck. Wedged by the crowd. Bone jabs a finger toward the other side of the stage. Foley nods.

INTERCUT BONE/FOLEY

BONE

Approaches three GUARDSMEN barring the backstage entrance stage right. He flashes a warrant card. One guard squints, theatrical. The others smirk, shake their heads.

FOLEY

Wedges deeper, shouldering in. Spots Vittoria - catches her eye. Her face tightens - disbelief, then resolve.

BONE

Turns, scans the stage. On the dais, Edward and Percy stare back with imperious, blank-faced indifference.

FOLEY

Mouths something to Vittoria. She hesitates, leans to Eleanor, whispers - then breaks from the cluster of ladies.

BONE

Spots something at Percy's feet. Wrong. Off.

FOLEY

Slides past the guards - Vittoria's calm authority clears the way. He flashes Bone a grin. Thumbs up, proud. Bone watches, a faint smile tugging. *Ahead for once. About time.*

The National Anthem ends. A collective breath releases.

A SPEAKER - stooped, bespectacled - approaches the lectern, speech trembling in his hands. He bows deep before the monarchs and their wives, then turns to the crowd.

SPEAKER

Your Royal Highnesses, my lords and ladies, Prime Minister, honoured guests: It is my great privilege to welcome you to this historic occasion in the Crystal Palace, one of the marvels of our modern age -

BONE

Narrows his gaze as Percy shifts, revealing the side of a CARPET BAG.

SPEAKER (CONT'D O.C.)

Today, our two great nations, long divided, stand united against the vile aggression of the Russians and Turks in Crimea...

155 INT. ROBINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

155

Vittoria BURSTS through the door, Foley close behind.

A massive table dominates the room - an ornate inkwell, silver paperweight, magnifying glass, quills, a sand shaker.

FOLEY
 (mid-flow)
 So he says if you mix nitric acid with
brandy, toss in mercury - Boom. Same
 mix used in Paris.

SPEAKER (O.C.)
 And our two nations share so much:
 art, music, culture...

FOLEY
 (barks a laugh, tense)
 Brandy. Who'd have thought?

His eyes drift to a hand-written document on the blotter -
 the contract.

FOLEY (CONT'D)
 He reckons the signing is just a way
 to get close to the royals - to kill
 'em.
 (chuckling)
 Sounds mad, but he's been right
 before, so -

Vittoria circles the table, fingers brushing its edge.

SPEAKER (O.C.)
 Our armed forces uphold shared values
 of discipline, valor -

FOLEY
 Look, we should get back -

She turns, her face unreadable. He steps closer.

FOLEY (CONT'D)
 What is it?

A flicker of resolve.

VITTORIA
 I'm sorry.

She GRABS him - pulling him into a long intimate embrace. His
 eyes go wide. She eases him into the desk chair.

A BLOODSTAIN blooms on his shirt.

CLOSE ON his slack mouth. A faint wheeze escapes - a final
 breath.

Vittoria steps back, a gleaming stiletto in her hand. Calm.
 Methodical. She wipes the blade with her handkerchief. Slides
 it back up her sleeve. Her gaze lingers on Foley's lifeless
 body.

She strides to the wall - RIPS down a TAPESTRY of the ROYAL COAT OF ARMS and flings it over him.

The inkwell tips, black and blue spilling across the desk.

She scratches the bite on the back of her hand.

She unlocks the door, steps out - locks it with a cold CLICK.

SPEAKER (O.C.)

Meanwhile, the Russians and Turks
quake at the thought of our union...

156 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE -- MOMENTS LATER

156

The crowd ROAR as the Royals and their entourage step down from the dais. They're immediately ushered away by a circle of smiling officials.

With the guards' attention glued to the stage, Bone slips through their ranks, vanishing into the darkened -

157 INT. BACKSTAGE AREA -- CONTINUOUS

157

Bone threads through the usual backstage chaos, searching for Foley and Vittoria. He sidesteps two STAGEHANDS hauling an oversized urn.

A quick glance outside: The Prince lightly touches the Queen's hand - she laughs, settling with him in a cordoned-off area overlooking the gardens. The Prime Minister lounges smugly nearby.

Raised voices snap Bone's attention back.

Edward jabs a finger at the locked Robing Room door, barking at a flustered aide. Percy rattles the handle, frantic. The Commissioner has an amused glint in his eye.

BONE

Seen Foley?

COMMISSIONER

They lost the key...

Bone frowns, tension rising.

BONE

Something's off...

Bone tips his head at the door.

BONE (CONT'D)

Help me break it down.

The Commissioner stares, incredulous.

COMMISSIONER
You're not serious -

Bone's glare says otherwise.

Without waiting, Bone charges the heavy oak door - WHAM! - it barely budes. He grits his teeth, limping back, then SLAMS it harder. Edward and Percy gape, aghast.

CRACK! The door bursts open in a shower of splinters.

158 INT. ROBINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

158

Bone freezes in the doorway. His eyes lock on a distorted shape slumped in the centre of the room.

He raises a hand, palm out - instinct, command.

BONE
Wait.

He backs up a step, flicking a glance over his shoulder.

BONE (CONT'D)
No one in. NO ONE!

He kicks the door shut with a bone-jarring CRUNCH. The echo lingers as he moves forward - slow, deliberate.

A heavy silence.

DRIP. A thick strand of ink trickles from the desk to the polished floor - black on black.

He reaches out and lifts the tapestry - cautious, reverent. Foley. Eyes wide in surprise. A plum-coloured stain spreads across his chest, centred around a single puncture wound.

The room seems to ripple - time stutters.

CLOSE ON Bone's fingers as he leans in and gently closes Foley's eyes.

Then his spine straightens. He exhales. Lifts his head.

159 INT. BACKSTAGE AREA -- CONTINUOUS

159

Bone storms past the Commissioner - grabs Percy, SLAMS him against the wall. Baton pressed to Percy's throat.

BONE
(menacing)

Where's the bag?

Percy chokes, squirming. Bone leans in - baton grinding harder. The Commissioner and Edward rush to intervene, trying to pry Bone off.

PERCY
(rasping)
What bag?

COMMISSIONER
Bone -
(spins to Rita and Droopy)
For god's sake help me!

BONE
The one you had! Where is it?

EDWARD
(firm)
It's my wife's. She gave it to Percy.
To look after. It was heavy.

Bone releases Percy. Percy drops, clutching his throat, wheezing.

RITA
(shocked)
Jesus. Boss -

Bone steps into Edward's space - close, ice in his eyes.

BONE
Where is she?

EDWARD
Changing. I imagine. Not that it's any
of -

FIREWORKS explode outside. The crowd erupts. Bone bolts for the exit.

160 EXT. TERRACE -- NIGHT

160

A sea of grinning faces - lit red, white and blue - crane skyward. ROCKETS spiral, BOOM overhead. The crowd ROARS.

Bone paces the gravel's edge - scanning, tense. He signals to Rita and Droopy, then turns back, eyes never leaving the crowd.

Two stagehands in black wheel a towering CATHERINE WHEEL into position.

Above: more SCREAMING FIREWORKS.

The wheel sputters, then spins - slow, then faster - a cyclone of gold and crimson sparks, like molten shrapnel.

Its whir becomes a piercing SHRIEK -

A SHADOW slips behind it -

Vittoria, disguised as a stagehand.

Face hidden. Intent clear. Bone freezes. Breath held.

BONE
(under breath)
Damn it.

Rita spots her.

RITA
(pointing)
BONE!

Vittoria hurls a small object skyward - a glint of metal arcs toward the royal party -

Bone explodes into motion - gravel spraying.

A single stride, two -

His hand SNAPS UP - and SNATCHES it from the air.

Bone HITS the ground hard, rolls, springs up - clutching a FIZZING, barbed GRENADE.

He pivots - hurls it back at the CATHERINE WHEEL - back at Vittoria.

FLASH.

BOOM.

A fireball erupts, drowning out screams - flames shoot skyward. SMOKE billows, swallowing the chaos.

SLOW MOTION: Bone staggers upright - dazed, ears ringing. An eerie HISS rises.

Millions of shards rain down - glittering, not glass but crystal.

A man calmly opens an umbrella beneath the shimmering fall. Surreal. The crowd - untouched - gapes in silence.

A few begin to point at the scorched earth where the Catherine Wheel once stood.

Then - a ripple of applause. CHEERS.

The Royals, smiling, are ushered back inside beneath umbrellas.

Bone waves to Rita and Droopy - *I'm OK* - then limps toward the wreckage.

Through the haze, Vittoria rises, gripping her side. She turns - and stumbles into the darkness.

Bone follows, pace quickening. His eyes locked on her vanishing silhouette.

161 EXT. PALACE GROUNDS -- MOMENT LATER

161

Vittoria shoves through a gawking crowd clustered around a torchlit, life-sized MODEL DINOSAUR.

She stumbles - drunk, desperate.

PALACE VISITOR
(offended)
'ere - watch it Mrs!

Bone elbows through the throng.

162 EXT. FOUNTAIN BASIN -- CONTINUOUS

162

Vittoria lurches down worn stone steps toward a fountain choked with giant lily pads. Bone gives chase.

BONE
(shouting)
Police! Move!

The crowd scatters.

Vittoria spins - a gun trembling in her grip.

Bone freezes. Sees her face - pale, lips bloodless. She presses a hand to her bleeding side, eyes glassy. Her breath stutters. The gun dips.

VITTORIA
Great catch. You saved the day...

BONE
(flat)
Not for Foley.

VITTORIA
No.
(venomous)
Don't look at me like that.

BONE
You murdered a good man -

VITTORIA
And Alice. And Eliza -

She raises the gun. One eye squints shut as she takes aim.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
BANG! BANG!

The SHARP CRACK of two gunshots ECHOES from the earlier scene. She mimics the recoil, smirking.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
Try to keep up detective.

She sways. Glances at the blood pooling at her feet. Slumps onto the basin wall, the gun slipping in her lap.

BONE
Why? Why all this...chaos?

VITTORIA
(whispered)
You wouldn't understand.

BONE
(quick as a whip)
Try me. You've got nothing to lose.
You're dying. You know that right?

She chuckles - dry, broken.

VITTORIA
(low)
There he is.

She swallows hard. Fixes her gaze on Bone. Steady. Unflinching.

EXT. FACTORY FLOOR -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

VITTORIA (V.O.)
The girls would have talked.

Violet THRASHES on the floor. Nick shoves a filthy rag into her mouth. Arthur grips her wrists. Vittoria pins her ankles. Violet shakes her head free - twists. Alice's horrified face bobs in the window. Vittoria and Alice lock eyes.

VITTORIA (V.O.)
Wrecked everything.

FLASHBACK ENDS

VITTORIA

I brought Arthur and Nick to England.
Got them jobs at the factory.

She stares Bone down - almost daring him.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)

(pointed)
Englishmen are so easy to
manipulate....

BONE

(dismissive)
They're Italian? Nick and Arthur?

VITTORIA

I grew up with Arthur.
(testing him)
Remember?

BONE

The boy you ran off with. Who loved
you. So why have Nick kill him?

VITTORIA

He got careless. Had this thing for
Alice. Infatuated.

EXT. FACTORY WALL -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Alice CLAWS at the bricks, kicking frantically.

ALICE

(screaming)
NO! NO, NO -

She's YANKED backward.

EXT. FACTORY YARD - CONTINUOUS (FLASHBACK)

Nick hauls Alice from the tunnel. Flips her. SHOVES her face
into the mud. She thrashes - gasping, choking.

CRACK! A fist SMASHES Nick's face - he drops. Arthur stands
over him, breathing heavily, fist cocked again.

VITTORIA (V.O.)

He became unreliable. Unmanageable.

Arthur looks at the hole. Empty. He sinks to his knees, rain
slicking his face. Smiles.

FLASHBACK ENDS

Bone's expression is unreadable. Cold. Vittoria coughs. Blood bubbles at her lips.

BONE
(impatient)
And the Straffords?

VITTORIA
Useful cover. Well connected.

BONE
Compromised.

VITTORIA
(thoughtful)
Percy's brandy business kept eyes elsewhere. Hastings'... *enterprise*...
That was a surprise.

BONE
But not an unwelcome one?

VITTORIA
You sound bitter. Like a scorned lover.

BONE
Don't flatter yourself.

A flicker - pain. Vittoria's eyes glaze, distant. Her hand slips into her jacket. She draws a BARBED GRENADE. Fingers trembling.

BONE (CONT'D)
Don't.

She turns the grenade in her palm. Mesmerized. Almost reverent.

VITTORIA
It's beautiful. So simple. So sure.
One moment - *and everything changes*.
No kings. No gods. No masters. A perfect solution.

Her gaze lifts. Locks on Bone.

VITTORIA (CONT'D)
You, of all people, should understand.

BONE
There must be order.

VITTORIA
(rasping laugh)
So speaks the detective!

BONE
 (shrugs, steady)
 Yes.

A long beat. She stares at him - grenade...Bone...grenade...
 Bone takes a step forward. Hand out, slow. Steady.

BONE (CONT'D)
 Vittoria. Stop.

She SLAMS the grenade against the marble step.

Bone dives.

A deafening FLASH. WHITE-HOT.

163 INT. THRONE ROOM -- DAY

163

Gold and crimson tapestries line the walls, flanked by oil paintings of grim-faced monarchs. Sunlight fractures through IMMENSE CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS, scattering light.

COMMISSIONER (V.O)
 She witnessed her parents' murder. It radicalized her - turned her into an anarchist. Hell-bent on overturning the established order. At any cost...

The Commissioner kneels on a velvet-cushioned stool before the QUEEN - regal, motionless in her ceremonial robes. She taps his shoulders with a ceremonial sword - right, then left. A sacred rite, delivered with practiced detachment.

He rises. Bows low. Muted words pass between them - reverent, unreadable. The Commissioner steps back. Sinks into a gilded chair, eyes scanning the court.

164 EXT. MARGATE PIER -- DAY

164

CLOSE ON pale eyes, sharp and frost-bright, squinting into the salt wind.

COMMISSIONER (V.O.)
 Of course, we had suspicions of Lord Hastings - whispers, inconsistencies.

A shuttered Punch and Judy booth flaps in the gale - blue and white canvas SNAPPING. No crowd. Just seagulls and blowing sand.

A black cat slinks from behind the booth.

COMMISSIONER (V.O. CONT'D)

But the connection to Vittoria
Strafford...That surfaced only
recently - thanks to the steady, if
unremarkable, work of one of our best.

Hands scoop the cat up.

We see a rail-thin man wrapped in a knitted blue jersey. A
port-wine birthmark stains his neck.

.....THE END.....

